

## 29<sup>th</sup> Informal Working Breakfast on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

### *Measuring ambition: Creating an effective indicators framework*

Hosted by the Bahá'í International Community and the International Movement ATD Fourth World  
5 November 2015

A diverse group of stakeholders<sup>1</sup> attended a working breakfast to discuss key issues related to articulating a set of indicators for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The following are highlights of the discussion:

- This is the first breakfast meeting following the adoption of Agenda 2030.
- Indicators are very important because “what gets measured becomes the agenda.”
- The Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG) was established at the last statistical commission (March 2015). IAEG held its second meeting in Bangkok in Oct 2015. The secretariat analyzed inputs from various consultations. Indicators were coded: green (no disagreements); yellow (agreement but needs further work); and gray (no consensus reached). Agreement was reached on some 220 indicators. Final proposal will be presented to statistical commission
- The “TAP Network” is a coalition of civil society organizations working around the 2030 agenda.
- Indicators need to strike a political balance between ambition and reality. How do you measure progress against 169 targets? What is the data that is needed to measure progress against them? We need to continue to refine the work to make sure we are measuring progress as accurately as possible. There will never be a final set of indicators; the data we use to measure progress of indicators are very ‘dynamic’, need to be continually refined.
- For example: Goal 16 sparked one of the main arguments namely that that it was difficult/impossible to measure. This is an opportunity to show that it can be measured. A special group has been established to work on Goal 16 data and measurement issues.
- Both quantitative and qualitative data is very important. As for the latter, we need to consider “people’s perceptions of progress.” This is the best measure for assessing how people truly perceive what is happening on the ground. As such, “perception-based data” is very important.
- Disaggregation is a key issue; if you disaggregate data by any means, you have to double the sample size (at least) and thus, increase your resources. There is widespread support for disaggregation. How do we determine when to disaggregate the data?
- Civil society data has to complement the official sources of data that comes from NSOs (national statistical offices). There are questions about objectivity of the data coming both from civil society and NSO.
- While some say it is difficult to measure political will, we can look at resources allocated for any given issue. There is political meaning behind the targets; *difficult to separate political and technical* facets of indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> Permanent Missions & Government Agencies: Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Japan, Liechtenstein, Netherlands. Representatives from UN: Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Office of the Special Representative of the World Bank Group to the UN, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNICEF, United Nations Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, United Nations Statistics Division. Non-governmental organizations: Bahá'í International Community, Beyond 2015, Center for Economic and Social Rights, CIVICUS, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Global Policy Forum, International Committee for October 17, International Disability Alliance, International Movement ATD Fourth World, Loretto Community, Medical Mission Sisters, Quaker UN Office, Regions Refocus, Salesian Missions, Save the Children, Sisters of Charity Federation, Soroptimist International, Transparency, Accountability & Participation Network, UNANIMA, World Council of Peoples for the United Nations, World Vision International.

- The budget of DESA is 0% growth. Where will the additional resources come from? If UN agencies aren't getting additional resources then you have to restructure and reprioritize what you are doing.
- We are seeing a disconnect between what member states were pushing for as priorities and how what NSOs are agreeing are indicators.
- Civil society feels that it has to push for every opportunity to be involved in the process.
- There are very high expectations of member states: The number of indicators is very high and will require a lot of capacity nationally to report on them. We are putting too many expectations on HLPF.
- Governments need to be consulting with civil society in order to keep their fingers on the pulse and to course-correct when needed.
- The mandate of the High Level Group on Partnership Coordination and Capacity Building is to advise chief statisticians to the UN. It was established by the Statistical Commission in March 2015. Capacity building is at the heart of what needs to move forward with this agenda, especially for NSOs. Global level indicators are not the same as those at the national level; the real work going forward is about national level work and progress.
- Global Partnership on Sustainable Development and Data received \$75 million, is this in competition with the core work of the UN?
- The World Bank has established a Global Partnership on SD data, it wants to host a World Data Forum. The Bank will launch a \$100 million trust fund to support innovation in data production.