



# Southern Voice

2015 On Post-MDG International Development Goals



Southern Voice Post-MDGs 2015

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## Occasional Paper Series

# 43

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## National Level Implications of Implementing SDGs in Paraguay

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# **NATIONAL LEVEL IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING SDGs IN PARAGUAY**

*Southern Voice Occasional Paper 43*

*Verónica Serafini Geoghegan*

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Publisher

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First Published June 2017

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ISSN 2307-9827 (Online)

ISSN 2307-681X (Print)

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# Preface

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*Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals* is a network of 49 think tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Since its inception in 2012, it has served as an open platform to provide structured inputs from the global South into the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, with a view to address the 'knowledge asymmetry' and 'participation deficit' that usually afflict such global discussions.

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was finally adopted at the Seventieth Session of the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015 by the member states. With the 17 new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) placed as oncoming development priorities, *Southern Voice* is currently working to examine national experiences in meeting the early challenges of delivering the 2030 Agenda.

The research programme titled *National Level Implication of Implementing SDGs* is based on call for proposals among its network members, and through a peer process, eleven country studies were commissioned for nine countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. The broad areas of concern of the country papers are the following: (i) investigate the means of mainstreaming the SDGs into national planning process, within the context of its national priorities; (ii) explore the adequacy of coordination, management and leadership of the SDG implementation process, including the monitoring and evaluation mechanism; (iii) examine the adequacy of financing and other specific means of implementing the SDGs; (iv) investigate the extent of partnerships and stakeholder participation, including institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs; and (v) evaluate the capacity of the national statistical agencies and other data-related issues.

This country paper on Paraguay titled **National Level Implications of Implementing SDGs in Paraguay** is the penultimate of the eleven country studies to be published under the Southern Voice Occasional Paper Series. The study has been authored by *Dr Verónica Serafini Geoghegan*, a Research Member at the Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya (CADEP), Paraguay.

The paper examines the compatibility between the SDGs and the objectives laid in the National Development Plan (NDP) of Paraguay, and also explores the challenges in implementing the global goals in the country. It identifies serious obstacles in revenue increase to finance SDGs, and highlights the need for transforming the pattern of economic growth which may contribute for further generation of decent employment. The paper recommends for improved capacity of the government in policy-making and the national statistical system, as well as for promotion of civil society participation in delivering the SDGs in Paraguay.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the support of The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation towards *Southern Voice*, particularly of *Dr Ruth Levine*, Programme Director and *Ms Sarah Lucas*, Programme Officer of the Global Development and Population Programme, at the Hewlett Foundation.

In connection to the publication of this paper, contribution of *Ms Umme Shefa Rezbana*, Senior Research Associate, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and the focal point at the Southern Voice Secretariat for overseeing the programme is highly appreciated. *Ms Tarannum Jinan*, Administrative Associate, CPD is acknowledged for

providing useful contribution in following-up of the country papers. *Ms Farah Nusrat*, Publication Associate, CPD provided assistance in processing of the publication. I would also like to thank *Ms Erin Palmer* for her editorial inputs and feedback.

Hoping that the paper will be a useful addition to the ongoing discussion on challenges of implementing SDGs in developing countries.

Dhaka, Bangladesh  
June 2017

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This paper looks at the national level implications of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Paraguay. Specifically, it examines the compatibility of the SDGs with the objectives of Paraguay's National Development Plan (NDP); the coordination, management and monitoring mechanisms available for implementing the SDGs; the political, institutional and economic challenges for achieving the SDGs; the existence of (or potential for) effective partnerships and stakeholder participation; and the capacity of government statistics agencies to monitor and report the SDG targets. The study suggests that implementing the SDGs in Paraguay will not be an easy task. The challenges range from institutional weaknesses and poor coordination capacity to inadequate financing and social accountability mechanisms. In order to optimise Paraguay's performance to accomplish the SDGs, the government will need to improve its ability to design and implement public policies, and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of its national statistics system. It will also have to promote platforms for civil society participation and work closely with local government institutions throughout the country. In addition, it will need to put more efforts to reduce illicit financial flows, and increase foreign direct investment (FDI).



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# Acronyms

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AAAA	Addis Ababa Action Agenda
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo)
APS	Primary Health Care Programme (Atención Primaria de la Salud)
CADEP	Center for Analysis and Dissemination of the Paraguayan Economy (Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya)
CNCC	National Climate Change Commission (Comisión Nacional de Cambio Climático)
CONACYT	National Science and Technology Council (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGEEC	National Statistics Institute (Dirección General de Estadísticas, Encuestas y Censos)
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EEN	National Economic Team (Equipo Económico Nacional)
ENEP	National Country Strategy Team (Equipo Nacional Estrategia País)
EPH	Permanent Household Survey (Encuesta Permanente de Hogares)
ESSAP	Sanitary Services Company of Paraguay (Empresa de Servicios Sanitarios del Paraguay)
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FONACIDE	National Fund for Public Investment and Development (Fondo Nacional de Inversión Pública y Desarrollo)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFI	Global Financial Integrity
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
kWh	Kilowatt-hour
MAG	Ministry of Agriculture (Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería)
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIC	Ministry of Industry and Commerce (Ministerio de Industria y Comercio)
MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
MNC	Multinational Company
MNP	National Mechanism for Prevention of Torture (Mecanismo Nacional de Prevención de la Tortura)
MOPC	Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones)
MSPBS	Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (Ministerio de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social)
MTESS	Ministry of Justice and Labour (Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social)
NCCP	National Climate Change Program
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OGP	Open Government Action Plan
ONCC	National Office for Climate Change (Oficina Nacional de Cambio Climático)
PANI	Integral Nutritional Food Programme (Programa Alimentario Nutricional Integral)
PEES	Plan Estratégico Económico y Social
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PLANDEH	National Plan for Human Rights Education (Plan Nacional de Derechos Humanos)
PLANHAVI	National Housing and Habitat Plan (Plan Nacional del Hábitat y la Vivienda)
PPDS	Paraguay para Todos y Todos
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEAM	Secretariat of Environment (Secretaría del Ambiente)
SENASA	National Environmental Health Service (Servicio Nacional de Saneamiento Ambiental)
SENATICs	National Secretariat for Information and Communication Technologies (Secretaría Nacional de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación)
SENAVITAT	National Secretariat of Housing and Habitat (Secretaría Nacional de la Vivienda y el Hábitat)
STP	Technical Planning Secretariat (Secretaría Técnica de Planificación del Desarrollo Económico y Social)
TERCE	Third Comparative and Explanatory Regional Study (Tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo)
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax

# National Level Implications of Implementing SDGs in Paraguay

Verónica Serafini Geoghegan \*

## 1. Introduction

In 2015, Paraguay made its commitment to both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA). The commitment for SDGs is important for a country that is often below the Latin American and Caribbean averages for various social and economic indicators.

This initial disadvantage with respect to below average state of development indications presents enormous challenges for the country in coming years, and it demands important efforts to fulfil Paraguay's newly adopted international commitments. The present paper addresses these challenges in the context of an investigation by Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya, or Centre for Analysis and Dissemination of the Paraguayan Economy (CADEP), with technical and financial support from the Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study include:

- Investigate the implications of implementing the SDGs at the national level;
- Examine how global targets of the SDGs will be embedded in the national context;
- Understand the challenges in the areas of national planning process, sector-based programmes, resource framework, monitoring, reporting and accountability; and
- Anticipate how intra-governmental coordination and multi-stakeholder participation will be ensured in this process.

### 1.2 Methodological Approach

The present study took two methodological approaches: reviewing secondary information available in existing literature, and gathering primary information from government data and through interviews with different stakeholders.

In terms of the literature review, as much as possible updated data/information were gathered on regulations, opportunities and constraints of development financing modalities such as foreign direct investment (FDI), public-private partnerships (PPPs), and the impact of illicit flows of funds. Finally, sectorial plans and programmes of the National Development Plan (NDP) were also part of the literature review.

The second source of information consisted of interviews done with – (a) representatives of the Technical Planning Secretariat (Secretaría Técnica de Planificación del Desarrollo Económico y Social (STP)), the Foreign Ministry, the Social Cabinet, and the Ministry of Finance, to discuss the means of financing and implementation of SDGs in the country; (b) representatives of the Statistics Office and other public sector agencies with administrative records; (c) members of National Country Strategy

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\*The author would like to thank *Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals* for its support to carry out this research; and the people who gave their time and willingness to provide the study team with invaluable information.

Team (Equipo Nacional de Estrategia País (ENEP)), to identify their understanding on role of the private sector in reducing inequalities; (d) Ministry of Women to explore its position on reducing gender gaps; and (e) donors who would actually support the management and monitoring of the SDGs.

### 1.3 Structure of the Paper

The remainder of this paper is divided in six sections. Section 2 provides a summary analysis of the integration and mainstreaming of the SDGs in the national priorities and planning process of Paraguay's NDP. Section 3 reviews the potential for coordination, management and leadership of the SDG implementation process, including monitoring mechanisms. Section 4 reviews the obstacles to increase revenues in order to finance the SDGs. Section 5 analyses existing institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs and the challenges to improve social participation. Section 6 examines the capacity of the national statistics system to monitor and report on the SDGs. Conclusions are presented in the Section 7.

## 2. Integration and Mainstreaming of the SDGs in the National Planning Process in view of the National Priorities

Paraguay's NDP 2030 outlines the country's development priorities for the next 15 years. It has three strategic pillars: poverty reduction and social development; inclusive economic growth; and making Paraguay more engaging and inclusive in the world (see Annex Table 1). It also has four cross-cutting objectives: equality of opportunity; transparent and efficient public management; land development and management; and environmental sustainability. Together, these pillars and objectives comprise 12 strategies for public sector projects and programmes.

Table 1 provides an overview of the compatibility between the NDP and the 17 SDGs, prepared in the context of this document.

The STP is responsible for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of the NDP, using results-based management principles. Every public institution – within the central government, decentralised institutions and local governments – is required to create its own strategic operational plan that aligns with the objectives and activities of the NDP.<sup>1</sup> The NDP also serves as the guide of the resources allocation in the national budget.

**Table 1: Summary of Compatibility between Targets of the SDGs and the NDP, Paraguay**

Goals	Considerably Covered	Weakly/Partially Covered	Not Covered
1. No poverty	✓		
2. Zero hunger		✓	
3. Good health and well-being		✓	
4. Quality education		✓	
5. Gender equality			✓
6. Clean water and sanitation	✓		
7. Affordable and clean energy		✓	
8. Decent work and economic growth		✓	
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	✓		
10. Reduced inequalities		✓	
11. Sustainable cities and communities		✓	
12. Responsible consumption and production		✓	

(Table 1 contd.)

<sup>1</sup>See Presidential Decree No. 3361/2015.

(Table 1 contd.)

Goals	Considerably Covered	Weakly/Partially Covered	Not Covered
13. Climate action		✓	
14. Life below water		-	
15. Life on land			✓
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions		✓	
17. Partnership for the goals			✓

**Source:** Prepared by the author.

**Note:** Considerably covered: More than 70 per cent compatibility; Weakly/partially covered: 40 to 70 per cent compatibility; Not covered: Less than 40 per cent of compatibility between the targets of the SDGs and the NDP.

Goal 14 is not applicable for Paraguay, since it is a landlocked country.

The following analysis presents the compatibility of each of the SDGs with Paraguay's existing national plans and programmes. It regards ministerial plans and programmes to the extent that they complement with the NDP's efforts to achieve the SDGs. Annex Table 2 presents the list of SDGs covered by the NDP.

### ***Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere***

Paraguayan national programme of reducing poverty 'To Seed Opportunities' (*Sembrando Oportunidades*), which is part of the NDP, aims to increase income and access to basic social services for families living in extreme poverty (Secretaría de Información y Comunicación, 2014). It gives priority to the financial and economic inclusion rather than social protection, as the first and third of the SDGs point out.

Along with these, there are two important social initiatives. First is the conditional money transfer programme, *Tekoporã*, with the main objective of stopping the intergenerational transmission of poverty, and contributing to the reduction of extreme poverty overall. This effort is significant for Paraguayan national context as more than one-third of people living in poverty, are children. Since 2010, the programme has expanded its coverage for about 50 per cent of population living in extreme poverty from 6 per cent of earlier years.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, there is the food programme (pension) for senior citizens under the poverty line.

It is argued that these programmes would have more effective impact on poverty reduction if they were formalised through being included in a policy or social protection system.

### ***Challenges***

Designing a social protection policy (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 10) that complements the actions of economic and financial inclusion.

### ***Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture***

The programme of Seed Opportunities within the NDP puts emphasis on agricultural and livestock production income, while food production gets lesser priority. Other than this, Paraguay has two more important programmes to fight against hunger: Integral Nutritional Food Programme (*Programa Alimentario Nutricional Integral* (PANI)) and the School Feeding Programme. The country now seeks to make both programmes universal.

<sup>2</sup>See Gabinete Social (2011).

### *Challenges*

Integrating and coordinating programmes aimed at combating malnutrition and hunger, such as: the PANI, the School Feeding Programme within the education system, and those from family farms, promoting healthy food, and fair trade markets with effective family farming policies in place.

### ***Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages***

The NDP includes targets for reducing mother and child mortality rates. Also, National Health Policy 2015-2030<sup>3</sup> aims to achieve universal access to health services, and expand national coverage for healthcare.

The health coverage at present in Paraguay is low, and the out-of-pocket expenses for people are relatively high (PNUD-Paraguay and One Mujeres, 2015). Abortion is the leading cause of maternal mortality. Some other common causes, such as respiratory and intestinal diseases in childhood, dengue fever, yellow fever, leishmaniasis, hantavirus and cholera are preventable, if an effective policy for primary healthcare is put in place. However, in Paraguay, the basic health services are provided by various institutes, which are not much connected or coordinated. In addition, the perpetuating inequity in health access have reduced the efficiency of the supply and management of the available services.

### *Challenges*

Ensuring universal health coverage (Goal 3), strengthening the Primary Health Care Programme (Atención Primaria en Salud (APS)), and creating comprehensive networks within the health system.

### ***Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all***

The Ministry of Education is responsible for implementing the national policy for education and culture.<sup>4</sup> In 2011, the government presented the National Education Plan 2024. Its main goal is to guarantee access, and improve the quality and equity of education in Paraguay. There is also a National Plan for the Integral Development of Childhood, a National Education Plan for Risk Management, a National Plan for Human Rights Education (Plan Nacional de Derechos Humanos (PLANDEH)), and education policies from and for indigenous people.

Although free and compulsory education has been extended up to first 14 years of schooling<sup>5</sup>, students still need to pay for enrolment and other basic expenditures. There are also some progress in terms of achieving gender parity in the education system and the secondary school enrolment, which was up to 75 per cent by 2012 (World Bank Group, 2015a).

The Third Comparative and Explanatory Regional Study (Tercer Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo (TERCE)) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reports worrisome results in the areas of science, mathematic and research for the country. Paraguay's performance is below the regional average in all the areas evaluated by the study (Suarez and Escalante, 2015). The government has recently adopted the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which will be implemented from 2016 on a pilot basis (Sanabria, 2015).

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<sup>3</sup>See "Resolution S.G. MSPBS No. 612/2015," by which the National Health Policy 2015-2030 is approved.

<sup>4</sup>See Law 1264/1998, Art 93.

<sup>5</sup>See Law 4088/2010; the mandatory education period was extended to 14 years from 9 years.

### *Challenges*

Ensuring an educational policy to attain all of the Goal 4's objectives, and to integrate the educational policy with social protection and social care policies that would eventually eliminate school exclusion and poor academic performance.

### ***Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls***

In 1993, a Women's Secretariat under the Office of the President was inaugurated. In 2013, this Secretariat became the Ministry of Women.<sup>6</sup> Provision of equal opportunities between women and men within the National Plan 2008-2017, is the key instrument for mainstreaming the gender equality perspective. It promotes the integration of gender equality in the elaboration, coordination, execution, follow-up and evaluation of public policies. NDP does not yet consist a gender-based approach.

The World Bank has concluded that Paraguay's institutional framework is conducive to realising gender equality (World Bank, 2015). However, UN Women notes that the current gender gap between men and women in Paraguay will require affirmative action to truly improve the situation of women (PNUD-Paraguay, 2013).

### *Challenges*

Incorporating a gender equality perspective in NDP along with all other public policies is deemed as the main challenge for this goal. Designing and implementing social care policies with the purpose of reducing gaps in terms of political participation in policy- and decision-making bodies, increase women's participation in the formal economy, equal pay for equal work, access to monetary and non-monetary assets, domestic violence, are among others.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all***

A study by the Inter-American Development Bank (2010) estimated that achieving the MDG 7 [Millennium Development Goals] (related to water and sanitation) in Paraguay would require an investment of USD 98 million per year, almost six times the average amount of what the government had invested in the sector in 2008 and 2009 (data provided by the BOOST system from the Ministry of Finance).

Paraguay's water and sanitation sector is maintained by a variety of institutions. Among them, the most relevant are the Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones (MOPC)); the Sanitary Services Company of Paraguay (Empresa de Servicios Sanitarios del Paraguay (ESSAP)); the National Environmental Health Service (Servicio Nacional de Saneamiento Ambiental (SENASA)), a technical body of the Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (Ministro de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social (MSPBS)); and the Secretariat of Environment (Secretaría del Ambiente (SEAM)), which provides the corresponding environmental license for the construction and operation of water and sanitation systems.<sup>8</sup>

Since 2009, the World Bank Group has provided technical and financial support to a modernisation project for the water and sanitation sector. The ESSAP (n.d.) reports that water and sanitation coverage reaches 80 per cent of the population in urban areas, and only 49 per cent in rural areas. Proper waste water management in the capital of Asunción serves only 33 per cent of the population. Further, only 11 per cent of sewage is treated before reaching the Paraguay River at the capital city.

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<sup>6</sup>See Decree 630/2013.

<sup>7</sup>Women's earnings represent only 71 per cent of men's earnings; only 8 per cent of land assets have titles in favour of women; 49 per cent of women work under precarious conditions (in the informal sector), comparing to 30 per cent of men (Serafini and Imas, 2015).

<sup>8</sup>Among these, MOPC and SEAM are the regulatory entities; and the MSPBS, SENASA and ESSAP are services entities.



### *Challenges*

Designing and implementation of a comprehensive, integrated policy for water management and provision of environmental sanitation services (Goals 3, 6, 11 and 15).

#### ***Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all***

In 2014, Paraguay's Vice-Ministry of Mines and Energy produced its first Energy Efficiency National Plan which was designed to provide guidelines and recommendations for implementing immediate and strategic measures for using energy resources efficiently in different sectors (MOPC, 2014a).

In 2012, the composition of national energy supply was – hydroelectricity: 67 per cent and biomass: 33 per cent. However, the figures for energy consumption are reversed, i.e. biomass and fossil fuels represent 44.4 per cent and 37.7 per cent of national consumption respectively, while electricity only represents 17.9 per cent (MOPC, 2014b). Less than the 8 per cent of households use electric energy for cooking. Most of them use coal or gas (DGEEC, 2016).

This situation is paradoxical, given that Paraguay is one of world's main producers of renewable energy, ranking fifth in kWh (kilowatt-hour) produced per capita, and owns the world's highest per capita surplus in electricity.<sup>9</sup> Most of this energy abundance is generated by the Itaipu and Yacyreta binational hydroelectric dams which (particularly Itaipu) have contributed to the development of new technologies, and boosted the use of alternative sources like wind and solar energy (Itaipu Binacional, 2014). In 2015, a Presidential Decree<sup>10</sup> established the certification, control and promotion of the use of bioenergy to ensure the sustainability of renewable energy resources regimes.

### *Challenges*

Designing and implementation of a national energy policy in order to expand the use of renewable energy, and reduce the demand for biomass, one of the causes of deforestation.

#### ***Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all***

Paraguay's economic growth has been positive in the past couple of years (14 per cent in 2013, and 4 per cent in 2014), though it had been very volatile. The economy is still highly dependent on agricultural production and exports. Inequality has remained extremely high, despite the attained economic growth.

The Permanent Household Survey (Encuesta Permanente de Hogares (EPH)) 2010–2014 showed that, as of 2014, Paraguay's open unemployment rate was at 6 per cent, while underemployment was at 20 per cent.<sup>11</sup> Of the underemployed, 66 per cent are youth between the ages of 15 and 29. The overall unemployment rate for youth was 9.2 per cent.

The EPH notes that in 2014, out of the total employed population that receives salaries, only 43 per cent makes contributions to retirement plans. It also shows that 22 per cent of the poorest quintile and 15 per cent of the second poorest quintile receive some sort of social protection assistance.<sup>12</sup> In terms of the youth population, 75 per cent do not have social security.

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<sup>9</sup><http://www.stp.gov.py/pnd/ejes-estrategicos/diagnosticos/recursos-energeticos-renovables/>

<sup>10</sup>Executive Decree 4056/2015.

<sup>11</sup>See DGEEC (2014).

<sup>12</sup>In this case, social protection refers to either the conditional cash transfer programme (Tekoporã), or subsidies and pensions for elderly people.

There is currently no national plan articulating strategies to increase employment, social security coverage and social protection. The Ministry of Justice and Labour (Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social (MTESS)) was created in 2013 to take over the administrative and comptroller functions related to work, employment and social security regulations.<sup>13</sup>

### *Challenges*

Designing and implementing employment and labour market policies and integrating them to the social protection policy with the aim of contributing to the Goals 8.3, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8, and in compliance with other SDGs related to income generation and social security.

### ***Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation***

PPP was legally established in Paraguay in 2014 to build infrastructure that enhances inclusive economic growth and development.<sup>14</sup> However, although the Ministry of Industry and Commerce's (Ministerio de Industria y Comercio (MIC)) mission is to coordinate, plan and promote industrialisation, there are no current plans or strategies for the industrial sector.

Paraguay has developed national plans for the transportation and information and communications technology (ICT) sectors. The National Secretariat for Information and Communication Technologies (Secretaría Nacional de Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación (SENATICs)) has both a Master Plan for ICTs and a Digital Agenda 2018. Internet and broadband access is still considerably low in Paraguay, but it is steadily increasing. The Master Plan for ICTs and Digital Agenda 2018 aims to integrate ICTs in education, e-government, public procurement and other sectors, while enhancing transparency through open data portals and promotion of innovative technology-related start-ups.

The Transportation Master Plan assesses the current demand for road, river and rail transportation, and have projects for the coming 20 years (Salinas, 2012). Nevertheless, the focus of the plan and its contribution to promote alternative and sustainable transportation methods are not clear.

The National Fund for Public Investment and Development (Fondo Nacional de Inversión Pública y Desarrollo (FONACIDE)) has been directed to several key sectors such as infrastructure, education, research and healthcare. With FONACIDE's resources, the National Science and Technology Council (Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT)) has started to promote research and innovation.

### *Challenges*

Designing and implementation of an industrial policy and a competitiveness policy with the purpose of directing efforts to economic sectors that would contribute to attaining the SDG 9, as well as those related with economic performance for attaining SDGs 1 and 8.

### ***Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries***

Fiscal policies that are in place in Paraguay, are not helping in reduction of inequalities. On the one side, the tax rates are very low, and they mostly consist in indirect taxation affecting people with low level of income. Secondly, tax pressure in Paraguay is one of the lowest in Latin America, reducing the chances of accumulating adequate public funds for social programmes. In addition, tax evasion as well as tax exemptions are high.

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<sup>13</sup>See Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social (2013). Law 5115/2013.

<sup>14</sup>See Law 5102/2013 regarding investment promotion in public infrastructure, expansion and improvement of goods and services.

Consequently, fiscal policies do not contribute to reducing inequalities in Paraguay. An inequitable tax structure results in low level of tax collection, which is a hindrance to the increase of social and economic investment needed to improve internal conditions of the country and reduce the development gaps with the rest of the Latin American countries.

NDP puts much emphasis on poverty reduction, but not on reduction of social and economic inequalities.

### *Challenges*

Incorporating targets of reducing economic, gender, regional and ethnic disparities into all government public policies.

### ***Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable***

Paraguay's urban population rose from 57 per cent in 2000 to a little more than 60 per cent in 2014 (DGEEC, 2015). This process of rapid urbanisation occurred without any planning that could ensure improvement in life quality in the cities. In Asunción, the capital city, the population has greatly increased in marginal and precarious zones over the last two decades. Climate changes with *El Niño* has displaced around 150,000 persons from these zones in between 2015 and 2016.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of access to decent housing, Paraguay moved forward in 2013 when the National Secretariat of Housing and Habitat (Secretaría Nacional de la Vivienda y el Hábitat (SENAVITAT)) introduced its National Housing and Habitat Plan (Plan Nacional del Hábitat y la Vivienda (PLANHAVI)) 2020. According to SENAVITAT's estimates, the housing deficit (lack of housing, overcrowding, poor quality), in 2011, affected more than 1,100,000 households. PLANHAVI is the first national plan that articulates short- and long-term goals regarding housing strategies.

The NDP includes policies and actions to provide sustainability of cities. There is a history of conflict between the central and municipal governments when it comes to following centrally-generated guidelines, particularly in planning and development (i.e. public transportation, green areas, etc.). Such conflicts have potentials to neutralise the targets or commitments of the central government included in the NDP.

### *Challenges*

Designing and implementing urban development and environmental policies, jointly with local authorities, in order to guarantee the access to housing and public services, safe and affordable public transportation; as well as expanding green areas.

### ***Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; and Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainable forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss***

In 2015, Paraguay had the sixth highest annual rate of deforestation in the world (FAO, 2015). This is because the economy of the country is based on production and exports of agriculture commodities that require intensive use of and land.

The Vice-Ministry of Mines and Energy has very recently presented a National Reforestation Plan.<sup>16</sup> It aims to reforest 160,000 hectares over the next four years (MOPC, 2015). However, it is observed that the proposed reforestation scheme would actually benefit the corporate interests more, reducing the space for conservation of wilderness and forests.

<sup>15</sup><http://www.paraguay.com/nacionales/paraguay-el-mas-afectado-138175>

<sup>16</sup>See Executive Decree 4056/2015.

Soybean and meat are the principal agro-commodities of Paraguay. The country's dependence on key agricultural sectors creates significant challenges to adapt its production patterns in ways that are sustainable. World Bank (2015) and IMF (2015) have drawn attention to the limited economic diversification and high dependence on exogenous factors such as climate and international prices for commodities, contributing to high economic volatility.

The NDP has direct specifications on these two objectives – addressing climate change; and reducing subsidies to fossil fuels, public procurement practices and access to information. Sectorial plans focus on sustainable agriculture and climate change. The Ministry of Agriculture (Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería (MAG)) has a National Plan for Sustainable Agriculture 2018.

In 1999, Paraguay approved the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).<sup>17</sup> One of the results of this ratification was the creation of the National Climate Change Program (NCCP) in 2001. Implemented by the SEAM, this programme created two institutions: the National Climate Change Commission (Comisión Nacional de Cambio Climático (CNCC)) and the National Office for Climate Change (Oficina Nacional de Cambio Climático (ONCC)). In 2012, Paraguay unveiled its National Climate Change Policy.

Paraguay submitted a climate action plan to the UNFCCC. The presented Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC)<sup>18</sup> shows a plan for 20 per cent reduction in emissions in accordance with its global goal (UNFCCC, 2015).

An action plan designed by the SEAM is directed to strengthen its institutional capacity for environmental protection and sustainable development. It aims to strengthen the work synergy between the Convention on Biological Diversity, Climate Change, and the Combat Desertification Agreement ratified by Paraguay.

### *Challenges*

Designing and implementing an environmental policy that includes SDGs 12, 13 and 15. Some of these Goals are included in sectorial plans, such as the NCCP, National Plan for Sustainable Agriculture and National Reforestation Plan. Yet, other Goals are absent within the NDP or other sectorial national plans (i.e. waste treatment, sustainable practices of the private sector, sustainable use of land ecosystems, etc.).

### ***Goal 14: Conservation and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development***

Paraguay is a landlocked country with no direct access to the ocean.

### ***Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels***

In terms of fighting against violence, Paraguay has made progress in reducing some aspects of gender-based violence, especially domestic violence. A law on domestic violence was enacted, and the Ministry of Women is implementing the Second National Plan against Violence against Women 2015-2020, jointly with judicial system. However, a comprehensive law against gender-based violence is required. While there is a recently passed law against human trafficking, there is no policy or actions for comprehensive prevention and care for people suffering from crime and penalty.

The recent installation (2014) of the National Mechanism for Prevention of Torture (Mecanismo Nacional de Prevención de la Tortura (MNP)) is a step forward in preventing violence from the state

<sup>17</sup>See Law 1447/1999.

<sup>18</sup>[http://unfccc.int/focus/indc\\_portal/items/8766.php](http://unfccc.int/focus/indc_portal/items/8766.php)

apparatus; however major efforts to combat impunity for the large number of complaints of ill-treatment and torture, mainly in public institutions, are required.

Although Paraguay still ranks poorly as one of the most corrupted countries in the region, it has moved forward in terms of transparency and access to information. The government has increased the supply of public information available to citizens through legislation and virtual platforms. Regarding its commitments with the Open Government Action Plan (OGP) 2014-2016, progress is evident in: (i) a landmark transparency law<sup>19</sup> regulating access to public information; (ii) the creation of the government's open data portal<sup>20</sup> with information on over 30 public institutions; (iii) increased transparency of emblematic public projects<sup>21</sup> linked to Paraguay's NDP; (iv) the creation of the Directorate of Access to Public Information<sup>22</sup> within the MTESS; and (v) improvements on the monitoring dashboard of the NDP, which will include the development of a citizen's interface.

Civil society's room, for involvement in monitoring government services and budgets, has increased as a result of the government's openness. Civil society played a key role for the enactment of the new legislation on access to information. Moreover, civil society organisations (CSOs) that monitor the government's commitments to the OGP created their own open data portal.<sup>23</sup>

### *Challenges*

Reforming the judiciary and improving the transparency and social accountability mechanisms in all three branches of government to reduce impunity, and improve routes of impeachment and intervention in cases of violence and suspicion regarding public corruption.

## **3. Coordination, Management and Leadership of the SDG Implementation Process including the Monitoring Mechanism**

### ***3.1 Background: The MDGs***

The central government bears the greatest responsibility for ensuring compliance and financing of the SDGs. Although there are some areas in which municipal governments have skills and the potential for impact, however, most of the expertise and resources are concentrated in the central government.

Successive administrations in Paraguay did not provide sufficient attention to meeting the MDGs. There was no government institution assigned for coordinating and monitoring the process. Various ministries implemented independent programmes that had direct impact on the MDG targets. However, there was little explicit reference to them in official documents. Some references to the MDGs have been part of two public plans for economic and social development (*Plan Estratégico Económico y Social* (PEES) and *Paraguay para Todos y Todas* (PPDS)), initiated in 2008 and 2010 respectively. Only in 2010, a compliance report, for the first time, was officially submitted by the government.

A total of four MDG monitoring reports were produced for Paraguay. The first two (2003 and 2005) were conducted by the United Nations System in Paraguay. Another report, undertaken by civil society, was published in 2015. The civil society report collected and organised the critical perspectives of more than 50 Paraguayan organisations; representing human rights, peasants, indigenous people, labour unions, women, youth and others. It aimed to promote action lawsuits and claims for economic, social and cultural rights through information, advocacy, social communication and mobilisation.

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<sup>19</sup>See Dirección de Publicaciones Oficiales (2014).

<sup>20</sup>See SENATICS (n.d.-a).

<sup>21</sup>See MAG (n.d.).

<sup>22</sup>See Gobierno Abierto Paraguay (2015).

<sup>23</sup>See SENATICS (n.d.-b).

**Table 2: Summary of Final Results of Compliance Indicators for the MDGs**

Target	Accomplished
Low income portion	Yes
Percentage of population living in extreme poverty	Yes
Recorded percentage of children under 5 years of age with underweight	No
Recorded percentage of children under 5 years of age with chronic malnutrition	No
Recorded percentage of undernourished pregnant women	No
Net rate of adjusted assistance; primary education	No
Survival rate to the 6th Grade; primary education	No
Literacy rate of the population aged 15 to 24 years old	No
Gender parity index in gross attendance rate in primary and secondary education	Yes
Ratio of literacy rates among women and men aged 15 to 24 years old	Yes
Recorded mortality rate of children under 5	No
Infant mortality rate (IMR) recorded	No
Proportion of 1-year old children vaccinated	No
Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) recorded	No
Recorded percentage of institutional childbirth	No
Percentage of population with access to improved water source	Yes
Percentage of population with access to water network	Yes
Percentage of population with access to improved sanitation	Yes

**Source:** Based on Gabinete Social (2015).

The current administration recently presented the final official report on national performance indicators MDG 2000-2015. A summary of the final results of compliance indicators is presented in Table 2.

### **3.2 Institutional Framework for Coordination on SDGs**

The three coordinating bodies of public policies, designated with the task of coordinating the SDG implementation, are: Social Cabinet, the National Economic Team (Equipo Económico Nacional (EEN)) and the STP.

The Social Cabinet is responsible for promoting, coordinating and directing the management of public programmes and government policies in the social sectors. Specifically, it is responsible for designing social and poverty reduction policies; developing a strategic agenda that is shared between public institutions and civil society actors at the central and local levels; identifying priority areas for support from international cooperation agencies and other social development partners; and ensuring coherence between social and economic policy.

While monitoring is not its direct responsibility, the Social Cabinet has exercised that role under previous administrations. The Social Cabinet is composed of six ministries and eight secretariats under the President's Office, as well as other institutions. Due to the number of institutions involved, an executive team led by the STP was created. STP is the coordinating agency for programmes and policy planning, especially those related to tackle poverty.<sup>24</sup>

Economic policies are coordinated by the EEN, which is consisted of the Ministers of Finance, Industry and Commerce, Agriculture, Public Works, and the President of Paraguay's Central Bank. Its responsibilities include advising with regard to global and sectorial programmes, public investments, and policy projects, and regulations in fiscal, tax and customs issues.

<sup>24</sup>See Decree 291/2013. Declaring Poverty Reduction as a National Priority and assigning the STP with the elaboration and implementation of the National Development Plan.

The current institutional framework offers no platform that could be used for the coordination and monitoring of all targets included in the SDGs. While the Social Cabinet is to coordinate the social and economic policies; participation of this institution in the economic decision-making is marginal.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Women, the Environment Secretariat, and the National Indigenous Institute are not present in any of the aforementioned groups. However, these institutions have responsibilities regarding specific SDG indicators.

The government has created online platforms to provide monitoring information that is currently available only to the Executive Branch. Through this dashboard, citizens will be able to monitor government actions related to the NDP. Moreover, open data portals that are available now, allow citizens to access information and to demand better services, thus opening government to social accountability mechanisms.

The Social Cabinet is in charge of writing the monitoring reports for the SDGs. It is also the institution in charge of collecting and processing data provided by the registers of different public agencies and ministries. Moreover, the National Statistics Institute (Dirección General de Estadística, Encuestas y Censos (DGEEC)) is responsible for information related to population, employment, poverty and other social data, which are obtained through national census and household surveys. Thus, it is recommended that both institutions work for the implementation of social accountability mechanisms on the SDGs.

#### **4. Adequacy of the Financing and other Means of Implementation of the SDGs in Paraguay**

The results of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (held in Ethiopia in 2015) included in the AAAA agreements are not necessarily compatible with Paraguay's indicators on tax system and institutional arrangement for regulating the private sector actions. Paraguay is ranked among the major countries in the world for tax evasion by multinational companies (MNCs) and in terms of tax inequity. At the same time, implementation of PPP works confronts great institutional weaknesses of the state.

An excessive optimism, within the AAAA, has been placed on the potential of the private sector, to finance public and common goods which are necessary to achieve the SDGs. In Paraguay, the impact of commitments of the AAAA is limited due to the institutional weakness in strengthening tax collection.

As discussed in the following sections, there are serious obstacles in Paraguay to increasing revenues sufficiently to finance the SDGs. However, low tax pressure – determined by low tax rates and high levels of tax evasion – leaves ample room for improving tax policy, thus for improving development financing.

The institutional challenge is not just a matter of tax policy. The regulatory and supervisory roles of the state need to be strengthened so that compliance with current regulations – especially labour and environmental – remains effective.

Furthermore, it is necessary to transform the pattern of economic growth, so that it contributes more to the generation of decent employment. The following section discusses this particular point.

##### **4.1 Economic Growth with Little Redistributive Impact**

In the last decade, Paraguay's gross domestic product (GDP) has increased at an average annual rate of 5 per cent, raising it to the status of a middle-income country (CEPAL, 2012). However, this economic growth had low impact on reducing inequality. Measured by the Gini index, Paraguay is amongst the five top countries with highest inequalities in Latin America (ECLAC, 2012). In addition, Paraguay is among the countries that least reduced inequality compared to the rest of the region, mainly due to the

limited redistributive impact of its fiscal policy. Existing studies show that income-based inequality after public spending is not modified due to significant resource allocations – especially transfers – to higher income levels to the detriment of the poorest (Jiménez, 2015; Higgins *et al.*, 2013).

Ranked as a middle-income country, Paraguay is now facing all the difficulties of being in “the trap of middle-income countries” (Foxley, 2012). These include, problems of competitiveness, productivity and lack of dynamism of exports as an engine of growth; as well as weak social safety nets, failures in the labour market and human capital formation, and fragile and inefficient institutions. These problems put obstacle to the ability of financing the SDGs and to the compliance with other goals such as generating decent employment and increasing exports.

#### **4.2 Low and Inequitable Tax Burden**

Meeting the SDG targets requires the mobilisation of significant resources. Appropriate level of taxation provides governments the capacity of investing to promote growth. Paraguay is among the countries with the lowest tax burden in Latin America. Of the 22 countries in the region, only two countries have lower tax burden than Paraguay, Guatemala and Dominican Republic (OCDE *et al.*, 2016).

Inequality is observed not only in income, land tenural system and access to public services, but also in the tax structure. Due to the weight of indirect taxes vis-à-vis direct taxes, the poorest 10 per cent of the population (the extreme poor) spends 18 per cent of their income in taxes, while the richest 10 per cent spends only 5 per cent (Alarcón, 2010). Noticeably, last year’s growth benefitted mainly the latter group, which is the one that least contributes in terms of taxes with respect to the amount of benefits it receives.

In 2012, the induction of personal income tax was approved with general support of society and strong campaigns led by CSOs. However, because all expenses are allowed for deduction, personal income tax is not expected to contribute much to tax collection. Its effect will mainly help to increase collection of the valued added tax (VAT) that presents high rates of evasion.

A study by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) points out that income taxes in Paraguay have little redistributive effect, declining in the Gini index by only 1 per cent, below the Latin American average (CEPAL, 2014).

#### **4.3 Illicit Flows in the Spotlight**

The low tax rates are coupled with a high level of tax evasion and avoidance. By not constituting a governing body within the United Nations (UN) to regulate the flow of international derivatives, the AAAA weakened the tax collection capacity of small countries with fragile institutions against large corporations. Without an appropriate framework for implementing the principle of “no double taxation,” the empirical evidence suggests that, transnational companies end up remaining untaxed in the countries they operate in, thus eroding the already limited tax bases of lower-income countries.

A study by Global Financial Integrity (GFI) found that, between 2003 and 2012, developing countries lost USD 6.6 trillion in illicit flows. In the same period, these flows increased on average by 9.4 per cent annually. In 2012, they reached a peak of USD 991.2 billion.

On the other hand, the official development assistance (ODA) directed to these countries during this period accounted for about USD 89.7 billion, according to the OECD. In other words, if these countries had not been losing illicit financial flows, ODA would not be necessary for them after all. Compared to FDI flow in developing countries in the same period of 2003-2012, the study finds that it came to represent USD 5.7 trillion, a figure that is below the above mentioned illicit flow amount.



“GFI measures illicit financial outflows using two sources: (i) outflows due to deliberate trade misinvoicing (GER) and (ii) outflows due to leakages in the balance of payments, also known as illicit hot money narrow outflows (HMN). The vast majority of illicit financial flows – 77.8 per cent in the 10-year period covered in this report – are due to trade misinvoicing” (Kar and Spanjers, 2014: vii).

According to the same report, Paraguay is among the 20 countries with the highest loss of resources from underinvoicing exports, having lost around USD 18.2 billion between 2003 and 2012. If overestimation of imports is added, losses amount to nearly USD 36 billion over 10 years. On average, during this period, Paraguay lost USD 3.6 billion, with an increasing trend given that the last calculation, according to the same source, results in an annual average of USD 4 billion for 2014.

If these amounts are compared to a few macroeconomic indicators, as presented in Table 3, Paraguay happens to rank 11th among countries affected by illicit flows, since they represent 18.6 per cent of GDP. Also, it would be 14th with regard to total trade, given that it represents 23.3 per cent of that indicator.

**Table 3: Proportion of Illicit Flows in Paraguay with respect to Selected Indicators**

Indicator	Ratio (%)	Ranking
GDP	18.6	11
Total trade	23.0	14
FDI	2064.4	5
ODA	957.6	1
Public investment in education	361.0	9
Public investment in healthcare	242.7	18
Taxes	156.7	6

Source: Spanjers and Frede (2015).

#### **4.4 The Risks of PPPs**

The PPPs have been considered as another tool for financing public policies (Banco Mundial, 2011; IMF, 2004). Paraguay has instated a law regulating the operation of this form of financing since 2013.<sup>25</sup> The PPPs also have an important place in the AAAA (paragraph 48-49).

The potential for PPPs to finance implementation of the SDGs should be assessed in terms of the countries’ own limitations for this kind of operation, in comparison to other experiences in the region; more specifically, the size of the markets, scope of competition between companies, potential profitability of the projects, etc.

In general, the laws governing PPPs make it clear that private participation happens in a context where business must be profitable, then PPP projects pursue more efficiency than equity. The market not only has little interest in achieving equity, but often benefits from asymmetries and inequalities. Therefore it is up to the state to reduce market failures and avoid PPP projects from resulting into increase of social inequities.

With respect to the particularities of country contexts, empirical evidence shows that successful PPPs have required strong states.<sup>26</sup> The executive institution must have a staff of highly professional and upright officials, and a judiciary free from influence and conflicts of interest. Paraguay’s public institutions are far from having these characteristics, which implies a high risk for the country’s implementation of PPPs.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup>See Law 5.102/2013.

<sup>26</sup>See Alborta, Stevenson and Triana, (2011).

<sup>27</sup>BID-PRODEV, World Economic Forum. Latinobarómetro, World Bank.

Finally, with regard to sufficient empirical evidence to proper planning, PPPs do not have assessments that integrate efficiency, quality and impact, despite the implementation experience of more than 30 years. Even organisations such as the OECD and the World Bank put the benefits<sup>28</sup> of PPPs in doubt in certain areas and warn about the risks in implementing them (Miyamoto and Biousse, 2014; World Bank Group, 2014). One of the principal arguments in favour of PPP projects is that private financing of public works allows more fiscal space for social investment. However, problems such as contingent liabilities and overcosts are prevalent in this type of projects, which affect the fiscal space.

## **5. Partnership and Stakeholder Participation including Institutional Arrangements**

The Paraguayan government has a long tradition of creating sectorial agencies to facilitate public-private participation. However, these agencies have usually responded to corporate and other private interests that capture both regulations and decision-making policies of the state.

Corporate interests are translated in the participation of representatives of minority sectors in key public agencies related to public financing, technical assistance for production, the use of funds in science and technology, as well as for health and education. Participation of social organisations in these state bodies are very much limited.

The ENEP and the Public-Private Council for the Reduction of Extreme Poverty are the only instances where there is representation of non-government organisations (NGOs). The government should consider the possibility of ENEP becoming a participatory body to monitor the SDGs, among other institutions. So far, its performance has not been relevant in this sense.

The STP is responsible for international cooperation, which brings together different agencies. Some of them are relevant in terms of their financial contribution. For instance, the European Union (EU) has several active budget support programmes as well as its technical assistance, especially in areas related to SDGs, as do other agencies within the UN system. Other important partners are the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID)), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

One of the major challenges in implementing the SDGs in Paraguay will be the creation of a platform to ensure the coordination of efforts and resources among the central, departmental and district levels of government and with the private sector.

## **6. Capacity of the National Statistical Agencies and other Data-related Issues**

This section analyses the government's ability to generate and track data for monitoring progress toward achieving the SDGs. It is based on interviews and a review of available databases.

### **6.1 The Political-Institutional Context**

The approval of the 17 SDGs poses a major challenge for Paraguay in terms of production and use of statistics. There is no national statistical system or single institution with the capacity to regulate and coordinate all the information generated by various government agencies. The government is in the process of designing a national statistical development strategy.

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<sup>28</sup><http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=DCD/WKP%82014%292/PROV&docLanguage=En> and <https://www.scribd.com/document/338662213/WBG-IIWG-Success-Stories-Overcoming-Constraints-to-the-Financing-of-Infrastructure>

Without appropriate institutions, there is no integrated and rigorous information. This creates conflicts of interest in some areas. For instance, the Central Bank has the competency to calculate inflation, as well as the related statistical functions to measure inflation. In this respect, the institutions involved with the SDG indicators should make the effort to create formal links for the construction of information.

In addition, the Government of Paraguay has only recently become compelled to provide public information.<sup>29</sup> However, the existence of legislation does not guarantee that the public institutions will provide information with the quality, quantity and timeliness required by the SDGs accountability processes.

Appropriate institutions do not, by themselves, guarantee a culture of transparency and accountability in the public sector. Therefore, the public dissemination and training of citizens – to improve their analytical skills and the impact of their advocacies – must parallel the strengthening of regulatory and public organisations.

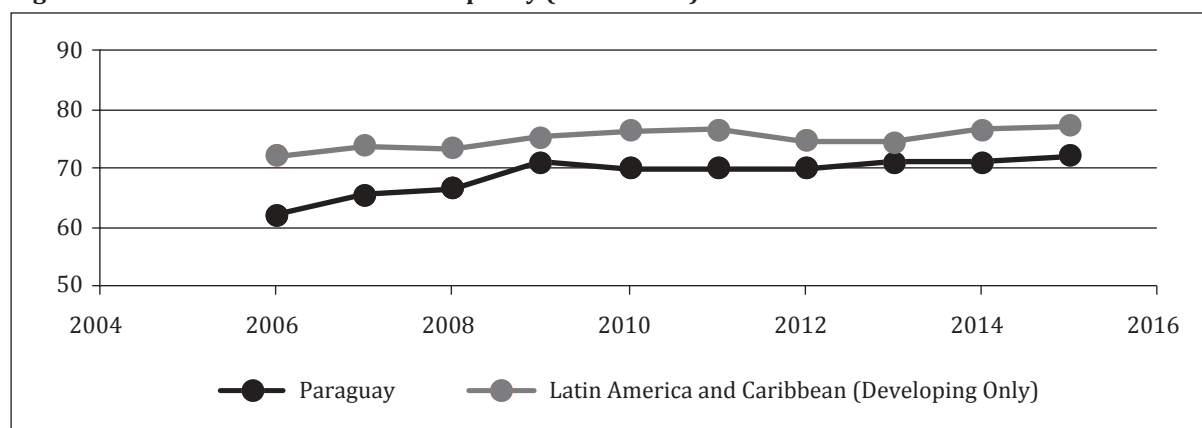
Institutional weaknesses in statistics is evidenced in the accountability regarding the MDGs. Paraguay produced five reports. The first two, in 2003 and 2005 respectively, were made by the United Nations system. In 2008, civil society developed its own report. In 2010, with the support of the United Nations system, the government published the first official report, and the second one in 2015.

## 6.2 Data Sources

Monitoring SDGs requires two sets of data. On the one hand, there are economic and social data that results from census, national household surveys, and household income and expenditure surveys. This type of information is available to the public through the DGEEC which is responsible for generating, organising, analysing and disseminating statistical and cartographic information of the country. On the other hand, there are social and economic data that are relevant to measure macro and micro economic indicators, as well as social indicators on health and educational performance of the population. These data are obtained from the different administrative registrars of public agencies, ministries and the Central Bank. However, not all of these data are available on time or in a proper manner, since processing of the numerous basic indicators needed to assess economic and social conditions of the population is a difficult task.

DGEEC is strong in human resources and technical capacities. Moreover, it enjoys relative legitimacy. But a proper follow-up of indicators will demand increase in human resources. As Figure 1 shows, Paraguay is below the regional average in terms of statistical capacity.

**Figure 1: Overall Level of Statistical Capacity (Scale 0-100)**



Source: World Bank Group (2015b).

<sup>29</sup>See Law 5282/2014 regulated by Decree 4064/2015.

In the absence of a legal framework or institution in charge of integrating the national statistics, the information is scattered and fragmented. Administrative records are considerably delayed, and databases usually do not offer disaggregated data by sex, age, area of residence, socioeconomic status, disability, among other variables included in the list of indicators proposed for SDGs.

The SDGs, that had their roots in the MDGs, are better equipped with available information because the country made efforts to improve its statistics in these areas (i.e. poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, water and sanitation, etc.).

### **6.3 Access and Dissemination**

Access to information presents difficulties for both public institutions and citizens. In 2015, the law on Access to Public Information was approved. However, efforts are still needed to make public data available to the public with an easy processing format.

In general, except for the surveys conducted by the DGEEC, publication of administrative records are much delayed, and data breakdowns by sex, age, area of residence are limited. However, there have been some progress as regards increasing access, such as the implementation of the Boost system, a virtual online platform providing information on the national budget. Since 2014, the public has had access to annual budget data, with various degrees of disaggregation.

Diffusion from the public sector is minimal; and is torn between a public culture which is friendly towards transparency and accountability, and the limited resources available to CSOs to use, process and disseminate public information. Therefore, a major effort is required from both the supply and the demand sides to appropriately monitor the SDGs.

### **6.4 Cross-cutting Themes**

Approaches from gender, environment and life-cycle perspectives are transversal indicators of the SDGs. Paraguay has seen progress over the last years in the field of gender indicators, but it requires greater efforts in generating information on gender violence, in particular. These issues have taken higher priority in social policies, but not in political economy, except for economic indicators such as income and labour market surveyed by the DGEEC.

Information deficit is much higher for environmental issues, except for the indicators on access to potable water which is collected by the DGEEC. Paraguay does not have systematic data on levels of deforestation, water, soil and air pollution, waste management, carbon emissions, and use of clean technologies.

## **7. Conclusion**

Implementing SDGs in Paraguay will not be an easy task. The immediate prospects are not too bright, considering the country's experience with the implementation of the MDGs as a precedence, and its institutional capacity to carry out reforms to achieve long-term objectives. Even though progress towards the objectives was undeniable, so was the realisation that more could have been attained.

The Paraguayan government suffers from institutional weaknesses and a fragile capacity to articulate tasks that demand close coordination from many public institutions. The official report on MDGs (Gabinete Social, 2015) points out the need to make improvements in terms of coverage and integration of policy interventions. And while civil society's contribution and participation has indeed increased, it remains considerably centralised in the capital. Technical capacity in the central government is weak, and the situation is worse with local governments around the country. Hence, even though

Paraguay is a small, unitary country, it faces challenges to achieve goals that are national in scope, like many of the SDGs.

The contribution of the private sector as partners for development purposes are to be tested in the coming years, but risks are already evident. There are several factors that put certain limitations to this partnership, such as inequity of the tax system and very low tax pressure, lack of information on the impact of tax exemptions on economic and social development as well as impact of FDI on employment, the high levels of illicit financial flows, and high risks derived from PPP projects in a country with weak public institutions.

Additionally, the economic situation of the region and its forecast for the coming years create considerable external constraints for a landlocked economy. The decline of the world economy has already caused negative impacts on the Paraguayan economy, being characterised as a very open one, without productive diversification and exposed to high volatility (World Bank, 2015; IMF, 2015).

To attain the SDGs, important changes has to be implemented in Paraguay. They include those related to the financial aspects, and also those oriented to improve public policies in terms of design and effective implementation, to improve mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation and of the national statistics system.

Challenges of the SDGs are not only for the public sector. It is important that CSOs be involved in this process through different forms of participation and social auditing. As for the private sector, its commitments will need to be demonstrated throughout in terms of collaboration for financing development.

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## Annex Tables

Annex Table 1: Strategies of the NDP 2015-2030

Strategic Axes	Transversal Objectives			
	Equality of Opportunities	Transparent and Efficient Public Management	Land Development and Management	Environmental Sustainability
Poverty Reduction and Social Development	Equitable social development	Quality social services	Participatory local development	Adequate and sustainable habitat
Inclusive Economic Growth	Employment and social security	Competitiveness and innovation	Regionalisation and product diversification	Valuation of environmental capital
Paraguay More Engaged with the World	Equality of opportunities in a globalised world	Attraction of investments, international commerce, and country image	Regional economic integration	Sustainability of global habitat

Source: STP (2014).

Annex Table 2: List of SDGs Covered by the NDP

Goals	Targets	NDP Objectives
<b>Goal 1.</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	✓
	5	
	6	-
	7	✓
<b>Goal 2.</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	-
	5	-
	6	-
	7	-
	8	-
<b>Goal 3.</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	-
	4	✓
	5	-
	6	✓
	7	-
	8	✓
	9	✓
	10	-
	11	-
	12	-
	13	-

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

Goals	Targets	NDP Objectives
<b>Goal 4.</b> Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	✓
	5	✓
	6	✓
	7	-
	8	-
	9	-
	10	-
<b>Goal 5.</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	1	-
	2	-
	3	-
	4	-
	5	✓
	6	-
	7	-
	8	-
	9	-
<b>Goal 6.</b> Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	✓
	5	-
	6	✓
	7	-
	8	✓
<b>Goal 7.</b> Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	-
	4	✓
	5	-
<b>Goal 8.</b> Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	✓
	5	-
	6	-
	7	-
	8	-
	9	✓
	10	✓
	11	✓
	12	-

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

Goals	Targets	NDP Objectives
<b>Goal 9.</b> Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	✓
	5	✓
	6	✓
	7	✓
	8	✓
<b>Goal 10.</b> Reduce inequality within and among countries	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	-
	4	✓
	5	✓
	6	-
	7	✓
	8	-
	9	-
	10	-
<b>Goal 11.</b> Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	✓
	5	✓
	6	✓
	7	-
	8	-
	9	-
	10	-
<b>Goal 12.</b> Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	1	-
	2	✓
	3	-
	4	-
	5	-
	6	-
	7	✓
	8	✓
	9	-
	10	-
	11	✓
<b>Goal 13.</b> Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	1	✓
	2	✓
	3	-
	4	-
	5	-

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

Goals	Targets	NDP Objectives
<b>Goal 14.</b> Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development	1	-
	2	-
	3	-
	4	-
	5	-
	6	-
	7	-
	8	-
	9	-
	10	-
<b>Goal 15.</b> Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss	1	-
	2	✓
	3	✓
	4	-
	5	-
	6	-
	7	-
	8	-
	9	✓
	10	✓
	11	-
	12	-
<b>Goal 16.</b> Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	1	✓
	2	-
	3	-
	4	✓
	5	✓
	6	✓
	7	-
	8	-
	9	✓
	10	✓
	11	✓
	12	-
<b>Goal 17.</b> Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	1	✓
	2	
	3	-
	4	-
	5	-
	6	-
	7	-
	8	-
	9	-
	10	-
	11	-

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

(Annex Table 2 contd.)

Goals	Targets	NDP Objectives
	12	-
	13	-
	14	-
	15	-
	16	-
	17	-
	18	-
	19	-

Source: Prepared by the author.



Launched in 2012, **Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals** (*Southern Voice*) is a network of 49 think tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America, which was set up to serve as an open platform to contribute to the global discourse pertaining to the formation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the challenges of implementation, monitoring and mid-course review of the SDGs. *Southern Voice* addresses the existing 'knowledge asymmetry' in the global debates and 'participation deficit' of the developing countries by generating evidence-based knowledge, sharing policy experiences originating in the Global South, and disseminating this knowledge and experience among key stakeholders. *Southern Voice Occasional Papers* are based on research undertaken by members of the network as well as inputs received at various platforms of the initiative. The *Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)*, Bangladesh hosts the Secretariat of *Southern Voice*.



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