

**Statement of the United States of America  
Post-2015 Session on Indicators**

**Delivered by U.S. Coordinator for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Tony Pipa  
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**Indicator Statement**

- We want to start today, Mr. Co-Facilitator, by offering our thanks for the hard work that both of you have done in organizing the sessions this week. As we have emphasized previously, we place **a high priority on the interactivity of our sessions** and on the opportunity to openly dialogue with our colleagues. We thank you for crafting sessions like the panel this morning and those that will follow in the days ahead this week.
- We want to recognize the efforts being put forward by you and by the Statistical Commission in focusing attention and thinking on measurement and indicators, and we celebrate the move to get started early. With the MDGs, it took a period of years to build the sort of momentum around measurement and data that we are already experiencing. It will serve us well to have built this momentum, and it is important to have the opportunity to offer some guidance in this respect.
- Having said that, I want to add our voice to others emphasizing that we do not see it as the role of this assembly to come to political agreement on a set of indicators.
- It is important that **the process of selecting indicators be driven by technical experts**, and allow them the time, space, and flexibility necessary to design the best and most widely-supported indicators possible.
- We have heard the Statistical Commission's call that their process will necessitate work beyond March 2015, and beyond September 2015, and we support them in the road map to March 2016 that they have set out. We are grateful for the concentrated and rapid efforts that have resulted in the preliminary survey results that we have had the opportunity to review for today, and as they have asked, we do not consider the preliminary survey results as a proposal, and we look forward to the work of the expert group.
- We do recognize however that **our process and conclusions here can deeply affect – and even guide - the work of the Statistical Commission. It is also important that we understand the impact of how our targets are presented and structured, and how well that sets us up for success in accelerating and measuring our progress.** What they specify, how many concepts are included, the extent to which they overlap with one another – these and many other characteristics of our targets will guide the requirements of our indicators.
- To exemplify this, our initial review suggests that embedded within our 169 targets, we have articulated approximately 371 discrete intended outcomes. This demonstrates the challenges

of the integrated agenda we are pursuing, and highlights the importance of ensuring our targets achieve a common standard of measurability and achievability. This will help our technical experts as they develop indicators, and ensure we are delivering an agenda that will mobilize focused action in collaborative and coordinated fashion from us all, helping countries successfully accelerate their progress.

- It is in this spirit that we look forward to discussing our targets later this week. Here, we simply note the significant interconnections between these two topics.
- It is also in this spirit, that we **see great opportunity in defining and agreeing upon guiding principles** for our indicators - principles that support an ongoing and flexible learning process for the development of the indicators, each part of the broader follow up and review framework.

### Principles

- We expect that we will collectively bring further development and clarity to these principles over the coming months, and look forward to further conversation on the topic during our May session and again after. Preliminarily, we would include and emphasize the following characteristics:
  - **First, flexibility.** The indicator and monitoring framework should be clear, flexible, and achievable, and should enable evidence-based decision-making in support of the agenda at all levels.
  - **Second, measuring outcomes.** Robust indicators should be scientifically sound, and it should be the priority to measure outcomes – rather than inputs – as specified within each target.
  - **Third, capturing the intent of the targets.** More than one indicator may be necessary to monitor effectively any given target. Only 30% of targets at this stage include a quantified metric. Proxy measures will likely be necessary, and imprecision will lead to proxy measures that can easily proliferate.
  - **Fourth, integration.** Where practical, indicators should attempt to address multiple targets at once – though as our analysis mentioned earlier suggests, this will be a challenge given the expansive nature of our targets. This will underscore the integrated nature of the agenda and will simplify the task of monitoring.
  - **Iteration.** Indicators should help to monitor incremental progress (or setbacks) over time and thereby allow course corrections rather than being seen as simple measurements of success or failure.
  - **Multiple and Complementary Levels of Indicators.** It will be important for the Statistical Commission's process to deliver a set of indicators that are globally applicable, providing a platform for comparability and thematic analysis, which our experience with the MDGs has demonstrated to be so powerful and transformative in accelerating our progress. It will be important for those global indicators to be rigorous and focused. National and regional levels can be complementary, as others have said. Countries should be free and encouraged to add indicators at the country or regional level that are meaningful for their purposes, such as policy formation and implementation, and program design and monitoring. It will be important to get the

balance right among these different levels of indicators, and we see this as an important topic in our May Follow-Up and Review session.

- **Data Disaggregation.** In our analysis, we found at least 37 groups of individuals, business, countries, or geographies singled out for added focus. As has been pointed out earlier by others, data disaggregation will thus be critical to being successful with our indicators.
- **Data Availability.** Beyond publicly-available datasets, national governments should also pass freedom of information legislation, publish government budgets, expenditures, and results, and provide information and data on natural resource extraction. Such interventions are powerful and effective tools for improving accountability for the effective use of development resources.

### **Building a Data Ecosystem:**

- Finally a word on building a data ecosystem. We also strongly believe that data and indicators from existing reporting mechanisms should be used where possible, to avoid extra layers and greater burdens in reporting. It is vital to take time to assess the nature of the information we need, where it is already being collected or could most easily be collected, and to explore ways to link or align existing mechanisms in a more focused, deliberate, and cumulative way.
- Data come from a wide range of public and private sources, and we should be developing a system that leverages the data available from decentralized sources. Official national statistics, in particular, should be available for analysis and interpretation by a wide variety of stakeholders, who might add and layer different types of data – and our system should maximize the lessons that can be drawn from such activity. Such a “data ecosystem” would better link data generation, analysis, use, feedback, and accountability, and is a much better alternative than trying to centralize and control data through one collection and reporting mechanism, which would be costly and ineffective.
- Doing this well may require **greater investments in building national statistical capacities and strengthening quality and standards at all levels.** We will need to make information and data more relevant, disaggregated, adaptable and accessible, particularly in order to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable are met – and no one is left behind.
- There are many related topics that we did not address here, and we look forward to continuing this important conversation in future sessions discussing follow up and review. Many thanks.