

**Intervention delivered by H.E. Ambassador Guillermo Rishchynski, Permanent Representative, Canada**

**Session on Indicators– March 24, 2015**

Canada joins others in thanking the UN Statistical Commission for providing the technical update on its ongoing efforts to develop an indicator framework. We fully recognize that this is very much a work in progress, and much remains to be done. Without a doubt, the challenge is immense, and we are grateful for the professionalism and commitment of the Commission in carrying this work forward.

We also understand that the Commission is looking to member states for “broad political guidance” for its future work on the global indicator framework, so allow me to share a few thoughts here.

Canada believes the Commission should be given the necessary time and space to develop a robust and high-quality indicator framework. This includes recognizing that the indicator framework will only be ready in 2016. In addition, the Commission has recommended that a global indicator framework requires a “limited number of indicators” in order to be manageable, and that refinements to the framework may be needed periodically. We agree with this assessment.

With respect to the ratings of the proposed provisional indicators contained in the Commission’s technical report, we are pleased to see that a number of indicators (16%) received a “triple A” rating. However, Canada has noted that more than 30% of indicators scored poorly on feasibility and were only “somewhat relevant” to the target that they were supposed to measure. There could be a number of reasons for this, including that the Commission only had limited time to develop these provisional indicators. And we have to consider that some of our proposed targets may not be as clear and measurable as they could be.

On the way forward proposed by the Commission, we support the creation of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators. And we encourage this group to reach out – beyond its formal membership – and draw from technical expertise across civil society, the private sector and other international organizations. For example, Canada emphasizes the important work of the World Health Organization, as well as the Accountability Work-stream updating the global strategy on women, children and adolescent health.

We also heard yesterday that the capacities of national statistical systems - in developing countries in particular - will need to be strengthened to allow them to report on indicators. In the first place, we must be careful not to place unreasonable burdens on already overstretched statistical systems. In addition to north-south cooperation, we also encourage south-south, trilateral cooperation, and the engagement of other relevant stakeholders from civil society and the private sector to help tackle this significant challenge.

Finally, let me reiterate that Canada firmly believes that the development of indicators should be left to the technical experts and led by the Commission. They are best placed to identify and define indicators that would enable us to collect, compare and analyze reliable data, at an adequate level of disaggregation. With respect to the package that we adopt in September, we should resist the temptation to include a partial indicator framework or an incomplete list of indicators. Rather, as suggested yesterday by Switzerland, we could reference the work that will subsequently be done to develop an indicator framework, and set out the principles for this work.

Before closing I would like to briefly address Canada's position on a technical review of targets. We are not trying to use a technical proofing as a way of re-opening the discussion on goals at this time, or more specifically as a way of reducing the number of goals or targets. Our aim - rather - is to ensure that we have strong targets. As many noted yesterday, implementation will ultimately determine our success. So from this perspective, we believe that we need technical experts to assess the extent to which the proposed targets are measurable, achievable and consistent with existing standards and agreements. We have taken note of the technical proofing of 19 targets submitted by the UN task team, and will have more to say on this later this week.

We look forward to continuing our constructive discussions on this important issue.