

Swiss Working Paper on Monitoring and Review for the Post-2015 Agenda

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This document constitutes a working paper that will be further elaborated as discussions evolve. In this regard, it remains flexible and does not constitute a Swiss position for future negotiations.

“Shortfalls have occurred not because the goals are unreachable, or because time is too short. We are off course because of unmet commitments, inadequate resources and a lack of focus and accountability.” (United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon)

Key messages:

- An overall monitoring and review framework for the implementation of all goals and targets including those related to means of implementation must be an integral part of the post-2015 sustainable development framework.
- Therefore, we need to adopt a coherent approach for the post-2015 negotiations, the Ff(S)D process and in the HLPF Meeting in June/July 2015 on monitoring, follow-up and review.
- A monitoring and review framework for the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda (Post-2015 Agenda) should be based on the following principles: universality, incentive- and evidence-based, state-led, effectiveness and efficiency, regular periodicity and multi-level, participation and inclusiveness, transparency, results-oriented.
- The elaboration of a monitoring and review framework should learn from and build on existing monitoring and review mechanisms.
- Such a framework consists of (1) monitoring of sustainable development goals/targets based on indicators to assess progress and results, and (2) a qualitative review on progress in implementation, including mutual learning about underlying causes of successes, challenges and constraints for the realization of goals.
- The **national level** is the foundation of the overall monitoring and review framework. Data is a key building block to a robust and evidence-based monitoring and review framework. **Regional reviews**, adapted to each region's terms and needs, can provide added value and increase ownership.
- At the **global level**, a universal mechanism for regular monitoring, review and progress reporting of the achievement of goals should be established under the umbrella of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in order to guide and support all relevant actors towards the realization of the SDGs.
- Assessing progress towards implementation of the goals should **generate attention at the highest political level and mobilize action, at the HLPF under the auspices of the UN General Assembly during the High-Level Week every 4 years.**
- Knowledge exchange on the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda shall be promoted at the **annual** HLPF meetings, notably through **country reviews** across the 5 UN regions based on national reporting.
- The annual HLPF meetings also provide a unique opportunity to **review thematic progress** on the Post-2015 Agenda, focusing on the nexus between or a cluster of goals and targets and by drawing as much as possible from existing thematic monitoring and review processes. The overall review should also take into account the Ff(S)D follow-up, and in that context full use should be made of the experience of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

I. Context

The Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda (Post-2015 Agenda) will bring together two separate streams – the post-Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agenda and the work following from the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. The universality of the agenda as well as its breadth combining poverty eradication and sustainable development are two fundamental paradigm shifts.

In order to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development - environmental, economic, social - emphasis will not only be on thematic and sector-specific policies but also on the policy coherence between them. In addition, the importance of promoting human rights, good governance, the rule of law, transparency and accountability at all levels needs to be recognized.¹ The increasingly active role of a broad range of sustainable development actors, including from governments (local to national), philanthropic foundations, international institutions and civil society, business, research and academia needs to be acknowledged. The agenda itself is not legally binding but many of its proposed goals draw on international law. The SDGs can thus reinforce existing international norms and guidelines, and can strengthen existing thematic platforms as well as identify gaps.

Against this background, the Post-2015 Agenda will require a new paradigm for universal monitoring, review and accountability², where all actors are accountable for the achievement of the SDGs, according to their national circumstances. To make these efforts visible and transparent, all actors should be engaged in regular cycles of reporting, reviewing and adjusting conduct. A human rights based approach should be included in the future monitoring and review framework, as a solid base to ensure that all parts and groups of society benefit equally from the SDGs.

II. Learning from and building on existing structures and processes

The key lesson learned from the MDGs is that monitoring and review processes are crucial to keep track of implementation and progress, facilitate learning and ensure accountability.

A number of broader thematic monitoring systems and policy reviews³ exist, both at regional and global level. The future monitoring and review of the Post-2015 Agenda should (1) take into account best practices and lessons learned and (2) wherever pertinent make use of and build on these existing structures.

A UN analysis⁴ of the SDGs proposed in the OWG and the UNSG Synthesis Report shows that several of the goals and targets are already part of existing monitoring, reporting and review schemes. Some are universally applicable, while others could be adapted to the universal context. The relevant arrangements and platforms related to goals / targets need to be identified and gaps filled.

Some of these arrangements and platforms bring together relevant actors from governments, business, research and academia, the UN System and civil society, such as the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) which provides an innovative model for multi-stakeholder governance that could also be applied to the monitoring and review mechanism of the post-2015 agenda.

¹ See Ministerial Declaration, HLPF Meeting 2014, OP 11.

² See UN SG Report A/68/2012, Vision and transformative actions of the agenda (published 26 July 2013).

³ For example OECD DAC peer reviews where OECD countries are being held accountable for their development cooperation commitments, the UNECE Environmental Performance Reviews, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council, the Trade Policy Review of the WTO, or the Beijing Review on Gender Equality, and other monitoring and review mechanisms of relevant international instruments and/or multilateral agreements.

⁴ TST – Selected Follow-up and Review Processes and Platforms (May 2015):

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7186Short%20matrix%20-%202022.5.pdf>

III. What to monitor and review?

The monitoring and review framework should **apply to all goals as well as all means of implementation, including all aspects of financing**. Therefore, an overall monitoring and review framework for the Post-2015 Agenda requires a coherent approach for the post-2015 negotiations, the Ff(S)D process and in the HLPF Meeting in June/July 2015 on monitoring, follow-up and review.

Indicators are the backbone of monitoring at all governance levels. A sustainable development **indicator-framework**, elaborated by experts in a transparent manner under the umbrella of the UN Statistical Commission and guided by a number of principles, should provide the common basis for a coherent set of indicators to monitor the Post-2015 Agenda.⁵

Indicators must allow for a **disaggregated analysis** of data (by sex, age, occupation, disability, ethnicity etc.)⁶ throughout the SDGs framework. A set of **global indicators**, will need to track the full range and reflect the ambitious political will expressed in the SDGs and targets. The global indicators can be complemented by **national indicators** that are defined according to national contexts. **Strengthening capacity** for relevant and high quality data, monitoring and statistics will be essential for closing key gaps in access and use of information. Initiatives focusing on the data revolution post-2015⁷, including PARIS21⁸, have an important role to play in this regard.

Monitoring of results will need to be complemented by a qualitative review on progress in implementation, including mutual learning about sharing of good practices, underlying causes of successes, challenges and constraints, failures and gaps for the realization of SDGs, both at national and global level. Scientific findings and evidence-based independent evaluations will also be essential to inform the qualitative review. Multi-stakeholder partnerships linked to the goals/targets could be promoted and also regularly reviewed in order to spur implementation.

National as well as global (including thematic) reports based on SDGs monitoring will inform the global review process under the auspices of the HLPF.

IV. Functions of a Monitoring and Review Framework for the Post-2015 Agenda

Monitoring progress on the realization of the SDGs is not an end in itself. A monitoring and review framework of the Post-2015 Agenda should provide support for information sharing, decision making and accelerated implementation by all relevant stakeholders, at the national, regional and global levels, through the following functions:

- Assess and review the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda, including achievements, gaps and challenges;
- Strengthen the knowledge base for sustainable development;
- Foster dialogue, learning and exchange about underlying causes of successes, challenges and constraints, failures and gaps as well as good practices, among all relevant stakeholders and actors including international institutions;
- Provide evidence for high-level policy guidance for the SDGs;
- Ensure high-level visibility and attention of the international community for the SDGs;
- Reinforce responsibility of governments and contribution of all other actors;
- Identify gaps in mobilizing necessary means of implementation;
- Provide a platform to identify/encourage partnerships;
- Increase coherence, collaboration, efficiency and efficacy of the UN System and other actors in providing support to implement the Post-2015 Agenda.

⁵ See adopted roadmap at the 46th Session of the UN Stats Commission and the proposed establishment of Expert Group on SDG Indicators.

⁶ See SDG 17.18 (OWG on SDGs Report)

⁷ See the Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development (IEAG) Report: *Mobilising The Data Revolution for Sustainable Development*

⁸ Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century

V. Key Principles for an efficient and effective monitoring and review framework for the Post-2015 Agenda

Based on previous sections of this document, several **key principles** should be taken into account for an efficient and effective monitoring and review framework:

- **Universality:** The monitoring and review framework must apply to all countries and involve all relevant stakeholders;
- **Evidence-based:** Analysis of progress must base on credible data and evidence;
- **State-led:** Governments have primary responsibility for the implementation of the agenda and are primarily accountable to citizens for their commitments and actions;
- **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Resources must be used in a rational and result-oriented way, duplication with existing mechanisms and processes be avoided and lessons learned from existing mechanisms taken into account;
- **Regular periodicity and multi-level:** The framework should integrate the national, regional and global level in regular cycles of monitoring and review;
- **Participation and inclusiveness:** Participation of all relevant actors at all levels must be ensured (“multi-stakeholder approach”) and their interaction conducted in a constructive spirit and non-discriminatory manner;
- **Transparency:** The monitoring and review of the Post-2015 Agenda should be conducted in an open and transparent manner and the outcomes should be publicly available.;
- **Results-oriented:** Monitoring and review should focus on outcomes/results, and whether investments and efforts aim at ensuring lasting impact;
- **Incentive based:** sharing of experiences, good practices, policy advice, technology and innovations and identifying the necessary means of implementation, a follow-up mechanism at the national level, platforms for partnerships and other structures should be part of the review framework.

VI. Components of an effective and efficient monitoring and review framework for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda

In September 2015, governments should agree on a Post-2015 Agenda with an integrated framework that provides for effective and efficient monitoring, review and follow-up of the Post-2015 Agenda, and which **should meet the functions described in section IV and be guided by the principles identified in section V of this Working Paper.**

The monitoring and review framework for the Post-2015 Agenda needs to be reflected **at the national, regional and global level.** It is important that governments link their national efforts related to SDGs implementation to the regional and global level.

Components of a universal monitoring and review framework:

1. The **national level** is the foundation of the monitoring and review framework, since governments have the primary responsibility to implement the Post-2015 Agenda.

1.1. Data is a key building block to a robust and evidence-based monitoring and review framework. National statistical offices collect data and produce statistics in coordination with other national producers of official data. Existing mechanisms for this purpose should be used where possible. Respective country capacity-building is key and needs to be strengthened. Data needs to be timely, reliable and sufficiently disaggregated.

1.2 Countries should elaborate national strategies/plans to implement the Post-2015 Agenda and be encouraged to communicate national commitments on all SDGs, guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account their national circumstances.

1.3 Broader society, such as civil society, businesses, the scientific community, educational institutions, private philanthropic organizations, foundations and other stakeholders, is expected to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs, including through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Contributions and commitments of national stakeholders should be integrated within national implementation plans.

1.4 Periodic multi-year national progress reports prepared by governments, complemented by information/reports from national stakeholders and relevant UN entities, should form the basis to inform the regional and global level. For these reports, a standardized template covering all SDGs and targets, including consideration of successes, good practices, lessons learned, challenges and constraints countries face in the implementation of the agenda, should guide and simplify reporting.

2. The integration of the **regional level** into the overall monitoring and review framework should be adapted to each region's terms and needs. Regional institutions will have an important role in aggregating existing information from the national reports and other relevant regional institutions. The regional level could serve as preparatory process for the global review, without replacing it. Region-specific reviews as a bridge between the national and the global level can strengthen countries' ownership, however, existing review processes should be used where applicable.

3. At the **global level**, progress and efforts towards the implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda should be reviewed within the framework of the HLPF in regular cycles that allow for tracking progress and possible correction of direction in a timely manner with regard to the achievement of the SDGs and targets.

The annual HLPF meetings under the auspices of ECOSOC should review on implementation processes, while the HLPF meetings under the auspices of the GA must provide high-level political impetus and momentum for implementation.

The HLPF provides for **innovative participation modalities** allowing a wide range of actors, including civil society, businesses, the scientific community, educational institutions private philanthropic organizations, foundations and other stakeholders, drawing from lessons learned as well as building on arrangements and practices of the former Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The HLPF encourages participation of a wide range of organizations of the entire UN system, including the Bretton Woods Institutions and other relevant international organizations, such as the World Trade Organization.

3.1 The HLPF Meeting under the auspices of the UNGA every 4 four years provides an opportunity for high-level stocktaking, political attention and mobilizing action at the highest political (summit) level. This mechanism is to be seen as a place for stimulating actors to keep the level of ambition high.

3.2. Annual meetings of the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC should undertake:

- **Multi-year country reviews in a regular cycle** of 4 years should be informed by submitted reports by governments, stakeholders and the UN. Presentation of results and efforts to realize the goals including means of implementation should be followed by interactive discussions including successes, good practices, lessons learned, challenges and constraints of Member States, civil society groups, business, experts, and representatives of relevant UN agencies and lead to recommendations and guidance by the HLPF. The process could be facilitated by Member States and technically supported by the UN. **In a first 4 year review cycle**, governments would be asked on how they translate the SDGs at the national level, and communicate on their national commitments to implement the post-2015 agenda, and on innovative approaches, including multi-stakeholder collaboration. The national commitments should be guided by the global level of ambition while taking into account respective national circumstances. **In subsequent 4 year review cycles** governments would be asked to share knowledge around implementation of the commitments communicated. The review should be based on criteria for a simple and consistent format for reporting for member states developed by the UN.
- The annual HLPF Meetings also provides a unique opportunity to discuss **and review thematic progress** on the SDGs at global level, focusing on the nexus between or a cluster of goals and targets, drawing from the thematic monitoring and review processes. The HLPF provides a unique opportunity to engage all relevant actors in the currently fragmented landscape of international bodies within and beyond the UN in a

coordinated manner. Thereby synergies will be promoted. It is important to benefit from and build on existing platforms. Given the wealth of existing arrangements there is a need to identify relevant thematic-relevant arrangements. Where no monitoring, reporting and review exist, respective gaps may need to be filled.

The Committee on Food Security is an example of a thematic multi-stakeholder platform that could play a role in the monitoring and review of the SDGs. Other examples include ECOSOC System with its functional Commissions, such as the Commission on Status of Women which undertakes thematic reviews on gender equality taking into account national and regional inputs. Other sectoral/thematic bodies and institutions could be considered. The overall review should also take into account the Ff(S)D follow-up, and in that context full use should be made of the experience of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC).

3.3 A “Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)” should inform the HLPF under the auspices of the UN General Assembly every 4 years, as an in-depth analysis on the advancement of the SDGs, including policy recommendations, based on scientific evidence. **Up-to-date information on the advancement of the SDGs**, including based on the global indicators, needs to be available in order to inform the yearly HLPF meetings under the auspices of the ECOSOC. The HLPF under the auspices of the ECOSOC, moreover, needs to be adequately informed through relevant bodies on the respective issue/s discussed in order to allow informed and evidence-based discussion and policy guidance. This could be in form of an annual edition of the Global Sustainable Development report. As a starting point, SDG baseline reports could be considered in view of the HLPF in 2016.

4. The UN General Assembly, the ECOSOC, relevant sector- and theme-specific institutional arrangements, platforms and bodies and the HLPF should be aligned in time, with meetings scheduled in a logical cycle and aligned in substance. Entities of the UN system will need to contribute to the review of implementation of the SDGs, through their different functions. For successful implementation of the Post-2015 Agenda on the ground, the political level of the UN needs to be linked to the UN development system. By aligning the review and follow-up cycle of the Post-2015 Agenda with the four year cycle of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) resolution, which will be negotiated again in 2016, the HLPF would offer crucial orientation to the UN development system regarding the UN’s specific contribution to implementing the Post-2015 Agenda.