

Government of Canada Comments
UN MVI indicators (May 2023)

Summary

- We applaud the High-level Panel for its work to advance the MVI to date. We recognize the challenge in selecting indicators that maintain the universal applicability of the index, while also striving to capture the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS. Achieving a balance here will be critical to the credibility of the index.
- Canada welcomes the series of consultations conducted by the Panel in recent weeks, and appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed indicators and governance model.
- We are keen to review the technical report referenced by the Panel at the May 8 consultation. Additional technical details are important in order to more fully assess the proposed indicators and methodology for the MVI. In particular, our technical experts would like to review the replication dataset for the MVI prototype.
- We would ask that member states be given another opportunity to provide input to the MVI process once the technical report has been circulated, and we understand that another consultation is tentatively being planned for the end of May.
- Acknowledging the considerable amount of work completed by the Panel to date, the recent virtual consultations highlighted a number of outstanding questions that still need to be addressed in order to finalize the index and ensure that it will be a tool that can be applied in a variety of contexts.
- We would encourage the Panel to take the time required to address outstanding technical and methodological questions. This could mean delaying the publication of the final MVI report in order to provide the Panel with more time to consider and incorporate views from member states and to provide a more technical justification for the indicators and methodology.
- We appreciate the focus on keeping the MVI (relatively) simple and focussed on structural factors.
- The balancing of vulnerability and resilience, with a breakdown of economic, environmental and social indicators under each also simplifies the index. The simplicity does come at a cost of sensitivity and nuance, but this also has to be weighed against availability of quality data in all countries.
- In the preliminary rankings, of the most vulnerable countries, many were conflict-affected states in Sub-Saharan Africa. Dedicated outreach to these countries would be beneficial to ensure their views have been well reflected in index development.
- After careful consideration, we agree with the Panel's conclusion that there is no clear database or indicator that would allow for a credible and universal measure of indebtedness in the MVI. However, we would like to reiterate Canada's view that debt should be incorporated into the MVI as soon as viable data is available. The feasibility of including a measure of debt should be revisited each time the MVI is updated.
- We welcome the inclusion of gender equity as a key concept. We would suggest framing it as "gender equality", and considering other possible indicators such as intimate partner violence prevalence (see proposal in the annexed template).
- It would be beneficial for the Panel to outline the tool's limitations in its final report. Doing so could help countries use the index within the scope of its intended purpose and better understand the nuances of its results.

General measurement

- It is important to have more sensitivity analysis around the inclusion/exclusion of concept indicators and other methodological choices (e.g. weights; quadratic vs arithmetic) to better analyze these choices. We would welcome the inclusion of this analysis in the technical note.
- In the absence of methodological detail, our preliminary response is that weighing each concept equally is a straightforward approach that appropriately represents the three pillars of sustainable development and avoids arbitrary and subjective judgements. Since the equal weighting will occur at the concept level, we would recommend careful consideration over the number and types of indicators chosen for each concept to ensure the weighting of each indicator is not distorted by redundancy or double counting of indicators that may overlap in their coverage.
- The use of a quadratic mean rather than an arithmetic one appears appropriate as it serves to emphasize higher values of vulnerability/resilience. It is high vulnerability, even only to one or two risks, that should be the concern rather than moderate vulnerability across several risks.
- We appreciate the Panel's focus on selecting indicators that have a good level of data availability. We fully agree that the MVI cannot inadvertently penalize countries with lower data collection by making them seem less vulnerable.
- To this end, we propose that the Panel include some measure of data availability alongside the MVI results, in an accompanying table or annex, such as a percentage indicating how many data points a given country was able to report. This could help readers to be cognizant of the connection between data availability and MVI scores and could help guide potential provision of technical assistance for data collection.

Vulnerability

- Some vulnerabilities, particularly environmental, can be highly variable and can change quite rapidly. These variabilities will need to be considered when deciding on the availability of data sources for the indicators and the frequency of their reporting to ensure the MVI is appropriately responsive.
- *On Economic Vulnerability Indicator #4 (Food and Fuel import dependency)*: Could consider framing this indicator as simply "import dependence" to capture the full mix of essential resources a country needs including critical minerals and clean tech.
- We have also suggested an indicator on income inequality that could be included as an addition to the social vulnerability or economic vulnerability pillar (see annex).

Resilience

- There is a 'resource capacity' dimension missing from the proposed MVI indicators, as countries with limited capacity may face barriers that will make them more vulnerable and ill-equipped to deal with shocks. For example, a country with limited capacity to collect climate data, including at the local level, may face issues in demonstrating that their vulnerabilities are caused by a climate driver which will therefore constitute a barrier that prevents them from accessing climate financing. The burden on data requirements and evidence of climate change risks can contribute to increasing vulnerabilities for countries with limited capacities.
- *On Social Resilience Concept "Gender Equity"*: We welcome the inclusion of gender equity as one of the key concepts reflected in the UN Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, given the

critical role played by gender equality in withstanding shocks and building resilience. It would, however, be better framed as “gender equality and social inclusion,” rather than “gender equity.” Gender equality and gender equity have two distinct meanings: gender equality means that people of all genders, including diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people, enjoy equal rights, status, and opportunities and are able to participate fully, meaningfully, and equally in all spheres of life, without bias or discrimination. In contrast, gender equity means being fair to women, men, and gender-diverse people. Equity is a means that leads to equality, but it is not the end goal. Adding ‘social inclusion’ is a way to highlight the importance of diversity, inclusion, and social cohesion.

- We would recommend an indicator on the quality of transport and trade infrastructure as part of the measurement for economic resilience (see annex).
- We have also proposed an indicator on dependency on external Resources for Health Services under Social Resilience (see annex).

Vulnerability – Resilience Country Profiles (VRCs)

- We are supportive of the concept of Vulnerability – Resilience Country Profiles. They could help to shape policy responses in response to identified vulnerabilities.
- We are also supportive of the idea raised during the consultation process to link vulnerability - resilience country profiles to National Sustainable Development Plans.
- A vulnerability – resilience country profile would be beneficial to donors in terms of better mapping their support to vulnerable countries.
- It is important that these profiles be country-led with support from the UN for countries that might require capacity support, regardless of the format

Possible Governance Arrangements

- Pleased that the governance model proposals have been informed by consultations with other UN agencies and multilateral organizations with indices (UNDP HDI, WB Human Capital Index, OECD- Multidimensional Fragility Index etc.).
- We would also recommend that in considering options, the UN considers the following principles: a demand driven focus, with its form following function; a results-based mandate that ensures effectiveness and efficiency; accountable reporting criteria with regular opportunities for Member States to be consulted on budget and priorities; transparency in the resource requirements and responsibilities of the potential UN organization hosting the MVI Secretariat.
- The process around updating the MVI should be clearly outlined in a governance document.
- The governance body should also conduct consultations with Member States on any new indicators that might be introduced.

Annex: Indicator Suggestion Forms

Attachment 1: MVI Indicator Suggestion Form

1. Name of indicator, units, database where it is disseminated and maintained, including web address

Gini index (income inequality), World Bank database:
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

2. Pillar, dimension, and concept where indicator should be located within the MVI framework
Indicator could be included as an addition to the social vulnerability pillar. It could also be added to the economic vulnerability pillar.

3. Is your suggested indicator an addition or replacement?
The suggested indicator is **in addition** to the proposed indicators in the section.

4. Provide a short justification focussing on the relationship of the indicator to structural vulnerability or structural resilience (**100 words**)

Justification: there is no measure of social equality, and the Gini coefficient for income inequality could fill this gap. The same way the MVI takes into account gender equality, it would be important to add a social/economic inequality dimension.

5. Provide a simple Theory of Change (**250 words**)

Theory of change for income inequality:

- High income inequality is associated with lower income growth and can limit the extend of which assistance reaches the most vulnerable populations, increase the probability of social unrest in case of shocks
- The IMF has shown that climate change can worsen income inequality
- Countries with higher income inequality are more vulnerable to shocks

6. Indicate which developing countries have missing data

Developing countries (SIDS) that have missing data: 9 countries - Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Cuba, Dominica, Grenada, Palau, Singapore, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Attachment 1: MVI Indicator Suggestion Form

1. Name of indicator, units, database where it is disseminated and maintained, including web address

Indicator: Quality of transport and trade infrastructure (incl. paved roads)

Units: Roads, paved (% of total roads), WDI, and Quality of trade and transport-related infrastructure, WDI

Data available

World Bank <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

2. Pillar, dimension, and concept where indicator should be located within the MVI framework

Location: Economic Resilience, Table 5, Concept: Logistics Performance

3. Is your suggested indicator an addition or replacement?

The suggested indicator is in addition to the proposed indicators in the section.

4. Provide a short justification focussing on the relationship of the indicator to structural vulnerability or structural resilience (**100 words**)

Countries that have good infrastructure are more structurally resilient, since they would have more robust natural disaster detection technology and emergency response communications, so they could respond to climate change impacts and disasters more quickly and effectively.

5. Provide a simple Theory of Change (**250 words**)

Theory of change for logistical performance

- Countries with poor infrastructure face more challenges in responding to climate impacts quickly and effectively.
- Communities that are more isolated also may also face more issues in accessing resources that are growing more scarce with climate change. Isolated communities are also more reliant on the resources within their geographic area than communities that are well connected to national trade routes and other communities.

6. Indicate which developing countries have missing data

n/a

Attachment 1: MVI Indicator Suggestion Form

1. Name of indicator, units, database where it is disseminated and maintained, including web address

Indicator: Dependency on External Resources for Health Services (Health Expenditure % of GDP)

Units: %

Data available

OECD: <https://data.oecd.org/healthres/health-spending.htm>

WHO: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.CHEX.GD.ZS>

2. Pillar, dimension, and concept where indicator should be located within the MVI framework

Location: Social Resilience, Table 6, Concept: Effective Social Service Provision

3. Is your suggested indicator an addition or replacement?

The suggested indicator is **in addition** to the proposed indicators in the section.

4. Provide a short justification focussing on the relationship of the indicator to structural vulnerability or structural resilience (**100 words**)

Given the health pressures of disasters (both slow and fast onset), it follows that countries with greater health expenditure and social services have less reliance on external support, including humanitarian funding, and are therefore more structurally resilient.

In many cases, high rates of privatization of health service systems also negatively impact marginalized populations within countries. More public funding for health services likely means that more folks have more equal access to health services, which would support structural resilience to the human impacts of climate change for marginalized communities.

5. Provide a simple Theory of Change (**250 words**)

Theory of change for health expenditure

- The human impacts of climate change and disasters are increasingly health-related. A strong public health system is a function of structural resilience, since more of the population would have access. Robust health sectors have more adaptive capacity, since they are more likely to better-respond to disasters and the human impacts of climate change without reliance on external support.
- The impacts of climate change are disproportionate on more marginalized communities, in part because they have less access to privatized health services. Higher health expenditure likely results in high access for communities with less financial resources.

6. Indicate which developing countries have missing data

A few countries/territories are missing, e.g. American Samoa, Aruba, Bermuda

Attachment 1: MVI Indicator Suggestion Form

1. Name of indicator, units, database where it is disseminated and maintained, including web address

Indicator: “Prevalence of lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) or non-partner sexual violence (NPSV) or both among all women aged 15–49 years”

The proposed indicator includes data contributing to both Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age Indicator 5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence.

Units: %

Data available

WHO: <https://vaw-data.srhr.org/data>

WHO “Violence against women prevalence estimates” on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence Against Women:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240026681>

2. Pillar, dimension, and concept where indicator should be located within the MVI framework

Location: Social Resilience, Table 6, Concept: Gender Equity.

3. Is your suggested indicator an addition or replacement?

The suggested indicator is **in addition** to the proposed indicator: “proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments”.

4. Provide a short justification focussing on the relationship of the indicator to structural vulnerability or structural resilience (**100 words**)

Globally, an estimated 736 million women – almost one in three – have been subjected to intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence or both at least once in their life (30% of women aged 15 and older). Violence against women, gender inequality and economic and social inequities, discriminatory gender norms and institutions perpetuate structural vulnerabilities across all sectors and have multi-dimensional effects on the overall health of an economy. The economic impact of domestic violence accounts for 1-2% loss of GDP in many countries, and higher during economic downturns, and financial, economic, and climate crises, making recovery and resiliency against these factors a global challenge.

Sources:

WHO (2010), pp: 33-35 Structural determinants – social determinants of health inequities: A conceptual framework for action on the social determinants of health:
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44489/9789241500852_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

WHO (2018): “Violence against women prevalence estimates” published by WHO, on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Violence Against Women:
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240026681>

World Bank: enGender Impact: Addressing GBV:
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/publication/engender-impact-addressing-gender-based-violence>

World Bank Gender Data Portal:<https://genderdata.worldbank.org/>

World Bank (2023): Women, Business and the Law:
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/b60c615b-09e7-46e4-84c1-bd5f4ab88903/content>

IMF (2021). The Heavy Economic Toll of Gender-based Violence: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. Working Paper No. 2021/277:
<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2021/11/19/The-Heavy-Economic-Toll-of-Gender-based-Violence-Evidence-from-Sub-Saharan-Africa-509667>

5. Provide a simple Theory of Change (**250 words**)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals articulate a transformative roadmap to address the structural causes of discrimination and inequality. It calls for the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, and stresses upon the removal of all legal, social and economic barriers to women’s empowerment. In particular, indicators SDG 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 contribute directly to global efforts on IPV/NPSV that address the pervasive structural social inequalities that prevent women and girls to enjoy equal access to quality education, health, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. Building social resiliency includes advancing positive social norms that break the cycle of GBV and promote a rights-based approach to raising awareness and prevention efforts, including supporting the mobilization of women and girl leaders and networks, as well as men and boys, to address the social norms and gender inequalities that are the root causes of SGBV and harmful practices.

Sources:

UN Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021, Theory of Change:
<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2017/UNW-2017-6-Annex2-Development-results-theory-of-change-en.pdf>

UNTF VAW 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, Theory of Change: <https://untf.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2021/06/strategic-plan-2021-2025>

WHO Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates Report:
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>

6. Indicate which developing countries have missing data

See WHO Interactive data visualization platform: <https://srhr.org/vaw-data>