Cross Regional Forum
SDG implementation: What is needed in terms of data, institutions and funding?
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Forum Summary

Introduction

Mr. Johannes Jütting (Manager of PARIS21) and Mr. Edwin Lau (Head of Division, OECD Governance Directorate) introduced the Forum and highlighted their organisations’ commitment in helping countries achieve the SDGs.

Mr. Jérémie Petit (Department Head of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs) introduced how France is measuring SDG progress. The first approach was to identify all indicators which have been previously produced and establish a working group, under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to identify missing indicators. He acknowledged that basing official development assistance on SDG progress can be complex due to the amount of indicators and the fact that many are intersectorial. Donors need to be accountable to international demands as well as to countries’ specific agendas. For this reason, France is supporting statistical capacity development together with AFRISTAT, as well as fostering the use of open data through the OPAL project.

Mr. François Fonteneau (Co-ordinator of the Data Advisory Services at PARIS21) presented the Advanced Data Planning Tool (ADAPT), a cloud-based tool that helps countries identify data gaps both for national and international reporting, and to repurpose existing data. ADAPT allows indicators to be mapped from various frameworks, reducing the complexity of the policy monitoring landscape.

Session 1: What are the data needs for measuring and monitoring the SDGs?

Ms. Michal Schinwell (OECD Statistics Directorate) introduced the study on measuring the distance of OECD countries to SDG targets. The presentation focused on explaining the complex methodology for doing so, highlighting the various existing data sources and proxies used in the study, as well as the considerations taken in order to set targets for those indicators that do not have a clear-cut objective. Ms. Schinwell pointed out that some areas, such as environmental statistics have low coverage, and others are highly ambitious in terms of what OECD countries have achieved, especially in gender. As a result, the variance between countries, and the levels of target achievement are uneven for each SDG. The discussion revolved around the considerations for conducting such a study for countries outside of the OECD, since the heterogeneity could be even larger.

Mr. Candido Astrologo (Philippine Statistics Authority) provided an overview of SDG indicators within the Philippine Statistical System (PSS). A number of governmental and non-governmental agencies are involved in the compilation and dissemination of SDG-related data and various co-ordination mechanisms and tools, such as SDG Watch and ADAPT, allow for the PSS to prepare the necessary information to report on their progress. Finally, Mr. Astrologo highlighted the need to improve capacity and technical assistance to address data gaps, complete methodological work, improve administrative data and produce data visualizations.
Ms. Ruth Minja (Tanzanian Bureau of Statistics) presented Tanzania’s outlook on the SDGs. Along with conducting communication and outreach workshops for data producers and users, Tanzania has conducted a data gap assessment on the SDGs and established a SDGs Data Roadmap Steering Committee. In the coming years, Tanzania hopes to increase data production and timeliness, improve data management systems, mobilise funding for statistics and develop capacity for NSS staff.

Ms. Aneta Haimannová (Czech Sustainable Development Unit) presented how the Czech Republic is preparing for the SDGs. Along with adopting the “Czech Republic 2030” resolution in 2017, the government performed a policy gap analysis and pushed for future policy coherence for sustainable development. The government also created a Government Council for Sustainable Development which is responsible for co-ordinating sustainable development policy.

Session 2: SDG implementation: What is the institutional set-up and what role does the NSO play?

Ms. Sara Fyson (Counsellor, OECD, Governance Directorate) presented the different institutional mechanisms for SDG implementation. She emphasised that there is no single best model of institutional set-up to implement the SDGs among countries and that peer learning among countries on the different institutional mechanisms to implement the SDGs is paramount. SDG implementation represents opportunities and challenges for government to have a more proactive role, align policies and sectoral work, and ensure co-ordination across ministries.

Mr. Azahari Mohd Raslan (Deputy Chief Statistician, Department of Statistics of Malaysia) presented Malaysia’s outlook on the SDGs. Their governance arrangement relies on multiple bodies, including: the National SDG Council chaired by the PM that formulated the SDG roadmap; the Steering Committee; the Technical Committee that comprises 5 Working Committees; and the appointment of the DOSM1 as a focal point in the development of SDG indicators. He explained the three phases of Malaysia’s Roadmap to implement the SDGs as well as a long term plan, TN 50 (2020-2050) that takes into account current trends such as Big Data. He emphasised the key issues and challenges in implementing the SDGs in Malaysia which include funding, capacity building, data limitations and data collection.

Mr. Jussi Kanner (Advocacy Coordinator, Kehys, Finnish NGDO platform to the EU) presented the institutional mechanism in Finland to implement the SDGs: the Prime Minister’s Office has the leading role in co-ordinating the 2030 Agenda while the National Commission on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Expert Panel also play important roles. He presented the follow-up system of the government’s implementation plan for 2030 which includes an online Platform on the website of Prime Minister’s Office that allows for broad discussion and interpretation of indicators and data. This information is then discussed in the Parliament and during the annual Government Budget Session.

1 Department of Statistics of Malaysia.
Ms. Andreja Slomšek (Economic Cooperation Adviser to the Prime Minister, Slovenia) presented Slovenia’s recently finalised National Development Strategy for 2030. The Development Strategy ensures the achievement of medium-term fiscal objectives, long-term fiscal sustainability and public finance stability, and dictates general government sector budget planning and implementation. She mentioned the 2017 Voluntary National Review (VNR) as an important tool to raise awareness among stakeholders and to internalise ownership among ministries related to SDGs. At the end of this session, she emphasised the expanding role of the NSO and its role in managing new data sources to implement the SDGs as well as data access, data confidentiality and data quality.

Session 3: How to raise domestic funding for measuring the SDGs?

This session discussed the issues of funding for statistics and in particular how to raise domestic funding to respond to data demand for measuring the SDGs.

Ms. Moizza Sarwar (Senior Research Officer, Overseas Development Institute) presented a joint ODW-PARIS21 paper on Good Practices for Financing Statistical Development which examines three country case studies – Ethiopia, the Philippines and Rwanda – and provides practical guidance to others interested in replication and adoption. Key factors for success include:

- High level political support, country ownership of statistical agenda with national funding
- National and international demand driven agenda and alignment with donors
- Autonomy of NSO through legal frameworks
- Alignment of NSDS and National Development Plan to improve co-ordination between NSO and the Ministry of Planning

Next, countries shared their experience in domestic resource mobilisation for statistics from the perspective of the NSO and the Ministry of Planning.

Mr. Harouna Kone (Director General, INSTAT Mali) presented the process which led to the creation of a National Fund for Statistics. Following recurrent issues (funding, human resources, etc.) related to statistical activities, there was a revision to the Malian statistical law which included the set-up of a National Fund for Statistics. Another important aspect of the project was to define a clear governance structure to manage the Fund with involvement from the NSO, Ministry of Finance and Donors.

Mr. Calyst B. Ndyomugabi (Senior Economist, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Uganda) shared some key elements which contributed to funding statistics in Uganda. As statistics are the basis on which to build the vision of country in terms of development, there is a high demand of statistics from the head of state. Allocation of resources is then made according to
requirements of country development programmes. Also, the SDGs were mainstreamed into the National Development Plan.

Ms. Halimeh Said (Director General of International Relations, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics) presented Palestine’s experience in domestic resource mobilisation. The PCBS improved government own funding for statistics from 40% in 1994 to 75% in 2017 through the establishment of partnerships and strong communication with donors. Mainstreaming the SDGs in the NSDS and the mapping of development indicators was very important to have an idea of the existing gaps. The use of administrative data and web based questionnaires were also used to reduce costs and make more resources available to the development of statistical activities.

Following these presentations, participants separated into three breakout groups to further discuss how to fund statistical development from domestic resources.

1. **Strategies, good practices and tools**
   This group highlighted the need to increase national-level political support around the SDGs, use international standards, adopt innovations to reduce cost, reference international benchmarks and reinforce co-ordination between the central government and local authorities.

2. **Capacity development**
   This group identified various capacity issues required to leverage additional domestic funding, including partnerships with the private sector and academia, adoption of innovative technologies, stronger co-ordination between stakeholders and increased communications.

3. **The view of the funders**
   This group, comprised mainly of donor countries, discussed what kind of support donors should provide NSOs and other data producers. Participants identified the need to promote peer reviews for quality assurance, build capacity in revenue generation, link loans to statistical outputs, and build political connections through advocacy activities.

**Session 4: What are the next steps to get the adequate data, institutions and funding to monitor and implement the SDGs?**

Mr. Rudolphe Petras (Regional Programme Co-ordinator, PARIS21), Mr. Azahari Mohd Raslan (Deputy Chief Statistician, Malaysia) and Mr. Johannes Jütting (Manager, PARIS21) provided the closing remarks for the Forum which focused on the three areas of data, institutions and funding.
1. Data

- Progress has been made in assessing the data gaps in many countries. OECD and developing countries are in a similar situation: 30% - 40% of SDG indicators are already covered.
- However, capacity is still missing at the national level, especially in SIDS and Fragile States.

2. Institutions

- SDG implementation should be co-ordinated by the central government under the responsibility of the President or the Prime Minister’s office. SDG processes should be aligned with the National Development Plan.
- The NSO should be included in all institutional arrangements for the SDGs.
- As most SDG data will come from administrative sources (line ministries), legal frameworks might need to be revised to enhance access to administrative data, provide the NSO a co-ordinating role, ensure quality and confidentiality and develop capacity for the NSS.

3. Funding

- Official Statistics are still underfunded, not only for the NSO but for the entire NSS.
- There is a need to establish international benchmarking of resource allocation to statistics as a share of GDP at the country level. This will help mobilise more domestic resources, facilitate comparisons across countries and put pressure on the NSO as well as the entire NSS to do better. International standards (e.g. IMF SDDS) can motivate countries to increase domestic resources mobilisation.
- Advocacy for statistics around the SDGs needs to be increased with demonstrated government ownership.
- The cost of measuring the SDGs can be shared through partnerships with NGOs and academia.