Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level: An Early Examination of Candidate Post-2015 Goals, Targets and Indicators

BACKGROUND
As the 2015 target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, deliberations and negotiations are intensifying on what the successor framework should be. Broad consensus exists that the post-2015 framework should include goals, targets and indicators, like the MDGs. But the architecture for the post-2015 agenda looks set to differ from the MDGs in some significant ways. The framework will likely be universal, applying to all countries, not just developing ones. It appears likely that countries will have greater space to determine their own post-2015 targets, and the corresponding indicators by which they measure progress. The range of issues prioritized in the global framework will be broader, and in many ways more complex, than the issues captured by the MDGs. To better understand how progress is distributed within society, the post-2015 goals will be measured in a disaggregated way.

To support this post-2015 framework, a “data revolution” has been called for. The revolution, it is hoped, will enhance the quality, diversity and accessibility of information available to monitor economic, social and environmental performance at the national and global levels. This should enable governments and decision makers to better track development progress and make more informed policy decisions, as well as equip people with the information and evidence they need to hold their governments and relevant global agencies to account.

THE INITIATIVE
To contribute to this effort, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD, Dhaka) and The North-South Institute (NSI, Ottawa) in association with the network Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals (Southern Voice), are leading an initiative called “Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level: An Early Examination of Candidate Post-2015 Goals, Targets and Indicators.”

The initiative aims to apply a select set of potential post-2015 goals, targets and indicators to a number of low, middle and high income countries. In doing so, it will assess the adequacy of data available for measuring post-2015 progress at the country level, seeking to inform debates and decisions on the architecture and priorities of the “data revolution.” It will also identify opportunities and challenges that may arise from a universal, country-relevant post-2015 framework. Through the process, the initiative seeks to enhance the capacity of Southern think-tanks – who will conduct the country studies – to contribute to the global policy debates shaping the post-2015 agenda, while also ensuring that the global processes are informed by country-level realities.

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE INITIATIVE

| Data adequacy, including disaggregated data, for measuring post-2015 progress at the country level. |
| Feasibility and relevance of selected candidate “zero” or “global minimum standard” targets in different country contexts. |
| Challenges of implementing a universal but country-relevant post-2015 framework, particularly from a measurement perspective. |
| Improvements in data quality, accessibility and transparency at country level and their drivers. |
| Potential of technology-enabled and non-traditional modes of data collection to support measurement of the post-2015 agenda. |
| Different stakeholders’ expectations for the “data revolution,” including likely opportunities and constraints. |
THE COUNTRIES AND PARTNERS

For the initiative, researchers will apply a set of possible post-2015 goals, targets and indicators to a number of low, middle and high income countries. Five countries have been chosen so far, and in each country the research will be conducted by think-tanks, most of which are members of the Southern Voice network. The think tanks and countries are the Centre for Policy Dialogue in Bangladesh; The North-South Institute in Canada; El Grupo Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE) in Peru; Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR) in Sénégal; and Policy Research for Development (REPOA) in Tanzania. Additional countries may be selected.

PROGRESS TO DATE

The inception phase of the project is underway. The plans for the initiative were discussed at a recent methodology and planning workshop in New York in November 2013. Supported by the United Nations Foundation and the Hewlett Foundation, the workshop was attended by statistical, research and policy experts from national statistical authorities, think-tanks, UN agencies, universities, diplomatic missions, and philanthropic foundations from around the world. Participants provided detailed feedback on how to situate the initiative within the broader post-2015 and data revolution discussions, refine the methodology and maximize policy usefulness and impact.

The initiative is moving forward quickly to ensure that the research results and policy recommendations can inform national approaches and inter-governmental discussions on the post-2015 framework broadly, and the data requirement specifically, throughout 2014. The methodology and approach will be publicly available, and partners encourage others to refine and apply it. CPD, NSI and Southern Voice will be engaging with others working in the areas of data assessment to ensure that the initiative is complementary.

INITIATIVE TIMELINE

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<th>Inception</th>
<th>Core Phase</th>
<th>Consolidation</th>
<th>Outreach</th>
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**OUTPUTS**
- *Methodology Workshop (completed, Nov)*
- *Methodology Guide*
- *In-Progress Briefing Note*
- *Op-eds, Blogs*

**OUTREACH**
- *OWG on Sustainable Development (Dec, Jan)*
- *Dialogue on Data & Accountability for the Post-2015 Agenda (Jan)*
- *Phase 2 UN consultations (Jan-Aug)*

**OUTPUTS**
- *Country-level Workshops conducted*
- *In-Progress Briefing Notes*
- *Website online*
- *Op-eds, Blogs*

**OUTREACH**
- *PARIS21 (Feb)*
- *UN DCF (March, July)*
- *HLM of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (April)*

**OUTPUTS**
- *Draft global & country reports*
- *Consolidation Workshop*
- *Op-eds, Blogs, media release*
- *In-Progress Briefing Notes*

**OUTREACH**
- *UNG A meetings*
- *Various local and regional events*

**OUTPUTS**
- *UNG A briefing materials (Sept)*
- *Final reports (Dec)*
- *Op-eds, Blogs, media release*
- *In-Progress Briefing Notes*

**OUTREACH**
- *Side event during UNG A (Sept)*
- *Global Launch of Report (Dec)*
- *Regional and country-level launches (Dec-Feb)*

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