Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG)

Statistical note for the issue brief on:

Conflict Prevention, Post-conflict Peacebuilding and the Promotion of Durable Peace, Rule of Law and Governance*

(draft, 17 January 2014)

1. Main policy issues, potential goals and targets

The TST Issues Brief emphasizes that ‘peace, rule of law and governance issues are interlinked and mutually reinforcing’ and are critical ‘enablers of sustainable development in their own right,’ as well as ‘ends in themselves’. In so doing, the Issues Brief follows an emerging consensus, including that found in the Report of the High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda,¹ the Secretary-General’s 2013 report on the MDGs,² in global thematic consultations³ and in expert consultations.⁴

Several of these reports have proposed goals and targets on peace, rule of law and governance. Other approaches have involved mainstreaming peace, rule of law and governance issues across other development goals, targets and indicators. Underlying both approaches, however, is the agreement that peace, security and justice are universal and declared aspirations for all peoples around the world.

While the MDG indicators did not directly address the measurement of peaceful societies, rule of law and governance,³ it has been increasingly recognized that achievement of the MDGs requires effective, inclusive and accountable governance structures that oversee urbanization and the equitable delivery of social services, such as health, water, sanitation and education. Evidence also indicates that progress on the MDGs is affected by inequalities, violence and weak rule of law. The inclusion of peace, rule of law and governance indicators in a post-2015 framework would represent a significant step towards compilation and reporting of data on key conditions and governance structures associated with most development indicators in the MDG framework.⁵ In this context, national data collection efforts and statistical capacity building is of outmost importance.

The TST Issues Brief lists 15 illustrative targets under the headings ‘peaceful societies’, ‘governance’ and ‘the rule of law.’⁶ While these targets are generally applicable to all countries, countries can set their own pace of improvements as applicable to the national context. At the same time, it is important that consideration of national specificities and contexts forms part of a policy dialogue on how indicators can be tailored most effectively at the national level.

Policy issues include how to select peace, rule of law and governance indicators that capture relevant elements of all of these concepts and, at the same time, can be populated now or in the near future with valid, accurate and comparable data that are salient to sustainable development. This brief covers the current state of international consensus around indicators and the availability of data across the spectrum. In all areas, it is critically important to consider accessibility and disaggregation of indicators in order to reveal inequalities by sex, among groups and geographic areas in achieving the goals and targets.

¹ This Annex was prepared by DPKO, OHCHR, PBSO, RoLU/EOSG, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, UNODC and UN Women.
2. Conceptual and methodological tools

Recent years have seen a high degree of interest and methodological advancement in the measurement of aspects of peaceful societies, rule of law and governance, as well as human rights. Measurements related to the experience of individuals of violence, corruption, discrimination, the use of land and of justice services, budget transparency, business costs and perceptions of government effectiveness, security and social cohesion are increasingly commonplace. Such measurements are increasingly utilized in international development processes, such as the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals of the g7+ group of conflict-affected countries. A broad range of countries have also established their own governance assessments and metrics to measure progress in their national development contexts, including within the context of the MDGs. These have included measurement related to, for example, public administration, democracy, justice, urban governance, human rights and crime.

The methods utilized for data compilation to inform the calculation of these measurements can broadly be classified as i) administrative statistical systems; ii) sample surveys (including population-based and specialized surveys); and iii) expert reviews. In principle, all of these tools could provide data for peace, rule of law and governance-related post-2015 indicators. Given the multi-dimensional nature of peace, the rule of law and governance, each data source type ‘carries particular trade-offs, including between specificity and breadth of context; universal application and context specificity; sensitivity of measurement and comprehensiveness; as well as in regards to considerations like cost, reliability, and measurement’.

Administrative statistical systems. Administrative statistical systems include records and data systems of governance, justice and security institutions. Many existing indicators and frameworks draw upon administrative data. For instance, civil registration and vital statistics collect information on births, deaths (including causes), marriages and divorces, which relate to legal identity, crime, health and dimensions of gender equality in family matters. Administrative systems also collect data on financial expenditure/budgets, land/cadastral records, property rights, licensing, employment and business registration and information related to banking systems. Electoral bodies, voter registries and administrative systems collect relevant information on public participation and numbers and representativeness of government personnel. Administrative records can provide information on homicide rates and the responsiveness of justice.

Sample surveys. Administrative data can only capture some elements of peace, rule of law and governance. Many dimensions of governance, including access to and freedom of information, freedom of speech and assembly and participation in public life are difficult to capture through currently configured administrative systems. Moreover, only a small proportion of crime, corruption, discrimination or abuse of authority is actually reported – whether to a state authority or otherwise. In the case of sexual and gender-based violence, underreporting is estimated to be as high as 70 per cent and even higher in disaster and conflict settings. Victims may not report their victimization due to a range of reasons, including shame, social pressure, associated costs, potential retribution or the lack of trust in the criminal justice system. In addition, in many countries, the majority of legal claims and civil and criminal disputes are resolved through informal and customary mechanisms. Effective measurement of peace, governance and rule of law requires therefore information from multiple sources, including sample surveys. Survey tools can be used to target a range of respondents and thematic areas. Population-based surveys, business surveys, and sector-specific surveys, such as surveys of public servants, have all been used to collect data on peace, rule of law and governance. Sample surveys are an important tool for obtaining data on both the actual experience and the perception of individuals, including of marginalized or difficult-to-reach
groups. Surveys can be useful in identifying perceptions of security. Agricultural censuses can be used to identify land ownership rights, and labour force surveys are useful tools to assess inequalities in wages and access to decision-making positions. Indicators derived from sample survey data also have the advantage that disaggregated results can be calculated when sample sizes allow and relevant respondent information is collected. Indicators derived from administrative data, in contrast, are reliant on disaggregation variables systematically used in national data collection systems. Combining administrative and survey data sources can be useful to detect gaps in realizing human rights that have a significant impact on enjoyment of peace, rule of law and governance. Finally, new forms of technology, such as remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS) or mobile phone data are increasingly used to gather whole-population and sample-based data as well as to visualise trends, hazards and hotspots.

**Expert reviews.** Expert assessments or data collected from key – preferably national – informants can be used to fill data gaps and to obtain qualitative information on issues such as the degree of implementation of, and compliance with, laws and policies, effectiveness of systems and structures, and the prevalence of phenomena that are not easily measured from administrative or survey-based data. These assessments are useful when they are implemented with a standard methodology that ensures a certain level of representativeness and validity. They can be conducted by a range of actors, including government institutions. Examples on the use of expert reviews to measure relevant indicators include civil and political rights and freedom of press, quality of democracy, civil society environment, as well as those included in the Mo Ibrahim Index in Africa and the World Justice Project. Voluntary regimes, such as the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme or Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, provide platforms to promote standards and controls and pool, exchange and compare data related to natural resource management among industry, civil society and government to detect misuse, prevent mistrust and foster transparency as well as demonstrating the contribution of the sector to society. One common form of expert assessment is the ‘structural assessment’ of the existence and content of laws, policies and systems. Structural indicators are able to provide important information about context and organizational frameworks, such as whether a legal framework preventing statelessness exists and the extent to which the institutional, legal and market framework provides secure land tenure and equitable access to land in rural areas. They may also relate to reporting and monitoring mechanisms. In general, however, structural indicators do not provide information about the functioning or effect of a system in practice, are not well suited to providing information about changes over time and are often reliant on the expert assessment of a limited number of individuals.

3. **Existing and new indicators - What is there to build on?**

To date, Member States have undertaken efforts towards the design of different sets of peace, rule of law and governance indicators. United Nations intergovernmental bodies, including the Statistical Commission, have agreed, for example, on indicators on violence against women and gender and requested the development of an international classification of crime for statistical purposes. Similarly, the members of the Security Council have requested improved monitoring of resolution 1325 (2000) through the use of Women, Peace and Security indicators.

International and regional organizations have developed indicators and measurement methodologies covering the rule of law, conflict, land and property security, accountability and governance, human rights, corruption, victimization, juvenile justice, violence against children, human trafficking, media development and democratic representation. Data is being collected for some of these indicators.
Review of this expanding body of work reveals consensus on the definition of key indicators and confidence that such data can be collectable, reliable and comparable. Examples include ‘intentional homicide per 100,000,’ ‘percentage of women subjected to physical or sexual violence,’ ‘percentage of children aged under five years whose births have been registered,’ ‘percentage of persons who think that formal/informal mechanisms to resolve disputes and interpersonal conflict are accessible’ and ‘percentage of persons who have a bank account.’ Some approaches generate ‘composite indices’ from aggregate data, such as the World Bank World Governance Indicators. While a number of such composite indices are in use, indicators in the form of rates, shares or proportions are often better suited for monitoring specific targets. Individual indicators also allow data users to identify drivers of progress and stagnation over time and enable disaggregation by variables such as sex, age and social group in order to reflect differences among population groups.

Countries are increasingly using security, rule of law and governance metrics in national policy planning and there is adequate experience that can define a post-2015 framework in these areas. Depending on which dimensions of peace, governance and rule of law are to be measured, some additional work may be required. For example, while rural land use data is currently collected, efforts are still needed to develop data collection methods to broadly measure possible property rights indicators, such as the percentage of men and women with legally recognized evidence of tenure. In certain areas of governance, such as freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association and information, possible indicators exist but international agreement around definitions might require further effort. Obstacles remain to the collection of reliable and comprehensive data in certain areas, despite their salience to sustainable development, for example on the decisions of informal or customary justice mechanisms.

4. Data requirements, challenges and limitations

Many of the initiatives mentioned above accompany the definition of indicators with the production of datasets. Many UN entities provide datasets using standardized methodologies that cover aspects of peace, rule of law and governance, including birth registration, crime, land use, informal settlements and slum populations, gender equality and businesses. For instance, UNODC compiles and disseminates data for various crime types, criminal justice measures, and experience and perception of corruption; FAO compiles and disseminates statistics on land ownership periodically; the UN Statistics Division collects data on gender equality and housing; and multiple-indicator cluster surveys implemented by UNICEF in partnership with national authorities provide data on birth registration. A number of organizations compile violent deaths data based on incident reporting for countries that have experienced armed conflict in recent years.

The production of international datasets is reliant on national statistical capacity. National capacity when accompanied with a sense of national ownership of statistics ensures the most effective use of statistics for national policy planning, as well as international reporting. While many peace, governance and rule of law indicators are periodically collected by national statistical systems, data availability, quality and capacity remains somewhat variable across countries.

In so far as administrative records are collected for operational purposes, all countries in the world have some form of relevant rule of law and governance data available. The challenge is in their coverage and comparability, and in the collation, analysis and dissemination of relevant statistical measures from underlying data. Countries for which rule of law and governance data collection is often most urgent are typically those in which administrative data is most fractured, including conflict-affected states. In such instances, recourse to surveys is important. National victimization, discrimination, corruption and governance surveys are part of regular production of
official statistics in an increasing number of countries. Victimization survey datasets are available, for example, for over 70 countries worldwide.\textsuperscript{52} While survey data, such as the experience of corruption or perceptions, are frequently collected with the support of various organizations,\textsuperscript{53} there is significant room for official statistics to be strengthened.\textsuperscript{54}

Capacity building is critical to strengthening the availability of peace, rule of law and governance statistics at national level. In order to improve data quality and availability, the international statistical community must work together with governments to improve the quality and availability of data through developing and harmonizing statistical standards and supporting countries to make full use of available administrative records and improve the coordination of different national data producers. The international community can contribute through standard approaches to survey questions and methodologies by supporting and providing statistical capacity building.\textsuperscript{55} Perception data, for example, would benefit from further methodological work, such as standardization of question and response structures. Currently, a number of UN agencies are working to strengthen the capacities of National Statistical Offices and other national authorities\textsuperscript{56} mandated to collect and analyse data related to rule of law, governance, justice and crime.

Other issues that continue to pose measurement challenges include conflict deaths and illicit flows of arms, drugs, finance and natural resources, as well as trafficked persons and smuggled migrants and the effect of informal or customary justice systems. It is also challenging to ensure that the experiences of minorities and hard-to-reach populations, including displaced persons, are fully captured. In the absence of registration systems and survey methodologies, data are often produced from alternative sources, such as media counts, civil society reports, or estimations based on statistical or analytical modelling. Additionally, sex and age-disaggregated measures need to be strengthened for peace, rule of law and governance statistics. In many cases, national statistical systems should be encouraged not only to compile the information but also to report it systematically. In other cases, additional efforts are needed to ensure sex and age-disaggregated registration and large enough sample sizes to obtain such measures from surveys.

It is particularly important to support data collection efforts that are undertaken following the principles of transparency and independence as advocated by the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics recently approved by ECOSOC.

Finally, in selecting targets, indicators and data sources, consideration must be given to the need to avoid perverse incentives, and to achieve appropriate balances among security, civil and political rights and inclusion in a manner consistent with international law and human rights.\textsuperscript{57} Measuring factors such as the number of security personnel, judges, or lawyers per 100,000 population, for example, does not provide any information about the capacity or professionalism. Conviction rate measures do not say anything about the quality of justice.

5. Conclusions

Measuring peace, rule of law and governance is feasible and necessary to guarantee the achievement of all development goals. A number of core indicators related to these concepts have been defined through international processes and are in use at the national and international levels.

For aspects that traditionally have been harder to measure or where there have been less focused efforts, some indicator proposals exist, and robust monitoring processes are feasible, subject to some strengthening of existing methodological approaches. Additionally, national ownership over the development of indicators on peace, governance and rule of law and support for the capacities of national institutions are central to measuring these issues in the context of the post-2015 agenda.
The close linkages between peace, rule of law and governance, and other development measures, highlight that the effective incorporation of related indicators to the post-2015 development framework is necessary, along with the continued production of relevant and reliable peace, rule of law and governance data. Capacity building is key in this respect, and the international community should continue to offer its support to the strengthening of national statistical systems.

Endnotes


3 See http://www.myworld2015.org/?page/results


5 Although it should be noted that Goal 3 (Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women) included the indicator ‘Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament.’


7 These include, under peaceful societies:, reduction of violent deaths and injuries; elimination of violence against children, women and other vulnerable groups; provision of adequate dispute resolution mechanisms; reduced inequalities; reduced external drivers of conflict. Under rule of law: universal legal identity, independence and increased responsiveness of justice and security institutions; increased capacity and professionalism of security institutions; extended access to secure rights to land, property and assets; and equal inheritance and contract rights for women. Under governance: reduced corruption, and accountability of public officials; increased political participation, universal freedom of expressions, association, and peaceful assembly; right to information; and enhanced state capacity and accountability regarding natural resources.


11 See UNDP Governance Assessment Portal (http://www.gaportal.org/) generally, see also for example, the development of MDG 9 on Governance and Human Rights in Mongolia available on the portal.

12 For example, the Strategy for Harmonization of Statistics in Africa Initiative seeks to build ownership and capacities of national statistics offices in the region on indicators related to governance and security.


Data from administrative sources, event based data reports, or surveys regarding acts such as arbitrary killings, torture, or other forms of ill-treatment of forced evictions are essential in assessing the effectiveness of conflict prevention and governance and rule of law systems.

See http://www.freedomhouse.org/.

See https://v-dem.net/.

See https://civicus.org/Civicus

Covering four over-arching categories (safety and rule of law; participation and human rights; sustainable economic opportunity, and human development) with 88 measures, many of them other experts assessments.


For example, when they reflect States’ reporting obligations to human rights treaty bodies and United Nations human rights mechanisms.

For further discussion on structural indicators in this context see UNODC, 2013. Accounting for security and justice in the post-2015 development agenda, p.50-51.


See http://www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/indicators


See 2010 Secretary-General’s report on Women, Peace and Security (pp. 15-21):


See UNHABITAT Global Land Tool Network, http://www.glt.net/

World Bank Group, 2013. Worldwide Governance Indicators. Available at:


UNESCO, 2008. Media Development Indicators. Endorsed by the intergovernmental council of the international programme for the development of communication.

Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013. Indicators for Democratic Parliaments Project.


The United Nations Statistics Division is responsible for collecting official national statistics on housing stock and housing conditions generated from population and housing censuses. See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/housing/default.htm

See http://www.unece.org/unesco/statistics/index_24302.html

See, for example, the IISS Armed Conflict database, the UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset and PRIIO Battle-Deaths Data.

The UNODC Global Study on Homicide 2011, for example, made use of publicly available administrative criminal justice data from 143 countries. In the context of the Americas, 18 countries systematically submit administrative and survey-based data on public safety for the reporting of citizen security indicators to the ‘Sistema Regional de Indicadores Estandarizados de Convivencia y Seguridad Ciudadana.’


See for example Diagnostic Surveys on Corruption conducted by the World Bank and UNODC corruption and integrity surveys; and Global Corruption Barometer produced by Transparency International. Available at:

http://www.transparency.org/research/gcb/overview

See reference in endnote 17. See also World Bank Justice Population and Institutional User Surveys. Available at:

http://go.worldbank.org/NGQKXOVHH0

Such guidance is provided, for example, in the UN-DESA Manual for the Development of a System of Criminal Justice Statistics and the UNODC-UNECE Manual on Victimization Surveys. A road map to improve crime statistics and the international crime classification system has already been approved by the Statistical Commission. See Economic and Social Council, 2012. Report of INEGI and UNODC to improve the quality and availability of crime statistics at the national and international levels. UN Doc. E/CN.3/2013/11.

Examples include the SHaSA (Strategic Harmonization of Statistics for Africa) project that brings together National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in the region to design and implement surveys and collect data on indicators for governance, peace and security and also the work of the UNODC-INEGI Centre for Excellence for Statistical information on Governance, Public Security and Justice in Mexico.

See Rio+20 Outcome Document, The future we want. GA Res 66/288. Member States stressed the need for goals to be ‘consistent with international law’ (para. 246), including human rights.