Leaving No One Behind:
Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development

A Shared United Nations System Framework for Action

**United Nations System
Chief Executives Board for Coordination**

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Tools and methodologies for equity/inequality monitoring

Tools and methodologies for equity/inequality monitoring

This list includes illustrative examples of new and innovative approaches being developed within the United Nations system to monitor inequalities, equity and discrimination:

- **The World Health Organization (WHO)'s Health Inequalities Monitoring and the Health Data Collaborative initiatives** are based on 100 core indicators and the WHO Office of the Americas (PAHO) is working with Columbia University's Earth Institute to efforts to ensure that the indicator framework adequately reflects gender, equity, rights and social determinants by deconstructing a core list of 100 indicators by equity gap and gradient.[1] WHO has also developed a monitoring framework with the World Bank on Universal Health Coverage that has equity stratifiers.

- **The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has developed human rights indicators and a human rights-based approach to data collection and disaggregation**, which can be adapted for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This approach entails, *inter alia,* providing guidance on the disaggregation of data at the national level, to ensure that the variables selected are aligned with international standards, including human rights standards on the prohibited grounds of discrimination, and to ensure that the human rights risks of collecting data on marginalized groups are taken into account.

  World Food Programme (WFP) has developed a mobile-phone-based remote survey system, the mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) project. This project collects food security data through short mobile phone surveys using SMS, live telephone interviews and an Interactive Voice Response system to understand the food security situation of people living in places too dangerous or remote for traditional face-to-face data collection. mVAM has provided essential decision support in conflict-affected environments where face-to-face data collection is fraught with risk to staff and survey

respondents. Since mVAM was piloted in 2014 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, it has been deployed to over 20 countries, including for emergencies in West Africa, Iraq, Syria, South Sudan and Yemen. mVAM uses free and open source software, and data are made available on an open access basis.

- **The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has worked to address the statistical challenge of the production of good quality data on small and/or hidden population groups**, who often remain invisible in current data production. These groups include, among others, people who inject drugs, sex workers, victims of trafficking in persons and victims of sexual violence. Traditional household surveys are not well equipped to produce data on such groups (as this would require increases in cost or complexity of survey design). Alternative approaches to estimate small groups include network scale-up methods and respondent-driven sampling, which are tested methodologies that can provide high-quality data in a sustainable manner.

- **The International Labour Organization (ILO) has also reached a new definition of "work" to include many groups that had been previously been invisible in data and statistics**. In particular, informal work, non-paid work, volunteer work and self-production of goods and services will be especially tackled and measured by official statistics under the agreement reached by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians at its 19th session in 2013. Women, who are often deeply involved in these types of activities, will now also be included in employment if they work for pay or profit or in unpaid activities; thus they will no longer be invisible. Women and men from marginalized groups affected by inequalities and discrimination, for instance, Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities or caste-based groups, also tend to be overrepresented in these kinds of work; hence, this move towards better statistics is crucial.

- **The ILO is currently engaged in strengthening existing administrative registries used by ministries of labour or other institutions in order to transform them into valuable and internationally comparable statistical databases.** By coding textual sources from legal frameworks in law and in practice into quantitative figures, countries will be able to monitor qualitative aspects such as labour rights compliance. Turning labour inspection reports into quantitative figures will reveal better information on compliance of labour laws in countries and therefore allow better targeting of policies in order to reduce occupational risks and improving work conditions at the workplace. The ILO is also deeply involved in enhancing capacities in capturing key indicators from establishment surveys as a way of combining information from traditional household surveys. An Inter-Secretariat Expert Group on Household Surveys was created in 2015 by the United Nations Statistical Commission to work with all entities involved in collecting data from households in order to align with the enhanced requirements from the emerging SDG Indicators Framework.

- **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is rolling out a poverty-risk analysis tool, piloted in Latin America**, in order to scale up support for "leaving no one behind", which implies understanding how and why people exit and fall back into poverty. Recent research in Latin America reveals that the household determinants of "moving out of poverty" are systematically different from determinants of "sliding back in". Policies for labour markets, education, social protection, systems of care and access to financial and

physical assets should thus be designed with the specific intent of lifting and keeping people out of poverty.

> **Example: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) tools for evidence-based policymaking on the drivers of inequality**
>
> **The Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI):** Combining a country's achievement in health, education and income with how these achievements are distributed, the IHDI is a tool to inform policies towards inequality reduction, and leads to better understanding of the drivers of inequalities across populations.
>
> **Humanity Divided: Confronting Inequalities in Developing Countries:** This report shows how inequalities of outcome and opportunities are important and how they interact.
>
> **Divergence, Determinants and Impact of Income Inequality in sub-Saharan Africa:** This ongoing comprehensive study on inequality in sub-Saharan Africa focuses on nine countries (Angola, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia) and various sectors (agriculture, manufacturing, extractive and social protection), and analyses the divergence of inequality among countries as well as the determinants and associated development impact of income inequality in the region.
>
> **Progress at Risk: Inequalities and Human Development in Eastern Europe, Turkey, and Central Asia:** This regional Human Development Report focused on the drivers of increasing income inequality in the region and means to address them in the context of the 2030 Agenda commitment to leave no one behind.

- **Based on the Human Development Report and in response to the dearth of data on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, UNDP has launched an LGBTI Inclusion Index.** This global index measures the inclusion of LGBTI people across five elements of sustainable development – political and civic participation, economic well-being, education, health, personal security and violence.

- **UNDP pilots initiatives to localize Sustainable Development Goal 16 targets**, supporting regional and local authorities in applying their national road map for achieving inclusive and peaceful societies at the level of cities, municipalities and local communities. Pilots include innovative engagement processes at the national and local levels, involving stakeholder groups, related awareness campaigns, public administration and local government associations. Pilot countries have mainstreamed SDG 16 targets into national planning and monitoring processes, localized these targets, and developed and adapted diagnostic tools to overcome obstacles. Policy support is provided through a knowledge portal facilitating statistical capacities and inter-agency collaboration.

- **UNDP works with countries to adopt and use a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** to better identify the overlapping deprivations people face and understand the implications for entrenched poverty and inequalities. UNDP strengthens the capacities of local actors to use the index in the design of policies and programmes. National Human

Development Reports, produced over the last two decades, in most cases by national experts with UNDP support, also include a wealth of data and analysis on inequalities.

- **UNDP works with countries in drafting National Human Development Reports that focus specifically on advancing local understanding and analysis of inequalities and their link to development.** The Maldives Human Development Report 2014, for instance, presents a framework that links vulnerability and inequality to the country context. Vulnerabilities are presented and assessed in terms of structural vulnerabilities that relate to the physical setting of the country and the over-reliance of the economy on tourism and imports. The report also assesses other vulnerabilities in terms of risks such as natural disaster incidents, the global financial imbalances, and the recent political and social transition in the country. The report argues that these vulnerabilities have an impact directly on inequality in the various human development dimensions, i.e. on individuals, households and communities.[2]

- **The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and World Food Programme (WFP) collaborate to annually produce the State of Food Insecurity in the World (SOFI) report** to assess progress in reducing food insecurity globally and identify groups being left behind. From 2016 onwards, a revised product is envisaged to be adapted for the 2030 Agenda. In terms of lessons learned, greater disaggregation of data is required, by gender by rural/urban and, where, possible, age. Greater understanding is needed on who and where the people at risk of being left behind are; there are global trends such as urbanization that raise debates on how the spatial distribution of hunger and poverty is likely to evolve in the years ahead.

- **FAO is scaling up its ongoing work on gender statistics in agriculture through its *global strategy for improving agricultural and rural statistics*.** The ultimate goal of this work is to improve the availability of systematically integrated and comparable sex-disaggregated and gender-relevant data within large-scale agricultural surveys (or agricultural modules inserted in household surveys). FAO is presently preparing guidelines to identify key gender-relevant indicators in agriculture and propose questions and modifications to existing agricultural and farm surveys so as to better capture these indicators. The guidelines will take into consideration several aspects of women's and men's roles in agriculture, such as access to and control of productive and non-productive assets, access to financial resources, access to training, groups and associations, time-use and labour and decision-making. The guidelines will consolidate all the gender relevant work carried out to date on best practices in the collection, generation and use of sex-disaggregated agricultural statistics. Emerging and challenging topics such as land ownership and rural women's productive and reproductive work will also be considered, and recommendations will be provided on how to mainstream such topics in the agricultural and farm surveys.

- **FAO develops agricultural statistics, including improving the availability and use of gender statistics,** to inform policy and programme formulation in agriculture and rural development, supporting Member States in capturing the social dimension in agricultural censuses, related rural surveys and food security monitoring, including relevant sex-disaggregated indicators with an agricultural/rural dimension or food security dimension.

FAO guidelines for the World Programme of Agricultural Census 2020 include a focus on the intra-household distribution of ownership and managerial decisions, for sex-specific information about decision-making on agricultural holdings, as well as on women's ownership of critical assets (e.g. land and livestock). FAO's "Voices of the Hungry" project uses a novel approach to collecting nationally representative food insecurity data at the individual level, enabling disaggregation by sex of survey respondent and the re-tabulation of national household surveys, which has led to the creation of a database of key food consumption indicators disaggregated by sex of household head (controlling for key economic and demographic variables). It supports national capacities to integrate the Women's Dietary Diversity Score (WDDS) data into the household budget surveys.

- **In September 2016, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) launched its new Flagship Programme Initiative, "Making Every Woman and Girl Count".** Through partnerships with national statistical offices in developing countries, international statistical agencies and civil society organizations, and with financial support from public and private sector partners, the Initiative aims to affect a radical shift in the production, availability, accessibility and use of quality data and statistics on key aspects of gender equality and women's empowerment. Although more than a quarter of the 230 unique indicators agreed on by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicators to monitor progress in achieving the Goals are explicitly related to gender equality, data are currently unavailable for many of these indicators. Closing these data gaps is of critical importance and will to a large extent determine whether policy efforts are marshalled and the goals and targets achieved or missed.

---

[1] See www.who.int/gho/publications/world_health_statistics/2016/en
[2] UNDP, Maldives Human Development Report 2014 Bridging the Divide: Addressing Vulnerability, Reducing Inequality (2014).