How to Measure Progress? Data and Statistics for the SDGs

22 MARCH 2019, 11:35-13:00
Plenary Room, International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG)

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the focus event on data and statistics is to

- provide a space for discussion and learning for participants of the Regional Forum on cross-cutting, innovative data issues affecting the overall implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Leave No One Behind agenda;
- to identify main lessons and compile a set of key messages that can be shared with a wider audience to support improvement of availability, accessibility and use of high-quality, timely and comparable data to measure progress towards SDGs.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The focus event will consist of a panel discussion involving two representatives of national statistical offices, the World Bank as both a co-producer of data/analysis and a user, and a representative from civil society, followed by a general discussion. It will consider the following issues:

- How is data and statistics used to provide evidence for policy-making and to accelerate SDG progress?
- Where do we stand with regard to SDG data and statistics? What has been the progress since 2015? What are the persisting gaps and challenges? What good practices/innovations?
- How can statistical and monitoring capacities be strengthened at the country level?

BACKGROUND

The importance of data for measuring the SDG is evident. To make the ambitious agenda of SDGs successful, we need reliable, timely and granular data to show where we are making progress and where we are falling behind – and which groups are being left behind. This focus event will discuss data and statistics for the measurement of the progress towards the achievement of SDGs and evidence-based decision-making: where we are and what we need to do to ensure that assessment of progress is based on evidence. The event will also look at practical examples and case studies of using data for policy making to ensure progress towards SDGs.

The official statistics community has established a list of 232 global SDG indicators to measure progress at the global level. The list was set up following clear requests from policy makers: the indicators should directly respond to each target, give equal weight to all targets, not undermine or reinterpret them, take into account different national realities, be action oriented and universally

applicable. The statistical community has made steady progress in improving availability of data for the global SDG indicators.

But the global SDG indicators alone will not be enough to inform policies for implementing SDGs. Many countries are establishing additional national indicators focusing on specific national priorities to measure policies for sustainable development. Many international organizations and the so-called 'custodian agencies' responsible for SDG indicators are maintaining thematic databases in their area of responsibility (health, education, energy, environment, etc.). It is estimated that there are over 100 such databases in the UN system alone. Private sector has been working on core indicators to assist Governments in collecting information on the private sector's contribution to the implementation of SDGs, building on the Global Reporting Initiative framework. Civil society is actively advocating for Governments to provide data on vulnerable groups, towards actions aimed to put the furthest behind first.

The focus event will explore how to bring these different contributions: government, official statistics, private sector and civil society together for improving measurement of progress towards SDGs.

SDG LINKAGES

Measuring the achievement of the Goals and targets is relevant for all SDGs. In addition, there are three SDG targets that aim to improve capacity to measure achievement of SDGs: 12.6 on encouraging companies to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle; 17.18 on capacity-building support to developing countries to enhance availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data; and 17.19 on developing measurement of progress on sustainable development.

PARTICIPANTS

Panel Moderator: Afshan Khan (Chairperson, UN Regional Issue Based Coalition on SDG Data and Statistics, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia (ECA))
Panel Members: Anahit Safyan (Member of the State Council on Statistics of Republic of Armenia), **Joanne Evans** (Head of Analysis and Engagement, Sustainable Development Goals, Office for National Statistics, UK**), Jos Verbeek (**Manager and Special Representative to the UN and WTO, World Bank Geneva) and **Marianne Haslegrave** (Director, Commonwealth Medical Trust and Representing the RFSD/CSO Forum)**.**

The focus event will target a multi-stakeholder audience, including government representatives, official statisticians, private sector, academia, civil society and others.

ORGANIZERS

The focus event is organized by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in cooperation with the Regional UN Issue Based Coalition on SDG Statistics and Monitoring (IBC SDG Data).

BACKGROUND MATERIALS

UN Statistical Division - Sustainable Development Goal indicators website:

https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/

Inclusive Data Charter: http://www.data4sdgs.org/initiatives/inclusive-data-charter

Conference of European Statisticians - Road Map on Statistics for Sustainable Development Goals:
https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=47510

Recommendations for Promoting, Measuring and Communicating the Value of Official Statistics:
http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51139