

**3rd Session of Intergovernmental Negotiations on
the Post-2015 Development Agenda
March 23-27, 2015**

**Statement delivered by Ms. Sunita Singh, Director (Sustainable Development &
International Cooperation), Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change,
Government of India
on the issue of development of Indicators
March 23, 2015**

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

At the outset allow me to express our appreciation to the Chair of the Statistical Commission for his presentation on the work of the Commission for the development of indicators for the SDGs and their targets.

We are also grateful to the other distinguished Chief Statisticians who have joined us today to share their perspectives on this important issue.

We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of South Africa on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

We appreciate the technical report of the Statistical Commission including the list of proposed indicators and their initial assessment.

However, in our view, while an interaction between the Commission and this political process is most timely and useful, the presentation of a draft list of indicators was not warranted at this stage. Given that the work of the Commission on development of indicators has not even commenced, this technical report and the so-called assessment based on a survey are premature.

The Commission has correctly emphasized that this technical process should not be rushed and we fully agree that the Commission should be allowed the time it needs to fulfill this task as per the timeline it has decided.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

In our view, the objective and purpose of this meeting is not to enter into a negotiation of indicators. We will therefore refrain from commenting on the specific list of indicators presented and we hope others will do so too.

The objective of this meeting must be to allow member states to provide their broad political guidance to the process of development of indicators.

While we do not expect the indicators to be adopted by member states along with goals and targets, it is important for the technical process to follow the wider political guidance emanating out of the intergovernmental negotiation process pertaining to follow-up and review of the agenda.

Mr. Co-Facilitator,

We would like to emphasize the following **seven** points as crucial markers for the development of indicators.

First, development of indicators is a *technical* process and this technical process should be fully consistent with the SDGs and their targets, which have been agreed politically. Development of indicators should not be used to undermine, re-open or even second-guess the agreed outcome of the SDGs.

Second, the indicators are meant to measure progress related to the implementation of the targets. It follows therefore, that indicators should directly relate to and be relevant to the target or targets they are supposed to measure.

In the list presented by the Commission, there are several indicators that do not speak to the targets but instead present quite distinct ideas. This should be avoided. Indicators must follow the political intent behind the targets and not substitute them in any way.

Third, the process of development of indicators must not be used to introduce contentious notions that do not enjoy wide acceptance or to disturb the delicate political balance of the SDGs package, including by over-emphasizing any one dimension of sustainable development.

Fourth, all goals and targets must be treated on equal footing and no target should be left behind. Not all targets may render itself to *measurability* by the same yardstick, but lack of uniform measurability does not mean that some targets are less important than the others. As the report of the OWG emphasized, the SDGs constitute an integrated, indivisible set of global priorities for sustainable development.

Fifth, it needs to be emphasized that the indicator framework being developed by the Statistical Commission/UN Inter-agency task force is for global monitoring of the agenda. Indicators for national level monitoring will be developed by the national statistical authorities subsequently, taking into account their national circumstances and capacities.

Sixth, differentiation in the application of SDGs must be duly noted. The Introduction to the SDGs clearly notes that "*Targets are defined as aspirational global targets, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances*".

Similarly, it should be borne in mind that not all targets are for monitoring of national level actions. Some targets are meant to monitor international actions.

Finally, the most pressing issue when it comes to development of indicators and follow-up of the Post-2015 Development Agenda is 'Capacity deficit', which is most pronounced in the developing countries.

In this context, it is important to recall that target 17.18 of the SDGs has also been framed exclusively in terms of capacity building.

As our Chief Statistician stressed in the meeting of the Statistical Commission earlier this month, it is of central importance that the development of indicators for the SDGs leads to a strengthening of the statistical system. This will require significantly enhanced investments in statistical capacity at the national, regional and international levels. This should be a priority both under this process as well as under the Financing for Development Conference.

I thank you.
