

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Sustainable Development**

REPORT

**Expert Group Meeting on
Indicators of Sustainable Development**

New York, USA

3 - 4 October 2006

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I. Introduction

A. Background

1. The indicators of sustainable development prepared for the Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD) are currently under revision. The main role of the CSD indicators (CSD-ISD) is to serve as reference for countries to develop national indicators for sustainable development.
2. The current CSD-ISD edition was developed between 1994 and 2001 within the CSD Programme of Work on Indicators on Sustainable Development after extensive consultations and national testing programmes. The current CSD-ISD edition consists of 58 indicators embedded in a thematic framework consisting of 15 themes and 38 sub-themes. The work programme was mandated by the CSD and had been developed in response to Chapter 40 of Agenda 21, which calls on countries and the international community to develop indicators of sustainable development.
3. In 2005, the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) within the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) began a review of the CSD indicators as part of its mandated support to United Nations member States in their efforts to develop and implement national indicators for sustainable development. The aim of the review was to incorporate new thinking on sustainable development and the role of indicators, to reflect country experiences with their indicator sets over the past years and to exploit synergies with major indicator initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals and sectoral indicator programmes.
4. The review included three assessments of the following topics: proposals to modify the CSD-ISD submitted by international agencies, coherence between the CSD-ISD and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) indicators, and international and national trends in developing and implementing indicators of sustainable development. It also included an international expert group meeting (EGM) held in December 2005 in New York.
5. The EGM in December 2005 agreed on an interim list of a revised CSD-ISD consisting of 99 indicators. The meeting also agreed to remove explicit division of indicators into four 'pillars' (social, environmental, economic, institutional). It further agreed to distinguish indicators into core and non-core indicators. Core indicators were supposed to be relevant for most countries, whereas non-core indicators would either provide additional information to core indicators or cover issues that are relevant for many but not most countries. The thematic framework should be retained, but themes and sub-themes would have to be modified. Finally, the meeting also discussed other indicator frameworks under development and possible options for future work on indicators.
6. To finalize the review process, DSD convened a second global Expert Group Meeting. The Meeting was held in New York from 3 – 4 October 2006. Ms. Kathleen Abdalla, Chief, National Information, Monitoring and Outreach Branch DESA/DSD, chaired the Meeting.

B. Objectives and expected outcomes

7. The main objective of the meeting was to finalize the revision of the current CSD-ISD. Indicators of Sustainable Development of the Commission of Sustainable Development.
8. The expected outcomes of the meeting were agreements on the list of indicators, their names and basic definitions, on the categorization of indicators into core, non-core or other categories, on the list of themes and sub-themes, on the assignment of indicators to themes and sub-themes and on the timeline to develop and revise the methodology sheets for the CSD indicators.

C. Participants

9. A list of participants is attached as Annex 1 to the report.

II. Outcome of discussion

A . Revised CSD-ISD indicators

10. The meeting agreed that the revised CSD-ISD will be placed in fourteen themes:

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Poverty | Natural hazards | Economic development |
| Governance | Atmosphere | Global economic partnership |
| Health | Land | Consumption and production patterns |
| Education | Oceans, Seas and Coasts | |
| Demographics | Freshwater | |
| | Biodiversity | |

11. The revised CSD-ISD consists of 98 indicators, of which 50 are core indicators. Core indicators cover issues that are relevant for most countries and that are not adequately covered by other core indicators. In addition, core indicators can be calculated by most countries with readily available data or with data that can be available within reasonable time and costs.
12. For all indicators in the CSD-ISD, revised methodology sheets have either been prepared or are under preparation. The indicators outside the core set include a number of indicators for which agreed methodologies are still under development, but that could nevertheless be applied by countries using the basic definition and other information contained in the methodology sheets. Other important issues, such as governance, for which agreed basic definitions are missing are not included in the CSD-ISD, but will be addressed in the upcoming publication on the revised CSD-ISD.

13. The following tables present the revised CSD-ISD on a theme-by-theme basis. Each of the fifteen tables contains sub-themes, names of indicators, and information on whether the indicator is a core indicator. Indicators for which confirmation by the responsible agency on the exact name or other details of the indicator are missing, are marked in italics. As indicators may relate to more than one theme (for example, the indicator on access to sanitation could be assigned to the poverty and the health theme), the forthcoming publication on CSD indicators will contain tables that illustrate the multi-thematic coverage of the indicators. The following tables also list the lead agencies for each indicator and, for easy reference, include information on their status in the list of MDG indicators. It is indicated whether the CSD-ISD are official MDG indicators ('Main'), included in the additional list of MDG indicators on the official MDG indicators website ('Additional'), include a MDG indicator as a subset ('Subset'), or are part of a MDG indicator ('Superset'). It should be noted that the MDG indicators are currently under review.

Poverty

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Income poverty | Percent of Population Living Below National Poverty Line | Yes | World Bank | Additional |
| | Proportion of population below International Poverty Line (\$1 and/or \$2) | | World Bank | Subset |
| Income inequality | Ratio of share in national income of highest to lowest quintile | Yes | World Bank | |
| Sanitation | <i>Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural</i> | Yes | WHO | Main |
| Drinking Water | <i>Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural</i> | Yes | WHO | Main |
| Access to energy | Share of households with access to electricity or commercial energy | Yes | IEA (tbc), IAEA | |
| | Percentage of population using solid fuels for cooking | | WHO | Main |
| Living Conditions | Proportion of urban population living in deprived housing conditions | Yes | UN-HABITAT | Main (different name) |

Governance

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Good governance | Percentage of population having paid bribes or other corruption indicator | Yes | UNODC | |
| Crime | Number of recorded violent crimes and homicides per 100,000 population | Yes | UNODC | |

Health

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Mortality | Mortality rate under 5 years old | Yes | UNPD | Main |
| | Life expectancy at birth | Yes | UNPD | |
| | Healthy life years expectancy | | WHO | |
| Health Care Delivery | Percent of population with access to primary health care facilities | Yes | WHO | |
| | Immunization against infectious childhood diseases | Yes | WHO | Subset |
| | Contraceptive prevalence rate | | WHO | Main |
| Nutritional Status | Nutritional status of children | Yes | WHO | Subset |
| Health status and risks | Prevalence of tobacco use | | WHO | |
| | Suicide rate | | WHO | |
| | <i>Morbidity of major diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis</i> | Yes | WHO | Subset |
| | <i>Morbidity of major childhood diseases such as diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria</i> | | WHO | |

Education

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Education level | Gross intake into last year of primary education, by sex | Yes | UNESCO | Main (different name) |
| | Net enrolment rate in primary education | Yes | UNESCO | Main |
| | Adult secondary (tertiary) schooling attainment level, by sex | Yes | UNESCO | |
| | Life long learning | | Eurostat | |
| Literacy | Adult literacy rate, by sex | Yes | UNESCO | Subset |

Demographics

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Population change | Population growth rate | Yes | UNPD | |
| | Total fertility rate | | UNPD | |
| | Dependency ratio | Yes | UNPD | |
| Tourism | Ratio of local residents to tourists in major tourist regions and destinations | | UNWTO | |

Natural hazards

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|---|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Vulnerability to Natural Hazards | Percentage of population living in hazard prone areas, by type of natural hazard | Yes | UNISDR | |
| Disaster Preparedness and Response | Economic and Human Loss Due to Natural Disasters, as percentage of population and of GDP | | UNISDR | |

Atmosphere

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Climate Change | Emissions of greenhouse gases | | UNFCCC | |
| | CO2 emissions, total and by sector | Yes | UNFCCC | Subset |
| Ozone Layer Depletion | Consumption of ozone depleting substances | Yes | UNEP-Ozone | Main |
| Air Quality | Ambient concentration of air pollutants in urban areas | Yes | WHO | |

Land

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Land use and status | Land use change | | FAO | |
| | Land degradation | | FAO | |
| Desertification | Land affected by desertification | | FAO | |
| Agriculture | Arable and permanent cropland | Yes | FAO | |
| | Efficiency of Fertilizer Use | | FAO | |
| | Use of Agricultural Pesticides | | FAO | |
| | Organic farming as percentage of total farming | | Eurostat | |
| Forests | Forest Area as a Percent of Land Area, | Yes | FAO | Subset |
| | Percent of forests damaged by defoliation | | Eurostat | |
| | <i>Area under sustainable forest management</i> | | FAO | |

Oceans, seas and coasts

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Coastal Zone | <i>Algae Concentration in Coastal Waters</i> | | UNEP | |
| | Percentage of total population living in coastal areas | Yes | CIESIN | |
| | <i>Coastal pollution</i> | | UNEP | |
| Fisheries | Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits | Yes | FAO | |
| Marine environment | Coral reefs | | UNEP-WCMC | |
| | <i>Marine trophic index</i> | | FAO | |
| | <i>Coverage of protected areas as percentage of marine area, total and by ecological region</i> | Yes | UNEP-WCMC | Superset |

Freshwater

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Water Quantity | <i>Water use as a percentage of renewable water resources</i> | Yes | FAO | |
| | Water use intensity by industry | Yes | UNSD | |
| Water Quality | BOD in Water Bodies | | UNEP | |
| | Concentration of faecal Coliform in Freshwater | Yes | WHO | |
| | Wastewater treatment | | UNSD | |

Biodiversity

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Ecosystem | <i>Coverage of protected areas as percentage of terrestrial area, total and by ecological region</i> | Yes | UNEP-WCMC | Superset |
| | Management effectiveness of protected areas | | IUCN, UNEP-WCMC | |
| | Area of Selected Key Ecosystems | | UNEP-WCMC | |
| | Fragmentation of habitat | | UNEP-WCMC | |
| Species | Abundance of Selected Key Species | | UNEP-WCMC | |
| | Assessment of threatened species | Yes | IUCN | |
| | Invasive species | | UNEP-WCMC | |

Economic development

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|---|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Macroeconomic Performance | GDP per Capita | Yes | UNSD | |
| | Investment Share in GDP | Yes | UNSD | |
| | Savings Rate | | UNSD | |
| | Adjusted net savings rate | | World Bank | |
| | Inflation | | tbd | |
| Sustainable Public Finance | Debt to GNI ratio | Yes | World Bank | |
| Employment | Labor productivity and unit labor costs | Yes | ILO | |
| | Employment-population ratio, by sex | Yes | ILO | |
| | Employment Status, by sex | | ILO | |
| | Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector | Yes | ILO | Main |
| Information and Communication Technologies | Internet users per 100 population | Yes | ITU | Main |
| | Fixed Telephone lines per 100 population | | ITU | Main |
| | Cellular subscribers per 100 population | | ITU | Main |
| Research and Development | R&D Expenditure as percentage of GDP | | UNESCO | |
| Tourism | Tourism contribution to GDP | Yes | UNWTO | |

Global economic partnership

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicator</i> |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Trade | Current account deficit as percentage of GDP | Yes | tbd | |
| | Share of imports from developing countries and from LDCs | | UNSD | |
| | <i>Average tariff barriers against imports from developing countries and LDCs</i> | | World Bank | Superset/Subset |
| External financing | Net Official Development Assistance (ODA) given or received as a percentage of GNI | Yes | OECD | Main |
| | FDI inflows and outflows as percentage of GNI | | tbd | |
| | Remittances as percentage of GNI | | tbd | |

Consumption and production patterns

| <i>Sub-theme</i> | <i>Indicator</i> | <i>Core indicator</i> | <i>Lead agency</i> | <i>MDG indicators</i> |
|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Material Consumption | Material intensity of the economy | Yes | Eurostat | |
| | Domestic material consumption | | Eurostat | |
| Energy Use | Annual Energy Consumption | Yes | UNSD | |
| | Share of renewable and non-renewable sources in total energy supply | | UNSD | |
| | Intensity of Energy Use, total and by sector | Yes | UNSD | Main |
| Waste Generation and Management | Generation of Waste | | UNSD | |
| | Generation of Hazardous Waste | Yes | UNEP-SBC | |
| | Management of Radioactive Waste | | IAEA | |
| | Waste Treatment and Disposal | Yes | UNSD | |
| Transportation | Car share of inland passenger transportation | Yes | Eurostat | |
| | Road share of inland freight transport | | Eurostat | |
| | Fuel use by distance of passenger transportation (Energy intensity of transport) | | IEA (tbc), IAEA | |

B. Conclusions and next steps

14. The meeting agreed that lead agencies will submit outstanding methodologies sheets by 6 November 2006 to DSD. DSD will circulate the methodology sheets to EGM participants for review and comments
15. DSD will also circulate a draft of the publication containing the CSD-ISD, which will include guidance on applying and adapting the CSD-ISD for the development of national indicator sets as well as short descriptions of each indicator and further background material. The complete methodology sheets may be published in electronic format only, thereby easing the incorporation of methodological updates and drastically reducing the number of pages of the publication.
16. The guidance material will emphasize that the CSD-ISD is a flexible indicator set that countries are invited to adapt and modify to suit their needs and priorities with regard to sustainable development. The linkages between indicators of sustainable development and national sustainable development strategies will be explicitly discussed. This discussion will include, among others, the role of national targets for sustainable development.
17. The publication will include information on the relationship of the CSD-ISD to Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the MDG indicators.
18. Concerted efforts by all actors will increase efforts to leverage the CSD-ISD at the national level with other, possibly on-going activities. These efforts could include capacity-building activities specifically on indicators of sustainable development and the incorporation of the CSD-ISD into capacity-building activities in related areas, such as statistical capacities, sector-specific indicators and information management systems, comprehensive development strategies (NSDS, MDG-based strategies, poverty reduction strategies, national developments plans) and reporting obligations of multilateral environmental agreements.
19. Continuing inter-agency cooperation will ensure the coherence of CSD-ISD with other indicator processes such as the MDG indicators, the 2010 Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, the Hyogo Framework for Action on disaster reduction and others.
20. Technical work, including through expert groups, would further the methodological status and technical depth of a number of CSD-ISD.
21. Country experiences in applying and adapting the CSD-ISD will provide important information for further work on indicators of sustainable development. The expert group agreed to examine ways to highlight these experiences, including voluntary reporting to the CSD.

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