

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by U.N. Member States at the Sustainable Development Summit in New York on the 25th of September, 2015. The outcome document of the post-2015 process lists 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 subsequent targets, which came into effect on 1st of January 2016. As stated by the UN Secretary General, they “will guide the decisions we take over the next 15 years”.

The 2030 Agenda is by no means the only reference for development in the future. Other agendas have been already defined (Agenda 2063 for Africa for instance) and regional institutions have their own objectives and priorities. Most developing countries have adopted their own strategies or/and long term visions that will not be abolished after the commitment to the 2030 Agenda. However as this agenda has been approved by the international community, it will constitute a common reference and will be submitted to a monitoring and evaluation process in which all the states are supposed to participate. This will have strong consequences for the statistical systems. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda should impact on the future national strategies of development and influence the objectives to be reached at the country level.

The outcome document of the 2030 Agenda explicitly refers to statistics as a decisive mean to implement the SDGs and monitor the progress Governments are making. Each country needs baselines to prepare the translation of the SDGs into national development strategies, and indicators are required to monitor and evaluate progresses on a regular base. The document therefore insists on the need for “high quality, timely, and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location”.

It can be expected that the implementation of the SDGs will put high demands on national statistical systems. Paragraph 57 of the outcome document therefore stresses the need to strengthen national capacities of UN member states and address the gaps in data collection to ensure progress can be measured properly.

In addition, Goal 17 on the Means of Implementation and a Revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development explicitly mentions the need to enhance capacity building support to developing countries and in particular LDCs and SIDS by 2020 to increase significantly the availability of high quality, timely and reliable data.

Moreover, paragraphs 74 to 82 of the document address the need for a follow-up and review framework at the global, regional and national level which should monitor the implementation of commitments made under the 2030 Agenda. To make a regular and inclusive review of progress at all levels possible, an indicator framework will be developed.

The document encourages UN members to undertake regular and inclusive reviews at national and sub-national levels. This will require support to developing countries through strengthening the capacities of their National Statistical Offices and data system (Paragraph

76).

Indicators for the 2030 Agenda

A list of indicators has been developed (see <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>) through the work of the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (SDG-IAEG) with a current estimate of 230 indicators.

In March 2016, at its 47th session, the UN Statistical Commission discussed and endorsed the first set of indicators before it goes to the designated intergovernmental bodies, and in July-September 2016, ECOSOC and the General Assembly endorsed the proposal.

The IAEG on SDG indicators continued its work on the indicators in 2016 and will continue in 2017 on the following items: global report mechanisms; procedures for the methodological review of indicators, review of data availability; guidance for data disaggregation, etc. Further work on the indicators will continue through the SDG-IAEG until 2030. In particular, the SDG-IAEG will propose 10 refinements to the global indicator framework, which will be included in the report to the 48th session of UN Statistical Commission in March 2017. Future reviews will be presented at Statistical Commissions 2020 and 2025.

The High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics and the Global Action Plan (GAP)

On 6 March 2015, at its 46th session, the United Nations Statistical Commission created the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (HLG-PCCB), composed of Member States and including regional and international agencies as observers. The HLG-PCCB has been tasked to provide strategic leadership for the sustainable development goal implementation process as it concerns statistical monitoring and reporting, and reports annually to the Statistical Commission.

The HLG-PCCB has drafted a Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data (GAP) that calls for a full, active and focused commitment of government, policy leaders and the international community to implement the sustainable development agenda, while also calling for policy leaders to achieve a global pact or alliance that recognises that funding modernisation efforts of National Statistical Offices is essential to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The HLG-PCCB held a global consultation, and the GAP was launched at the UN World Data Forum in Cape Town, South Africa in January 2017. It was adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 48th Session in March 2017. The “Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data ” sets a global vision for better data, calls for a commitment by governments, policy leaders and the international community to undertake key actions in six strategic areas, including:

1. Coordination and strategic leadership on data for sustainable development
2. Innovation and modernization of national statistical systems
3. Strengthening of basic statistical activities and programmes, with particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs of the 2030 Agenda
4. Dissemination and use of sustainable development data
5. Multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development data
6. Mobilise resources and coordinate efforts for statistical capacity building

The HLG-PCCB will review and update if necessary the GAP periodically to maintain its effectiveness, and will develop an annual implementation programme to measure the Plan's progress. The HLG-PCCB will report its progress assessment regularly to the UN Statistical Commission, and, as appropriate, to other relevant bodies, such as the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the UN World Data Forum.

The SDGs and the NSDSs

- The SDGs were formally adopted by Member states on the 25th of September 2015, at the Summit for the Adoption of the Sustainable Development Agenda.
- A monitoring framework for the SDGs has been prepared by the IAEG-SDGs and has been adopted by ECOSOC and the General Assembly of the UN in July-September 2016. The first SDG review has taken place in 2016 (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>), and by 2018 it is expected that the international system will have in place an accurate and meaningful annual reporting system.
- This will require significant adaptation efforts from NSOs and NSSs, and corresponding funding. NSDSs will need to reflect these changes to take place and the impact that the “data revolution for the SDGs” will have on NSSs. The preparation of new NSDSs / revision of current NSDSs integrating the monitoring of the new development agenda will be needed. It is therefore recommended that the leading institutions preparing the NSDS set a calendar for their new/updated NSDS in line with the 2030 Agenda, and taking into account the situation of their country regarding its development strategy and its NSDS: will the SDGs be integrated in a new national development document, or will a revision of the existing one take place? And how will the changes needed in the NSS be incorporated: through a new NSDS or a revision of the existing NSDS? Clarification is needed between the national development plan and the NSDS as they will both reflect the SDGs.
- The timing will also depend upon the availability of a **data framework** showing the data needed for the monitoring of the SDGs and how they can be produced. This framework should answer the following questions: what are the data that are needed to monitor the progress of the SDGs? Are these data already produced by the NSS? What kind of disaggregation and periodicity will be required? How can the new data be produced (e.g. through a census, an existing survey or a specific new survey)? Which institutions will be responsible to produce these data? Etc. New data sources will evidently play an important role, with an emphasis on environmental variables, and indicators picturing the situation related to governance and inequalities in their various dimensions. See section [The Data Revolution](#).
- The data framework should be adapted to the conditions prevailing in specific countries (LDCs, SIDS, etc.) and should be influenced by the capacities of the countries and the mobilization of the international community. This means that a new NSDS should be prepared in most of the countries soon after SDG implementation has begun, or that, at the least, an important revision of the strategy takes place in 2016-2017. The Agenda 2030 may impact the time frame of the current NSDS: NSDSs ending in 2015 or 2016 should be extended until 2016 or 2017 in order to reflect the impact of SDG implementation on the statistical system.
- Funding is another challenge. There will be a need to define an appropriate **funding framework**, including changes needed to fill the gaps, to ease the preparation of new NSDSs to incorporate the changes linked to SDG implementation. This situation requires three types of actions: (i) Advocacy for change: it refers to raising awareness and mobilizing international bodies, governments, NSSs and other

stakeholders both at the national and international level so that the impact of the SDGs on the statistical systems are properly grasped (data revolution for sustainable development). (ii) Preparation of a data framework (see above) for the monitoring of the SDGs and for the preparation of new NSDSs which will incorporate the impact of the SDGs. (iii) Mobilization of resources both at the national and international levels to finance the costs of the changes to be made in the NSSs in the 2030 Agenda context. SIDS, LDCs and fragile states will face strong resource and technical constraints regarding the implementation of the data framework requested by the 2030 Agenda. The decisions and recommendations of the July 2015 Addis Ababa Financing for Development Conference provide opportunities for this dimension but resources are yet to be mobilized. As requested by the UNSG, new initiatives, such as partnerships among international institutions, will be needed to respond to the challenges. A strong priority should be given to LDCs and SIDS in the efforts of the international community to adapt the NSSs to 2030 Agenda and its reporting requirements.

- It is important to note that a specific indicator related to NSDSs has been agreed by the IEAG-SDG; this is Indicator 17.18.3 “Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding”. This is a good incentive for countries to develop NSDSs and for governments and donors to fund NSDSs, and could be used as part of NSDS advocacy documents. PARIS21 is the custodian agency for this indicator and has already reported status on this in the [2016 Sustainable Development Goals Report](#).

The 2030 Agenda and NSDSs: a strategy

- Based on the list of indicators adopted by the UNSC, set up a list of the indicators needed for the monitoring of SDG implementation in the country. As stated by the SG “Each Government will set its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances”. Criteria: relevance of the indicators regarding the development process of the country. Establish a working group reuniting components of the NSS and users. This process should start as soon as possible, using the latest list of indicators adopted by the IAEG-SDGs (September 2016).
- Identify the gaps to be filled in order to follow the relevant indicators on a regular basis (see the [Advanced Data Planning Tool or ADAPT](#)). The gaps may be related to the level of disaggregation requested, to funding, to methodological difficulties (new fields: environment, governance...), or to a lack of capacities (e.g. new skills, technology, infrastructure, etc.) of the NSS. The ADAPT is designed to help national planners and statistical systems provide the required data for SDGs in a systematic way using on-line tools.
- Calculate the resources needed in order to fill the gaps (see the [Advanced Data Planning Tool](#)) and propose the corresponding funding strategy, including raising awareness within the government, the users and the technical and financial partners, in link with the national development funding process and donor coordination framework. If there is a specific donor coordination group on statistics/data in the country, it should of course be closely associated to this process.
- Update the NSDS so that the NSS is able to monitor and assess the SDG implementation process: what are the priorities for the NSS, taking into account the funding constraints? The new/updated NSDS should entail a training plan linked to the SDGs for the main players.
- Identify the institutional changes necessary for monitoring SDG implementation. Identify the new stakeholders (private sector, civil society, etc.) that should be

incorporated in the NSS in order to take into account the new dimensions resulting from the SDG approach and the level of disaggregation needed, and set up partnerships to actually incorporate these new stakeholders in the NSS. See section [The Data Revolution](#).

- Take into account the way the SDGs are reflected in the development process of the country. Make sure that a close and appropriate articulation is established between the new or updated NSDS and the requirements of the monitoring of the country development process.
- The monitoring strategy for the implementation of the SDGs at the country level should be defined in close relation with the initiatives originating from the regional bodies and coherent with the global framework defined by the UNSC.
- Ensure that the new/updated NSDS is promptly completed in order to participate in and benefit from the initiatives to be developed by the international community in accordance with the SG's Declaration supporting the strengthening of the statistical capacities in Africa, and for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

Tools:

[High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for statistics. Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data.](#)

[Advanced Data Planning Tool \(ADAPT\).](#)

Good Practices:

Ecuador: example of the process of construction of national statistical capacities for the SDG indicators - see <http://www.ecuadorencifras.gob.ec/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/>.

Philippines:

- [Key Outcomes Report on the Country Workshop on the Philippine Data Revolution Roadmap for the Sustainable Development Goals.](#)

- [Philippines Statistical Development Program 2011-2017 Update \(NSDS revised for the SDGs\).](#)

- [Advocacy material/brochure on the NSDS updates.](#)

- [Announcement about the SDG workshop](#)

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