

Role of NSSs in the Implementation of SDGs Indicator Framework: A Preview of Initiatives by Pakistan

By

Dr. Sajjad Akhtar

Member (Economic and Social Statistics)

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Islamabad, Pakistan

November 2016

Why SDG Indicator Framework?

A. Management Tool:

Country Specific Indicator framework will convert SDGs and their targets into a management tool to develop implementation strategies and allocate resources accordingly.

B. Report Card:

Indicators will also serve as a report card to measure progress towards sustainable development and to help ensure the accountability of all stakeholders for achieving the SDGs.

Characteristics of SDG Indicator Framework

A. Timeliness

The monitoring framework and indicators for the SDGs should reflect the lessons learned from the MDGs, namely that timeliness is crucial for the indicators to inform decision-making.

B. Disaggregation

Data needs to be carefully disaggregated to track equity in achievement

Towards a national ownership for developing and Implementing SDG Indicator Framework

1. Partners in Review Process

PAKISTAN

Two pronged institutional and review process is currently underway.

- A) SDG UNITS at the Federal, Provincial and at Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
- B) Three streams involved in Review of Indicators

- i) Planning Commission
- ii) Development Partners
- iii) Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

2. Aligning with context-specific priorities

3. Build upon existing monitoring methods used by NSSs

4. Alignment with Global Indicators

SDSN: 10 Principles for Selecting Global Monitoring Indicators

1. Limited in number and globally harmonized
2. Simple, single-variable indicators, with straightforward policy implications
3. Allow for high frequency monitoring
4. Consensus based, in line with international standards and system-based information
5. Constructed from well-established data sources
6. Disaggregated
7. Universal
8. Mainly outcome-focused
9. Science-based and forward-looking
10. A proxy for broader issues or conditions

Pakistan's preliminary brush with implementing the SDG Indicator Framework

Four technical committees (TC) constituted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics held their first meeting last month.

Objective is to

- a) synchronize the structure and content of surveys and census with SDG indicators
- b) move towards an integrated statistical system.

The TCs are i) Poverty, Inequality, Labour and employment, (SDG 1,2,8 &10) ii) Education (SDG 4), iii) Health (SDG 2,3) and iv) Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6).

The proposed SDG Unit at PBS will work on an integrated statistical system once a consensus is reached on the list of SDG indicators.

Pakistan: Challenges to implementing the SDG Indicator Framework

While many of the SDSN 10 principles shown above are also common to national indicators, and are meant to be a guide for committees that will review and reach a consensus on the indicator selection, I will focus on 2 principles that touch on NSSs mandate and were discussed in the TCs. These relate to: 5. Constructed from well-established data sources and 6. Disaggregated.

- a) Structure, content and length of existing household survey should not be radically changed for post-2015 era. Loss of comparability and ‘respondent fatigue’ is the main constraint. Rely on tweaking existing questionnaire and addition of 1 or 2 small modules.
- b) Documentation and dissemination of new modified data series

Contd....

c) 'Quality conscious' SDGs VS 'quantity conscious' MDGs,

Example: measuring 'proficiency' in education and assessing 'safely managed water' in Water and Sanitation

d) Disaggregation

Example 1: Assessment of poverty incidence by age and sex in SDG 1 will require a complete re-structuring of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey to capture intra-household consumption behaviour. Similarly is the case for coverage of population by social protection floors/systems.

Example 2: The disaggregation of parity indices in SDG 4 (Education) will also pose a challenge. In the spirit of 'Leave no one behind' the indicator is broken down by vulnerability attributes such as disability status, indigenous people and conflict affected. The last attribute is difficult to capture as usually household surveys are not conducted in conflict areas due to security reasons.

PBS: Innovations, Training and Capacity Building

SDG Unit in PBS

PBS undertook a need assessment in collaboration with development partners for strengthening its capacity to meet the challenges posed by DATA REVOLUTION.

The decision to establish a SDG unit in PBS with financial and technical support of UNDP to be manned by a 5 person team of professionals and area specialists is being implemented.

In addition, the concerned PBS staff has started to attend national and international training workshops on SDG indicator measurement.

Tablet-based data collection.

a) As a precursor to full-fledged Agriculture Census, a pilot Agriculture Census will be launched in 2 districts of Pakistan from December to test an in-house developed tablet-based census form.