



UNITED NATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
STATISTICS DIVISION

**First Meeting of the Inter-agency and
Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators
New York, 1-2 June 2015**

Opening Statement

Mr. Wu Hongbo
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Distinguished Experts and colleagues,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this first Meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).

Fourteen years ago the Inter-agency and Expert Group on the Millennium Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-MDGs) met for the first time to fulfill the requirements of the Millennium Declaration and to initiate the work to develop and implement the MDG monitoring framework. The regular monitoring of the MDGs has brought global attention to some of the most pressing development challenges of our time, helped to galvanize development efforts and implement successful targeted interventions. We should be inspired by the success of the IAEG-MDGs and build on its experiences.

While acknowledging the past, we must now consider the increased challenge ahead of us. Member States at the Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals (OWG) agreed last year on 17 goals and 169 targets. The post-2015 agenda will be universal, addressing the needs and seeking contributions of all people across the planet. It will aim at economic progress, social inclusion and environmental sustainability in a balanced manner, and be relevant to all countries. To ensure the full implementation of this agenda and respond to the level of ambition of the new goals and targets, the statistical community will need to develop and implement a robust framework of indicators. This is an important task which will require intense methodological and technical work. The implementation of the new monitoring framework will pose a challenge even for the most advanced statistical systems, and will certainly require significant efforts to strengthen the capacities of national statistical systems in many developing and least developed countries.

At the March session of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the SDGs, Member States reviewed and discussed the technical report by the UN Statistical Commission, which presented an assessment of preliminary and indicative indicators

proposed by experts of the UN system and assessed by national statistical offices. I am pleased to inform you that during that session Member States expressed their support for the roadmap agreed by the Statistical Commission for the development of a global indicator framework and its timetable, which foresees providing a proposal for a global indicator framework (and associated global and universal indicators) by March 2016. Member States also agreed that the development of a high-quality and robust indicator framework is a technical process that requires time, and supported the creation of this group, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs).

At the same time Member States stressed that the indicators must directly respond to the goals and targets agreed in the Open Working Group and their level of ambition, must not undermine or re-interpret the targets, cover all targets including targets on means of implementation, give equal weight to all targets, maintain the balance achieved, and should not introduce any new or contentious issues. There was also wide consensus that the number of global indicators should be limited and should include multi-purpose indicators that address several targets at the same time.

Member States also stressed the importance of disaggregated data to leave no one and no group behind, and to adequately address inequality and exclusion. The requirements for extensive data disaggregation will also have resource implications and will need to be addressed in the context of the strengthening of statistical systems.

Distinguished Experts and colleagues,

2015 is the most critical year in decades for global development. In July in Addis Ababa, the Financing for Development Conference will identify the mechanisms and resources required to fund the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. In September in New York, world leaders will meet to launch the new development agenda for all humanity for the next fifteen years. In December in Paris, The UN Climate Change Conference will attempt to deliver a global climate agreement.

I am looking forward to the work of the IAEG-SDGs on the development and implementation of an indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda, which will be crucial to inform decision making over the next 15 years. In this context, I would like to point out the importance of the establishment of a global database for the global SDG indicators, similar to the database for the MDG indicators. The global data set is expected to facilitate the implementation of the national and regional indicators, foster capacity building, and allow the global reporting on progress across all goals and targets in an integrated way.

This first meeting of the IAEG-SDGs will set up a process for the development of the indicator framework, establish the methods of work of the group and agree on the way forward. You will review proposals for indicators, agree on the most suitable methodological approaches in statistical areas that are still under development and discuss technical issues such as interlinkages across targets and data disaggregation.

This group brings together national and international statistical experts in a wide range of areas. It will also benefit from the important inputs of civil society and other key stakeholders. I am confident that you will make every effort to collaborate effectively for the preparation of the global indicators to monitor the post-2015 development agenda and will work successfully on their implementation.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion and look forward to the result of your work.