

France - Remarks - Virtual Informal Consultations for Developed Countries on a multidimensional vulnerability index (MVI) for SIDS, Tue, 9 May 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Madam Chair, dear colleagues,

- *Let me express France's gratitude for the excellent work carried out by the panel. The proposed methodology sets the basis for a robust and operational framework that could be taken up by a variety of stakeholders.*
- *A truly universal, multidimensional and evidence-based MVI has the potential to foster more equity in development cooperation and to complement GDP as a measure of sustainable development.*
- *We appreciate that the MVI reflects sustainable development in its three dimensions: economic, environmental, social. The structure is clear and balanced and offers a comprehensive coverage of different sources of vulnerability.*
- *In general, the proposed indicators are satisfactory, as they respect key principles such as availability of data and exogeneity. We have a few comments, in the perspective of ensuring a truly universal framework that faithfully considers the needs of all vulnerable countries.*
 - *Regarding indicators 12 to 14, we believe that it is essential to use data from the countries themselves, in complement to those of neighbouring countries. Scientific literature shows that internal violence and its numerous by-products are a structural obstacle to future sustainable development. It should therefore be taken into account as a key exogenous variable.*
 - *We express strong reservations on indicator 23, which is in our view excessively ambiguous. The underlying rationale is incomplete since low population density also implies greater difficulty in deploying essential State services, especially in times of crisis, with negative consequences for health and political resilience in particular. Furthermore, wouldn't this indicator give a partial view of the situation since it cannot account for large variations in population density across national territory – especially for those countries who boast a large share of inhospitable territory?*
- *Extreme exposure to one factor of vulnerability can have overwhelming impacts on local populations and hinder efforts to achieve sustainable development. For this reason, we fully support the use of the quadratic mean as the appropriate and just method to compute the MVI.*
- *Regarding governance options, we have some reservations about the creation of a new Secretariat. Efforts should be made to develop synergies with existing structures and avoid undue overlaps.*
- *Any governance arrangement should ensure sufficient independence so that the MVI remains robust and evidence-based throughout the years. The Committee for Development Policy has been conducting excellent work on very similar topics for years and it could serve as a reference point. Which possible synergies with the CDP do you identify for the MVI?*
- *Assistance to vulnerable countries is at the core of France's international partnerships. In the context of current multiple crises, it is more necessary than ever to devise concrete solutions and strengthen our multilateral cooperation instruments in order to address enduring vulnerabilities. This question will be at the agenda of the Summit for a New Financial Pact, to be held in Paris on June 22 – 23. The MVI has the potential to inform and feed into a number of major processes and discussion.*
- *We thank you for consulting Member states on this important matter and we will send further comments in writing.*