

Post-2015 Data Test

Initial Findings from Canada

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In-Progress Note No. 10

Date: 21 October 2014

OVERVIEW: ENGAGEMENT ON POST-2015

Canada is engaging in United Nations' (UN) preparations for the post-2015 negotiations. To date, much of this participation has been led by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). Canada is championing an agenda based on realistic, focused and measurable targets and indicators, a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable, ensuring a continued emphasis on maternal, newborn and child health in the new agenda, and job creation and economic growth (with a strong role for the private sector). Canada has supported a number of the UN consultations in the lead up to post-2015, including the consultations on education and data and accountability.

While a number of steps have also been taken to coordinate within DFATD and between government departments on the new agenda, the conversation on the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has not been advanced in Canada. Aside from departments more directly engaged in international discussions, domestic stakeholders across sectors are not overly engaged in the post-2015 process, with the exception of more development and environment focussed civil society organizations and academics. Further, the Canadian government has been ambivalent to date with respect to the universality dimension of the post-2015 agenda. Government inputs show a tendency to frame issues from a "development or Millennium Development Goal-like" perspective – i.e. a focus is on maternal, newborn and child health as well as the poorest and most vulnerable in developing countries.

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL POST-2015 PRIORITIES

Our review reveals that of the targets and indicators identified for the Post-2015 Data Test overlap fairly significantly with the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development's (OWG) zero draft SDG framework. Nearly three quarters of the targets and over half of the indicators selected for the broad study (i.e. used by all teams in their analysis) are reflected. With respect to the targets and indicators specific to the Canada case study, two thirds of the targets reflect the zero draft. Less overlap exists with respect to the indicators selected for Canada at one third. However, this is unsurprising given that the OWG's zero draft does not include indicators and the indicators selected for the Canada case study reflect issues specific to Canada.

DATA AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

Overview

Canada has an excellent, relatively independent statistical system and is well placed to measure progress on the post-2015 SDGs. Data availability will only be a challenge to the extent that monitoring requirements for priorities under the international agenda vary significantly from the standard datasets Statistics Canada already produces, which are considerable. Data produced in Canada follows comprehensive data quality assurance guidelines and is typically available at a high degree of disaggregation for core economic and social indicators, including by sex, language, sub-region, and age.

Data availability

In terms of measuring the post-2015 SDGs, most indicators examined under the study are currently available or can be made readily available relatively easily. However, additional efforts will be needed to calculate and report on certain indicators and collect additional information, particularly in the areas of environment,

governance and global partnership for sustainable development.

The data mapping process for the project showed that, in most instances: data were either already available for the indicator; the indicator could easily be calculated from available data; or Statistics Canada was able to calculate the indicator upon request. For 13 of the 45 global indicators included under the study, six of which fall under the goal area related to governance, data would need to be collected either through new survey instruments or by adding an additional question to existing survey instruments. For national level indicators, this follows for 22 of the 92 indicators identified.

Overall, the data mapping showed that data availability for global targets and indicators is excellent for all goal areas with the exception of governance, though some indicators are not readily available and will need to be calculated. For national indicators, a similar trend emerges, however roughly a third of the indicators for goals related to energy and infrastructure and environment will require data collection (though it should also be noted that in comparison to other goal areas, substantially more indicators were identified for Canada in these areas compared to others).

Data quality

For the targets and indicators examined under this study, data on goals related to poverty, education and employment are of excellent quality and very good for all other goal areas. Nevertheless, there is room to improve the relevance of data produced through greater consultation with users across data providers. Unsurprisingly, given its *raison d'être*, sources of data from Statistics Canada identified typically do better in the data quality assessment than data from other government departments.

Global minimum standards

Typically, the global minimum standards are not particularly relevant for Canada. For example, civil registration and primary education are near universal in Canada already and the target of ending extreme poverty as measured by US \$1.25 (PPP) does not make sense in the Canadian context. Nevertheless, there is room for Canada to make progress on ensuring equal pay for equal work. In addition, additional steps could be taken to ensure all people have full access to developed infrastructure, particularly in the northern parts of Canada.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The comparison between Post-2015 Data Test targets and indicators and the OWG draft zero suggests that it will be challenging to construct targets under the post-2015 framework that are relevant and applicable across different country contexts. Similarly, while the Post-2015 Data Test reveals that it is possible to make use of shared “global” indicators, making the post-2015 framework relevant across low, middle and high income contexts will require a high degree of flexibility to allow countries to prioritize issues and effectively measure progress in ways that makes sense from a local perspective.

Moving forward, the architecture of the post-2015 framework should include a global set of targets and indicators that allows for international monitoring on the agenda. However, this should be complimented by nationally determined priorities (targets) and indicators behind which the international community and domestic stakeholders can align their efforts. This approach would ensure that post-2015 framework is both relevant and measurable at the country level and allow countries to determine appropriate national indicators in relation to existing capacities, data availability and priorities. It would also facilitate global monitoring by reducing the overall reporting burden through the use of a select set of global targets and indicators.