



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

E-mail australia@un.int

150 East 42nd Street, New York NY 10017-5612 Ph 212 - 351 6600 Fax 212 - 351 6610 www.AustraliaUN.org

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Follow up and Review

Statement by Kushla Munro, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

(check against delivery)

Thank you co-facilitator,

At our session in May, there was broad consensus on **three principal elements** that would make for a good follow-up and review system.

- Firstly, that the Inter Agency Expert Group and UN Statistical Commission take forward its work on the development of global indicators **as part of a technical process** and that a technically robust set of global indicators would enable high level trend reporting against this agenda.
- Secondly, that the follow up and review chapter **should lay out grounding principles and broad parameters for the system but go no further at this stage.**
- Lastly, as raised by our Indian colleague in May, the system should be **'lean, but not mean' – one that is efficient and encourages participation by all stakeholders in a constructive spirit.**

With these three elements in mind we have a number of substantive comments to make on the current draft of the follow up and review chapter.

On the **principles** listed in paragraph 3, we appreciate the emphasis on minimising the burden on national administrations, and making use of existing systems and processes.

As called for by CARICOM and Tonga on behalf of the Pacific Small Island Developing States, we would support the inclusion of a reference to SIDS, along with LDCs, as being in particular need of statistical capacity building given their small administrations and dispersed populations.

My delegation notes that the concept of development effectiveness, or the optimal use of development resources to achieve outcomes, is not currently reflected in the principles. Development effectiveness should be included and could be incorporated into principle B.

The remainder of this chapter **goes beyond describing broad parameters** for the follow up and review system and is too prescriptive for us to be comfortable with at this stage.

For example, the proposal to create central guidelines and reporting formats raises the risk of the follow up and review process being centrally-driven towards a compliance approach, rather than a system that encourages a more constructive spirit of engagement through improved learning to deliver results.

It would also appear that one of the fundamental assumptions in this chapter is that national reporting will be aggregated and directly feed into a global monitoring system under the UN.

We think this assumption is flawed. Voluntary national review processes will likely be tailored to national circumstances and by necessity co-opt existing planning and reporting processes. It therefore follows, that national reporting will not necessarily be comparable or able to be considered in aggregate.

This is precisely why the work of the Inter Agency Expert Group to develop a set of global indicators, which will enable consistent measurement across all countries, is so important.

Taking this into account, it is not the aggregation of national and regional reports — or the creation of unnecessary new commissions or agencies — but the extensive network of existing thematic review processes (supplemented by trends detected under the global indicators) that should primarily inform discussions at the HLPF.

On this point, we note that the prototype 2015 Global Sustainable Development Report highlights no less than 36 existing international reports and assessments that largely already cover the spectrum of issues under the SDGs.

For example reports include:

- the Human Development Report, which has focussed in recent years on resilience,
- UNEP's Global Environment Outlook, which examined the environmental aspects of 'the future we want,' and
- the IMF's World Economic Outlook.

Many of these thematic reviews draw on detailed scientific analysis and reflect the complex links between multiple goals and targets.

What we need to do is use what we already have, and use it better.

Improving access to the findings of these existing thematic assessments, and facilitating discussion of them amongst policy makers, should be a key part of the HLPF's role.

Co-facilitators, while we have found this chapter to be helpful in terms of interpreting one possible vision for follow up and review, it is not one we would be able to agree in its current form.

So where should we go from here?

Let's go back to the three elements where we saw broad consensus.

We must recognise the important role of the global indicators in the follow-up and review system. We must safeguard the technical integrity of their development and resist any attempt to subject the indicators to a negotiated political process.

We must focus the chapter on the principles and broad parameters for the follow up and review system.

And we need to recognise and make efficient use of the systems and reporting we already have.

Thank you.