Designing indicators for DRR and SDGs

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A statistical indicator is a summary measure related to a key issue or phenomenon and derived from a series of observed facts.
Types of indicators

• Different kinds of indicators
  – Descriptive (describe situation or trend) / performance (progress towards a target)
  – Economic cycle: leading, coincident, lagging
  – Environment protection: driving force, pressure, state, impact, response
  – Project framework: input, output, outcome, impact
  – Policy-derived frameworks: headline, operational, explanatory, contextual
  – Direct, proxy
  – Objective, subjective
  – Quantitative, qualitative

• Describing complex phenomena
  – Set of indicators
    • Dashboard, scoreboard
  – Composite indicator
    • Advantages: facilitate communication – often attractive to media
    • Disadvantages: construction difficult (weights of components arbitrary), may be misleading and over-simplistic
Quality criteria

• Quality refers to institutional environment, statistical production processes and output
  – Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, mandate to produce data, commitment to quality
  – Sound methodology, appropriate procedures, non-excessive burden on respondents, cost-effectiveness
  – Relevance, accuracy, reliability, timeliness, coherence, comparability, accessibility, clarity

• Quality criteria for an indicator set
  – Relevant and useful for users
  – Methodologically sound
  – Measurable in cost-effective and practical manner, data collection mechanism within reasonable cost, updated at regular intervals
  – Indicators consistent and complementary, limited in number
Development of SDG indicators

- United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) to develop a proposal for indicators for SDGs and targets
- UNSC established Interagency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG)
  - Develop an indicator framework and a list of indicators for the monitoring of SDGs at the global level,
  - Provide support for the implementation of the indicator framework until 2030, review capacity building, report on progress towards SDGs and targets
  - Country led process, 28 countries are members, all other countries and international organizations are observers
  - For UNECE region: CES Recommendations for measuring sustainable development (2013) a good basis
- UN Summit 25-27 September 2015 to adopt the outcome document - final wording of goals and targets
  - Indicator list to be ready by end-Nov. 2015, to be approved in March 2016
Challenges in developing SDG indicators

• Scale
  - MDGs: 8 goals, 21 targets, 60 indicators, for developing countries
  - SDGs: 17 goals, 169 targets, ~170 indicators (?), for all countries

• Complexity
  - indicators must directly respond to the targets, not undermine or re-interpret the targets, not introduce new issues; cover all targets and give equal weight to all targets;
  - targets often multidimensional, the number of global indicators should be limited, too many indicators – difficult to comprehend and communicate

• No overarching view
  - Overlapping, linked, trade-offs

• Reporting burden and level of disaggregation
  - providing data on these challenging even for developed countries
  - data collection and reporting mechanisms still to be worked out

• New areas of statistics
  - Peace, security, governance, human rights

• Global- regional – national level
The challenges for statistical producers

- New competitors & changing expectations
- Increasing cost & difficulty of acquiring data
- New data sources
- Competition for skilled resources
- Rapid changes in the environment
- Reducing budget
Criteria for selecting SDG indicators

• Relevance
  – Linked to the target, policy relevant, applicable to all countries

• Methodological soundness
  – Existing internationally agreed definitions, classifications and methodologies
  – Coherent and complementary

• Measurable
  – Measured in cost-effective and practical way, sustainable, managed by a responsible agency, possibility to disaggregate

• Easy to communicate and access
  – Interpretability

• Limited in number, focused no outcomes
Links to more information

• Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations on Measuring Sustainable Development (2013)
  http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34522

• Towards a harmonized methodology for statistical indicators (2014)

• Getting messages across using indicators (2014)
Thank you!

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