

Statistics for Development Division (SDD)

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SESSION 8 – PACIFIC SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS: AN UPDATE ON DATA AVAILABILITY AND COORDINATION

(Document presented by the Secretariat)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. A set of Pacific Sustainable Development Indicators has been established to guide the measurement and reporting of progress made against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the regional level. After successive rounds of consultations with Pacific Statistics Steering Committee members, Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies, United Nations agencies and sectoral specialists, a set of 132 indicators was created and agreed on by the Pacific SDG Taskforce.
2. All 17 Goals are represented in the Pacific Sustainable Development Indicators although priority is given to the goals relating to health, education, gender equality and the transboundary issues of climate change and oceans.
3. The next phase of work will move from assessing baseline availability and the identification of data sources to the first regional report, which will be delivered in 2018. More detail on the proposed reporting timeline up to 2030 is available in the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development.
4. Effective monitoring of progress will require continued investment in standard household collections, and the exploration and integration of broader administrative datasets that reside outside of formal national statistics systems.
5. The Statistics for Development Division (SDD) will play a coordinating role in the monitoring and reporting of data, and provide a central platform for indicator reporting.

CONTEXT

6. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets that make up the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encompass a wide range of development sectors. They present a rare opportunity for improving statistical coverage and disaggregation in relation to the indicators, and national statistics in general, through well-coordinated and targeted capacity building. For example, standardised disability measures are being incorporated into national statistical systems due to the SDG agenda.

7. All Pacific Island countries have signed on to the 2030 Agenda, and there is an expressed interest in participating in the Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). This follows the success of Samoa, which participated in the first round in 2016, as the first Small Island Developing State to present its VNR. Kiribati will be conducting a VNRs at the 2018 HLPF, along with Australia. Palau, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu expect to nominate in the near future.
8. Pacific Island countries are at various stages in the process of localising SDGs and developing national sustainable development strategies or plans. Part of this process is a country assessment of data availability in the broader national statistics system.
9. Regional reporting will complement country-based national development reporting. Under the Pacific SDG Taskforce (see Information Paper 19), a quadrennial regional reporting timeline for Pacific Island Leaders has been endorsed. The first regional report will be delivered in 2018, and will use the theme of the 2019 HLPF: ‘empowering people to build equal and inclusive societies’.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

10. The development of a set of Pacific Sustainable Development Indicators (n=132), as a subset of the global SDG indicator set, contains some tailored indicators better suited to the Pacific Islands situation. There is a strong focus on transboundary issues, notably those arising in Goals 13 and 14.
11. The development of the Pacific Roadmap for Sustainable Development was an effective collaboration between all stakeholders involved, and was a key deliverable for the Pacific SDG Taskforce (of which the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is the Secretariat and SDD is a member). Forum Leaders endorsed the Roadmap at the 48th Pacific Islands Forum meeting in September in Apia.

CHALLENGES

12. The SDGs have created an unparalleled demand for national and subnational data.
13. ‘Leaving no one behind’ and ‘unfinished business from the MDGs’ are the key tenets driving sustainable development in the Pacific. ‘Leaving no one behind’ implies the necessity for disaggregation of indicators. In many indicators, this disaggregation is explicit, for example:

Indicator 1.2.2 = the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

This will place greater burden on countries, in particular national statistics offices (NSOs), to provide statistics that are more detailed and, in the case of survey data, to adjust sampling frames.

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

14. In collaboration with United Nations agencies and other technical partners operating in the region, SDD will assist NSOs to generate indicators from official data collections and to engage with other ministries to assess other sources of data. It is important that knowledge is shared in the region, and South-South attachments be encouraged and supported.
15. Ongoing capacity building will be required in many NSOs, particularly as new methodologies are developed and released by custodian agencies for Tier II and Tier III SDG indicators. Part of this capacity building will lie in applying administrative datasets to statistical production, with most administrative collections sitting outside of NSOs.

16. The statistical community needs to advocate and raise awareness of the importance of non-traditional data sources to monitoring SDG achievement in countries. A broader reach to other data producers and users will be required to monitor all indicators.
17. SDD will work with PIFS and other CROP and United Nations bodies to draft the 2018 Pacific Sustainable Development Report. This will be the first of four quadrennial reports.
18. SDD is currently testing web tools and platforms to establish an effective and user-friendly regional dissemination tool for SDGs and broader sector statistics. National data can be stored on this and subsequently 'mined' by other regional and global bodies that need to report on SDGs. An element of this project will be, for example, to ensure that global standards, naming code conventions and metadata are included.

RECOMMENDATIONS

19. During this meeting, representatives are encouraged to note:
 - the progress made on developing regional SDG priority areas;
 - the commitment between Pacific SDG Taskforce members, including SDD, to the delivery of the first Regional Report in 2018; and
 - the commitment from SDD to indicator dissemination and to the development and implementation of regional solutions and a shared dissemination platform to progress the existing National Minimum Development Indicators database.