

**Sixth Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group
on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators**

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 11-14 November 2017

Venue: Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel

Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Report

I Introduction

1. The sixth meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) took place from 11-14 November 2017 in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain. The meeting was hosted by the Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (DERASAT). An IAEG-SDG member meeting took place during the first two days on 11-12 November 2017, followed by a plenary session, attended by all participants, on 13-14 November 2017.

2. The main objectives of the meeting were to: i) review the tier classification; ii) discuss the proposed guidelines on data flows and global data reporting; iii) review progress made on the methodological development of tier III indicators; iv) discuss issues related to the work stream on data disaggregation; v) discuss progress made on the data reporting calendar; vi) discuss progress made on the implementation of monitoring of the 2030 Agenda at national, regional, global and thematic levels, and other related issues.

3. At the plenary session, Dr Ahmed Hashim Alyushaa, General Director of Research, Coordination and Follow-up at the Royal Court, Kingdom of Bahrain and Member of Board of Trustees, DERASAT, opened the meeting and welcomed participants to Bahrain. Dr Alyushaa emphasized the commitment of Bahrain to the development and implementation of the global indicator framework and to promoting the leadership role of the National Statistical Offices in reporting on the 2030 Agenda. He also mentioned that Bahrain will be presenting on their progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda at the High Level Political Forum in 2018. Mr. Enrique Ordaz, co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs and Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of the Statistical Services Branch of the United Nations Statistics Division, also offered opening remarks expressing gratitude for the active participation of all attendees as well as the IAEG-SDG Members in the preceding days. The meeting was attended by over 120 participants, including representatives from 25 member countries of the IAEG-SDGs, 14 observer countries, about 30 regional and international organisations, and over 15 civil society organisations, academia and the private sector.

4. The two co-chairs of the IAEG-SDGs, Mr. Enrique Ordaz of Mexico and Dr Albina Chuwa of Tanzania, chaired the meeting, assisted by UNSD staff as Secretariat.

5. All documents of the meeting, including presentations for each agenda item and statements are available on the website of the 6th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/meetings/iaeg-sdgs-meeting-06/>).

II. Introduction of the new members and co-Chair of the IAEG and updates on the IAEG-SDG working groups

6. Agenda item 2 introduced the seven new members of the IAEG-SDGs: Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Niger, the Republic of Belarus, Tajikistan and Trinidad and Tobago. During this agenda item, it was also officially announced that Dr. Albina Chuwa, Director General of the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics, would be replacing Dr. Lisa Grace Bersales of the Philippines as a co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs.

7. Agenda item 3 included presentations from the three working groups of the IAEG-SDGs: SDMX, Geo-spatial information and Interlinkages, and from the Joint sub-group of the IAEG-SDGs and the High-level Group on Partnership, Coordination and Capacity Building for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All presentations for these agenda items are included on the meeting website.

III. Review of tier classification

8. Agenda item 4, on the updated tier system, was introduced by the Secretariat. This agenda item was divided into two parts: The first part of this agenda item presented changes in the tier classification of indicators based on data availability in the global database while the second part of this agenda item addressed tier reclassification requests received for Tier III indicators.

9. The secretariat presented the changes in tier reclassification due to data availability. All Tier I and II indicators were reviewed as part of this work and based on data availability, seven indicators that were Tier I were proposed to be moved to Tier II. In addition, 19 indicators that were classified as Tier II were proposed to be upgraded to Tier I. A complete list of the indicators that will change tiers can be found in the presentation of this agenda item on the meeting's website.

10. The secretariat also presented the IAEG's decisions regarding the tier reclassification requests of Tier III indicators. The IAEG considered a total of 29 indicators for reclassification and decided to move 15 of these indicators to Tier II after reviewing documents on the methodological development and metadata of each indicator. The IAEG also decided that a further 7 indicators would be re-evaluated after the meeting as there was not sufficient time during the members' meeting to comprehensively review all 29 indicators. A Webex meeting would be held in a few weeks to review these indicators. For those

indicators that were not upgraded, the IAEG provided additional feedback to the custodian agencies on the steps required to upgrade them. A complete list of the indicators that were reviewed and the IAEG-SDGs' decisions can be found in the presentation on the meeting website.

IV. Methodological development of tier III indicators

11. This agenda item highlighted some of the progress being made on the methodological development of several Tier III indicators. Presentations were made by FAO, UNFPA, UNISDR, UN-Water, UN-Women, UN-WTO, the World Bank, Conservation International and OPHI on progress being made on some of Tier III indicators.

12. Some highlights from these presentations included FAO conducting a global consultation on the definition of small-scale food producer, UNFPA continuing to work to finalize the methodology for indicator 5.6.2, UNISDR working on finalizing the methodology for the Sendai indicators (the final one of which was upgraded from Tier III to Tier II at this meeting), and the work of Conservation International on implementing the proposed methodology for the indicator on land degradation in several African countries. All presentations made on these methodological developments can be found on the website of the 6th IAEG-SDG meeting.

V. Data collection calendars and NSO SDG contact persons

13. This agenda item presented two initiatives of the IAEG-SDGs designed to improve transparency and coordination in the transmission of data and information from the national to global level. In accordance with the request of the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 48th session, the secretariat, on behalf of the IAEG-SDGs, requested custodian agencies to provide a list of national agencies providing data to the international system and share data collection calendars in order to ensure the full traceability of data used in international sources. Custodian agencies were also asked to provide a focal point for each indicator. Information for over 100 indicators has been received and will be made available in advance of the forty-ninth session of the Statistical Commission.

14. The second initiative was the compilation of National Statistical Offices' SDG contact person(s). This initiative aims to facilitate the central coordination role of the national statistical offices. The contact person(s) will be kept systematically informed, via email, when custodian agencies are collecting, processing and disseminating data for SDG indicators. The secretariat requested this information on a voluntary basis from NSOs and will continue to compile this information on an ongoing basis. The information received on these contact persons will be shared with the international agencies responsible for the collection, processing and dissemination of SDG data.

VI. Guidelines on data flows and global data reporting

15. This agenda item discussed the IAEG-SDGs draft guidelines on data flows and global data reporting and inputs received for this process. The IAEG-SDGs was tasked by the Statistical Commission at its 48th session (Decision 48/101 (I)) to develop guidelines on how custodian agencies and countries can work together to contribute to the data flows necessary to have harmonized statistics. The first presentation was made by Mr. Sven Kaumanns from Germany, the co-chair of the drafting group for the development of the guidelines of the IAEG-SDGs, who presented the IAEG-SDG's first draft guidelines on data flows and global data reporting. Some of the general principles and issues included in the draft guidelines were that national data should be used whenever possible; if other data is to be used or estimates or adjustments are made, countries are consulted and provided with the methodology and that they are made in a transparent manner; the development of a common timetable with reasonable and workable timeframes; how to treat non-responses from countries; proposing different options in order to give both countries and custodian agencies the needed flexibility. Finally, the IAEG-SDGs proposed to split the document into two: the first document would be on the data reporting guidelines, while the second document would be a compilation of best practices on data reporting that would be a living document and continuously updated.

16. Following the presentation from Mr. Kaumanns, Ms. Angela Me, co-chair of Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) presented CCSA's document outlining guiding principles of data reporting and data sharing for the global monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This presentation highlighted the role international agencies play in reporting and stressed that agencies want to work with countries in order to improve the data reporting system, to reduce the reporting burden on countries and to increase coordination and communication in order to resolve the issues related to international data series and country adjusted and estimated data.

17. Two presentations on case studies on data flows were also included in this section. The first was made by Ms. Claire Plateau, the IAEG-SDG representative from France, who presented the results of the UNECE case studies and the second was made by the Secretariat, summarizing the key points from the IAEG-SDG's case studies on data flows. These case studies highlighted the different ways data are transmitted from the national to the global level and also the ways in which adjusted and estimated data are validated. The results of these case studies will provide valuable inputs to the guidelines and the best practices documents on data flows that will be prepared by the IAEG-SDGs.

18. Following the series of presentations, the discussion focused on several key points. The first was the need for data validation when data are adjusted or estimated, and the need for guidelines on how this validation will take place and what to do if the countries do not agree with the adjusted/estimated value. The second key point highlighted by many during the discussion was the recognition that these guidelines do not need to start from scratch, but should build upon the work that has already been completed. Many countries and agencies noted that data reporting and validation took place during the MDG period and before, and

the lessons learned from these experiences should be incorporated into these guidelines. Finally, it was stressed by many of the need for both countries and custodian agencies to follow the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Discussion on how “non-official” data can be incorporated into the data reporting and monitoring framework also took place.

19. After the discussion on the data reporting guidelines, there was a brief review of the way forward. The IAEG-SDGs plans to incorporate the comments and suggestions received during the discussion at the meeting and produce a revised draft of the guidelines document that will be shared in mid-December via a global consultation with countries and custodian agencies. This consultation will last until early January, after which the IAEG-SDGs will compile, review and incorporate the comments and suggestions into a final version of the guidelines that will be prepared as a background document to the 49th session of UNSC by mid-February. An initial version of the best practices document will be prepared during 2018 and posted on the IAEG-SDGs website. This document will be a living document that will be updated as new best practices are identified and shared.

VII. SDG implementation and reporting at national, regional, global and thematic levels

20. This agenda item included a series of presentations from countries, regional organizations, international organizations and stakeholders on the work taking place on SDG implementation and reporting at the national, regional, global and thematic levels. A total of 15 presentations were made during this agenda item: 7 by countries; 2 by regional organizations; 3 by international organizations; and 3 by stakeholders. On national reporting, countries have already begun implementing the 2030 Agenda and have domesticated both the global targets and indicators to their own national realities. Several countries highlighted that they either have already presented at the HLPF or are planning to do so in 2018. In addition, a couple of countries highlighted the national data reporting platforms they have developed and are using for reporting on the SDGs.

21. The presentations from regional and international agencies focused on their reporting at the regional, global and thematic levels. Many agencies highlighted the capacity building support they are providing to countries in order to increase national data availability and other initiatives designed to improve reporting on the SDGs. UNESCO discussed their thematic reporting on education indicators, where there are 43 indicators that will be included in the thematic monitoring for Goal 4, while also highlighting the continued methodological work on the global indicators under this goal. The Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat) presented their work on preparation of their first report on SDGs and capacity building. UNSD presented the global SDG progress report and database and the technical assistance activities carried out by the UN Statistics Division.

22. The three presentations by stakeholders highlighted several aspects of SDG reporting and implementation. The presentation by Open Data Watch highlighted the importance of ensuring that all data is open and focused on the production of gender and gender

disaggregated data. The presentation by the Women’s Major Group likewise focused on their ongoing work to increase the availability of gender disaggregated data. Finally, the presentation by the business sector highlighted the ways in which they can contribute to the implementation and reporting of the SDGs. All presentations made during this agenda item can be found on the meeting website.

VIII. Annual refinements of the global indicators

23. This agenda item presented refinements for three indicators that the IAEG-SDGs will propose for consideration at the 49th session of UNSC. These refinements comply with the criteria for annual refinements: that they are minor in nature and do not affect the overall meaning of the indicator. A set of refinements proposed by the United States of America was also discussed during this agenda item, but the IAEG-SDGs determined that it would need additional time to review these proposals and would make a decision on these proposed refinements in the coming weeks during the Webex meeting. The three proposed refinements can be found in the presentation of this agenda item on the website of the 6th meeting.

IX. Data disaggregation

24. Mr. Sven Kaumanns from Germany, the co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs work stream on data disaggregation, introduced this agenda item. He presented a review of the work that the IAEG has undertaken so far, including a stocktaking exercise and the identification of key challenges that need to be addressed. The presentation by Mr. Kaumanns highlighted the immense challenges with disaggregating data by the many dimensions included in the framework and what this would potentially mean for the number of data series that would need to be produced. His presentation concluded by highlighting some general recommendations including the need for a “minimum disaggregation” as a starting point and the idea to not overly standardize disaggregation: Different groupings will be needed for different indicators and some disaggregation might be required on national level rather than on global level. In such cases the existence of disaggregated information itself is more relevant than its harmonisation. In addition, it was recommended to work with expert groups and custodian agencies to use their expertise in order to better implement disaggregation principles and guidelines into the global indicator framework.

25. Following the presentation by Mr. Kaumanns on the IAEG-SDG’s work on data disaggregation, a presentation was made by the International Organization for Migration on the work being undertaken by an expert group on how to integrate migration statistics and disaggregation by migratory status into SDG reporting. This presentation highlighted one of the groups that IAEG-SDGs would hope to receive inputs from in order to develop their data disaggregation guidelines.

26. There was also a statement made from the stakeholders on the importance of data disaggregation for ensuring that no one is left behind. The presentation highlighted the need for disaggregated data in order to ensure that the most vulnerable are being reached. The

stakeholder group also offered their expertise to the IAEG-SDGs and looks forward to working with them on the development of the data disaggregation guidelines.

27. There was a brief discussion following these presentations that highlighted the work on data disaggregation being undertaken by many custodian agencies and countries and also the agreement on the way forward for this work stream. The IAEG-SDGs will plan to develop a mechanism to request and receive inputs from the different expert groups, custodian agencies and stakeholders working on these issues and plans to develop a background document on the guidelines for data disaggregation that would be submitted to the 50th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2019.

X. IAEG-SDGs Webex meeting on 28 November 2017

28. The IAEG-SDGs held a Webex call on 28 November 2017 to follow up on several pending issues from the 6th meeting of the IAEG-SDGs. The main items discussed during the call were the remaining tier reclassification requests of Tier III indicators that were not decided upon at the 6th meeting, a review of tier classification for indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 requested by one member of the group, a review of the refinements proposed by the United States of America and the proposal by Ramsar to be a co-custodian agency for indicator 6.6.1.

29. At the Webex meeting, the IAEG-SDGs reviewed the tier reclassification requests for eight Tier III indicators and invited the custodian agencies to make brief presentations (UNCCD, WHO/UNICEF, FAO and UN-Habitat made presentations during the meeting). After deliberations, the IAEG decided that indicators 3.b.1 and 15.3.1 will be reclassified as Tier II, while the remaining six indicators (11.3.2, 11.7.1, 11.a.1, 12.3.1, 14.6.1 and 14.b.1) will remain at Tier III. The IAEG-SDGs communicated these decisions to the custodian agencies along with the reasons for their decision and the necessary steps the custodian agencies will need to take for the indicator to be upgraded.

30. The IAEG considered a proposal from one member to review the tier classification for indicators 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. After internal consultations and reviewing the data availability, the IAEG decided to maintain indicator 2.1.1 as a Tier I indicator and to move indicator 2.1.2 to Tier II due to issues related with data availability.

31. The IAEG-SDGs considered the list of refinements proposed by the United States of America. After a thorough review of all proposals, the group decided to accept one of these proposals and will put it forward at the 49th session of UNSC. This refinement is for indicator 16.1.3: *Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months* and proposes to change it to: *Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence, and (c) sexual violence, in the previous 12 months.*

32. The final item on the agenda was the proposal to add Ramsar as a co-custodian (along with UN Environment) for indicator 6.6.1: *Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time*. There was general consensus among all IAEG-SDG members to make this change and the group asked the secretariat to communicate this decision to both Ramsar and UN Environment and asked them to work together on the methodological development for indicator 6.6.1.

XI. Way forward and conclusion of meeting

33. The IAEG-SDGs next steps (December 2017 – March 2018) and work plan for 2018-2019, as presented in the IAEG-SDGs report to the 49th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, are provided below for reference.

Next Steps:

1. Finalization of the Guidelines on Data reporting:
 - Members submit any additional comments and revisions of paper – by 21 November
 - Updated draft circulated for open consultation (to both countries and custodian agencies) – December 2017 – 10 January 2018
 - Finalize background document for submission to UNSC49 – 15 February 2018
2. Review requests by IAEG members on additional indicators to be reviewed, and provide comments on possible reclassification
3. Review suggested refinements proposed by United States and provide comments on these proposals
4. Finalize the updated tier classification – by the end of November

Work Plan – March 2018-March 2019:

- (a) Continue the review of workplans for tier III indicators and reclassify indicators when requirements are met at the two physical meetings and via Webex meetings throughout the rest of the year based on a calendar to be developed by the group;
- (b) Conduct an open consultation and finalize the proposal for additional indicators to be presented as part of the comprehensive review for consideration by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-first session in 2020;
- (c) Begin work on the comprehensive review by compiling a preliminary list of possible changes, refinements and deletions to the indicator framework for an open consultation in mid-2019;
- (d) Continue the work of the joint subgroup of the IAEG-SDGs and the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by reviewing data availability and capacity building needs for Tier I and II indicators;
- (e) Establish a mechanism for discussion with specialized groups and custodian agencies in relation to the specific data disaggregation dimensions (ex. age, sex, disability, etc.) and finalize document for consideration at the fiftieth session of the Statistical Commission in 2019;
- (f) Continue the work of the three working groups, on statistical data and metadata exchange (SDMX), geospatial information and interlinkages;
- (g) Develop a document on best practices for the data flows between countries and custodian agencies;
- (h) Hold two meetings, the first in the first-quarter of 2018 and the second in the fourth-quarter of 2018, on dates to be determined, and continue to interact electronically and through teleconferences, as needed.

Annex 1 – Agenda

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Statistics Division

ESA/STAT/AC.344/1/Rev.1

8 November 2017

Sixth Meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

13 – 14 November 2017

Venue: Diplomat Radisson Blu Hotel
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Plenary Session Provisional Agenda

Monday, 13 November 2017

*Registration and collection of badges for IAEG-SDG observers and other stakeholders
(8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.)*

Morning session (9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)

1. Opening remarks (9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.)
 - Dr. Ahmed Hashim Alyushaa, General Director of Research, Coordination and Follow-up at the Royal Court, Kingdom of Bahrain and Member of Board of Trustees, DERASAT
 - Ms. Francesca Perucci, Chief of Statistical Services Branch, United Nations Statistics Division
 - Mr. Enrique Ordaz, Co-Chair of the IAEG-SDGs
2. Update on the new membership and co-chair of the IAEG-SDGs (9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.)
3. Updates on the work of the three working groups of the IAEG-SDGs: SDMX, Geo-spatial information and Interlinkages and the Joint sub-group of the IAEG and HLG-PCCB (9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.)

Coffee Break (10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.)

4. Presentation of the updated tier system (10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
 - Tier re-classification based on regional and global data availability
 - Tier III indicators re-classified based on advancements in methodology

Lunch (12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.)

Afternoon session (1:30 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.)

5. Progress by custodian agencies and stakeholders on methodological development and other implementation activities on SDG indicators (1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.)
6. International agencies data collection calendar and compilation of NSOs' SDG data contact persons (3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)
 - Review of results of the survey
 - Requests for SDG data contact person at NSOs
 - Next steps

Coffee Break (3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.)

7. Guidelines on data flows and global data reporting (3:45 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.)
 - Inputs to IAEG draft guidelines
 - CCSA document
 - IAEG case studies on data flows for selected indicators
 - UNECE case studies on data flows
 - IAEG draft guidelines

Side Event on Ageing Statistics (organized by UN Women) (5:45 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.)

Tuesday, 14 November 2017

Stakeholder Briefing (8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.)

Morning session (9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

8. SDG implementation and reporting at national, regional, global and thematic levels (presentations by countries, regional commissions, UNSD and stakeholders) (9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.)

Coffee Break (11:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.)

8. SDG implementation and reporting at national, regional and global levels (continued) (11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.)

9. Annual refinements of indicators (*12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.*)

Lunch (12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.)

Afternoon session (1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.)

10. Data disaggregation (*1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.*)

- Work plan on data disaggregation
- Harmonization of categories for data disaggregation for the global indicators
- Ongoing data disaggregation work by other groups/organisations

Coffee Break (3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

11. Work plan, next steps and IAEG-SDG's report to the 49th session of UNSC (*4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.*)

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