

Unlocking the SDGs as a shared results framework: From ambition to action

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Moderator: Rahul Malhotra

Setting the scene – Archita Misra (PARIS21), Alejandro Guerrero (DCD – REEDI)

- Emphasized that alignment is key to an efficient SDG process, both from the perspective of development partners and national statistical systems
- Pointed out that in practice, alignment is incomplete and SDG data only usable for external monitoring purposes instead of national benchmarking
- At the same time, government and development partners lack the foundational data they need to pan effective policy interventions
- The SDG framework is an instrument to forge convergence amongst NSS, development partners and national policy makers leading to harmonised data generation and joined use.

Intervention by Samantha Custer, Director of Policy Analysis, AidData

In light of the 10 years left to achieve the SDGs, what have you seen has changed in the development data landscape? What kind of incentives have the SDGs created around incentives and use?

- SDGs foster, on the one side, the supply of data to target resources, and evaluate results, while on the other side, trigger demand among decision makers to put the information to use
- However, the heightened demand increase incentives and pressure on data producers
 - o More disaggregated data: Data producers have a mandate to produce granular, disaggregated data suitable to monitor policy action. Researchers find an overall increase in gender data since 2015, the NSO Jordan for example now releases labour market statistics with a focus on gender
 - o Domestication of policy targets: The SDGs allow for a common language with space to contextualise. Contrary to the MDGs, the SDGs allow more latitude to fit national and local needs. In this light, cities and local communities have developed and adapted indicators to their specific circumstances.
 - o Fostering multi-stakeholder approaches: The SDG enable policy makers to crowd in more stakeholders to close data gaps. Next to the NSO as a central player, there is now far greater emphasis on line ministries, unofficial data producers from academia, private sector and civil society organisations. This in turn might increase trust in data.
 - o Lack of financing: NSOs asked to do more, without more resources.
 - o Higher complexity: The SDGs represent a huge increase in targets and indicators thus further complicating data collection.
 - o Lack of common methodology: For 45 indicators a general methodology is still lacking.
- Consequently, donor financing for statistics is at times scattered, parallel monitoring/parallel financing systems emerge because information on the SDG indicators is often not accessible or usefully scalable. There is hence an overall lack of interoperability of data.

Intervention by Andrea Ries, Co-chair of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

- Introduction to GPEDC: The partnership brings together partner countries, and development partner relevant to aligning agendas around the SDGs as joined results framework, and impacting better data production.
- A key instrument to use scarce resources efficiently in an area with fragmented outcomes is their effectiveness monitoring system:
- Key results brought forward by the monitoring system include:
 - o National planning and monitoring has significantly improved over the last decade
 - o New national development plans do align with SDG frameworks
 - o However, only 35 of partners have data in the system to monitor their NDP
 - o Most of partner countries strengthen their M&E systems
 - o Alignment is indeed a big issue: development partners push national priorities aside; only half of the development partners do actually incorporate indicators from the SDG system
- Overall, development partners have a drive to be accountable to their own constituency instead of aligning to their partner countries
- Consequently, parallel monitoring and data collection processes proliferate.

Dr. Dennis Mapa, National Statistician and Civil Registrar General, Philippines Statistics Authority

- The Philippines have shown great commitment to the SDGs and recognized the need to monitor those indicators.
- The PSA assessed the capacities across the Philippine national statistical system to monitor the SDGs and scale up the data ecosystem provide the necessary skills, resources and partnerships to address these data demands
- Within the scope of this exercise, the PSA for the first time conducted a national indicator review and mapping exercise (supported by the national planning office). The mapping followed an inclusive and integrative approach, involving a large variety of stakeholders (data producer, user, academia, private sector, dev partners, CSOs).
- The mapping was later replicated at sub-national level (municipalities, provinces) to leave no one behind and create ownership of the SDG process.
- Overall, the PSA agreed on adopting 155 indicators (102 global indicators, 53 proxy indicators)
- Moreover, those efforts are fully funded and integrated in the Philippines development plan.
 - o Vertical implementation: Ensuring a mainstreaming of planning and implementation at both national and sub-national level.
 - o Horizontal implementation: Fostering a strong collaboration between different sectors.
- To fulfil all requirements, capacity development programmes have been identified, and form part of the national development system.

Questions & Answers

1. To what extent are the SDGs framing statistical work (beyond a theoretical level).

Andrea Ries

- GPSDC contributes to national processes, by re-focusing members on public ownership. These principles need to be introduced in the context of data (ownership, sustainability)
- SDG can drive a motivation to provide funding, e.g. sectoral support to statistics is central. (central vs. decentralized statistical systems)

Samantha Custer

- NSS needs to crowd in different stakeholders is central to overcome the status quo. Moreover, transparency is key. Project level and monitoring evaluation will stay, but NSS need to disclose their methods and processes.
- Development partners need to encourage learning, especially on Tier 3 indicators (e.g. Tunisia to employ social media matrix alongside NSO surveys), and reward positive deviance
- Governments need to develop frameworks for coordination (Chief Data officer, data champion) and reward data producers for integrating CSOs, private sector and other stakeholders (e.g. Bogota Chamber of Commerce and the NSO standardised formats)
- Unofficial data producers should enter partnerships with NSOs and dev partners to validate new ideas, and disclose their methods and standards
- Overall, we need to go away from differences between countries; the SDGs provide an opportunity to go sub-national, go to between group inequalities. In this light, project level M&E includes very rich demographic attributes, typically unaccounted and undercounted.

Dr. Dennis Mapa

- The Advantage of the Philippines lies in a profound legal framework for data/statistics. The PSA is the official repository for SDG indicators. Domestication of SDGs to the countries is key.
- To do so, the country needs to define coordination mechanisms. The Philippines started measuring the SDG indicators by engaging the different national government agencies. In addition, the national data flow reporting mechanism are guided by the global data flow architecture. Finally, the SDG indicators are disseminated by SDG watch.
- Nevertheless the government lacks capacity to:
 - o Disaggregate data further
 - o Producer poverty welfare analyses
- Under the new framework, the PSA is tasked to lead the community-based monitoring system (CBMS). The PSA sees it as an opportunity to generate disaggregated data, to involve other actors to strengthen their statistical capacity and to promote the use of SDG indicators at the local level with the national level decision making.

Dr. Bagashu, SDG Center for Africa

- Complexity and interdependency of SDG programme seek for high quality, timely data (disaggregated)
- Highlights the data gap beyond ones expectations and expresses concerns over efforts of domestication, at best aligning SDGs into national agendas without contextualizing them
- Moreover, a large part of data collection is happening by non-governmental agencies. The coordination by the NSO is not yet consistent due to a proliferation of actors.

Oliver Chinganya, UNECA

- Recognizes the value of SDG partnerships
- Questions the future of official statistics by highlighting that the UNFPOS do not embrace the interoperability of new data source

Soumya Chattopadhyay, ODI

- Highlights the fairly limited capacity to deliver SDG and the incentive gap between devising a system and being able to use it
- Stresses the importance of data use in policy making (how can disaggregated data generated by NSOs or other non-governmental organisations be used in policy making?)

Last round of interventions by panellists

Dr Dennis Mapa

- Legislators and policy makers need to invest in data generation at the national and local level

Andrea Ries

- The statistical system is not at the discretion of every actor. A multi-stakeholder approach needs more than governance to get this done.

Samantha Custer

- COVID-19 as chance to make SDG monitoring more efficient and collaborative. Most important is the transparent disclosure of M&E data.
- Credibility of unofficial statistics in monitoring the SDG needs to be strengthened. They would benefit from having their own production processes validated

Final conclusions, Johannes Jütting

- Alignment between statistical, policy makers and development partners is key to achieve a shared results framework for SDGS (key instrument is the NSDS process)