

PARIS21 Seminar: Making Countries Fit for the Post-2015 Development Agenda

It is clear that 2015 is a crucial year for global development and data will play a key role, particularly with the arrival of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations Open Working Group on the SDGs has proposed 17 goals, with 169 associated targets, and a list of approximately 300 indicators. National Statistical Systems (NSS) will continue to play a crucial role in the monitoring and implementation of this new agenda as well as responding to their national development plans.

Drawing from the lessons learned from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the seminar attempted to answer various questions to identify what needs to be done and what resources will be needed to ensure that developing countries are ready for the post-2015 development agenda.

Deb Bhattacharya opened the seminar with a keynote speech on *Making Countries Fit in Data Use: What is Really Needed*. He identified four main actions: tackling the post-2015 agenda in the national context; setting up an institutional structure for implementation; identifying data needs and articulating a national strategy to address them; and lastly implementing this strategy through multi-actor engagement within the country and beyond.

Matthias Reister from the United Nations Statistics Division then took the floor to provide an update on the current state of play around the SDGs and the development and implementation of the indicator framework. It was noted that since the MDGs, the data situation in most countries has improved although some challenges remain in terms of funding predictability; limited coverage of various sectors; lack of disaggregated data; low political commitment and, legal, social and administrative barriers. It was recognised that more consultations with developing countries will be essential when developing the indicator framework for the SDGs targets.

The second session of the seminar included a panel discussion to address questions around capacity development; international monitoring and reporting; funding; and public-private partnerships/foundations.

Panel members and participants agreed that the process of making countries fit for the post-2015 agenda should be country-led and closely supported by key partners. Countries' needs must be prioritised then feed into the international development needs. Participants expressed their support for mainstreaming the post-2015 framework in the national development plans and policies to create a direct link between investments in data and concrete policy outcomes. On the role of public/private partnerships to help achieve sustainable development, participants felt that there is a need for more clarity on the benefits these can bring.

Looking forward, participants identified the need to strengthen national statistical capacity and create national funding systems to reinforce statistical investment and ensure consistent funding. Several participants also addressed the need to prioritise financial and technical support to low income countries lacking national household survey programs.