ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Committee on STATISTICS
11-13 December 2024
Power of Data

Side Event: Can a Country-First Approach Drive Smarter Data Monitoring?

Concept Note

12 December 2024, 13:00-14:00 hrs., UN Conference Centre, Bangkok

Background

Demands on countries to produce indicators continue to grow with an increasing number of national, regional and global frameworks and initiatives, each with a range of reporting requirements.

Countries are doing their best to meet these growing demands within resource constrained environments, however, much more could be done to streamline and prioritise countries own monitoring needs enabling them to report progress regularly against each of their priority areas.

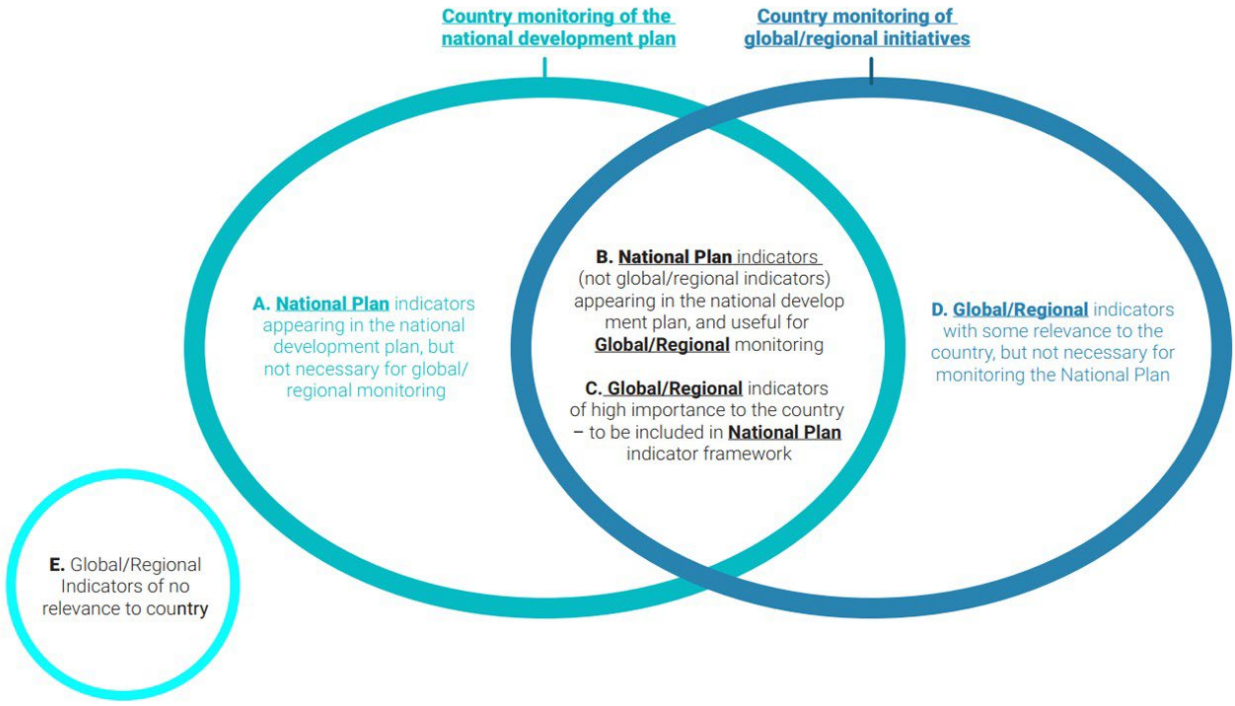
On average, half of the SDG indicators do not have sufficient data to properly assess progress in Asia and the Pacific. Enhancing coordination and effective SDG data sharing and use within countries and with international partners is needed to fill the remaining data gaps. However, it is also clear that not all indicators are relevant and / or are not considered a national priority. There is a need to balance the need for internationally comparable data with the need for data which meets the national context and national priorities.

The demands for global data are growing with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) being particularly challenged with smaller statistical offices, often with lower capacity than larger more developed countries.

It can be argued that a lot of focus and support that is provided to countries to address data gaps and needs is centred around development partner priorities (at times unrealistic), with insufficient effort placed on what countries should be prioritizing, especially given their limited capacities. For example, the National Development Plan is probably the most important document to guide sustainable development in most countries yet throughout the life-cycle of these documents, we see little annual reporting to demonstrate progress, especially through the document's indicator framework developed for that very purpose.

New ways need to be identified to work better with countries to put the emphasis back on national priority reporting, done in a way which is manageable to each specific country.

An example of such is promoting a “Core Set” of indicators which places the National Development Plan as the focus, topped up by additional indicators countries chose to monitor to enable more enhanced reporting against global and regional initiatives they wish to also monitor proactively. See diagram below for an example.



Objectives

This side event will explore how real “data gaps” should be defined at the national level, with a focus on SIDS, and whether the emphasis by both country and supporting partners/donors are addressing this problem in the most effective way, achieving the most optimal results.

The event will look at what are the most effective ways to build sustainable capacity to produce and use official statistics. The side event will be open to all participants attending the 2024 Asia-Pacific statistics week with a focus on Small Island Developing States with lessons that are applicable to other countries.

In particular, the following questions will be posed to the panelists (a mix of data users and data providers) and audience:

1. **Addressing Reporting Priorities:**
   Given the resource constraints many Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face, are national reporting priorities being effectively addressed? Are development partners and donors doing enough to empower SIDS to lead on setting and implementing national priorities?

2. **Challenges in Reporting Processes:**
   What are the main challenges your country faces with global and national reporting processes? Would streamlining these processes help to address priority data gaps?

3. **Effectiveness of SDG Reporting:**
   How effective and current is SDG progress reporting for SIDS? What lessons can be learned from this process to inform the upcoming Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), and for the Pacific, the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent?

4. **Coordination of Reporting Processes:**
   How well aligned are reporting processes within your country and what opportunities exist to improve coordination mechanisms?

5. **Data Collection and National Priorities:**
   Do current data collection efforts (e.g., surveys and censuses) adequately address your country's priority reporting needs? How do you ensure data aligns with these priorities?

Organization & speakers

The panel includes a range of speakers from different roles across government to provide a range of perspectives. Speakers will be asked to talk and not to use slides.

Moderator

- **Mr Peter Ellis,** Director, Statistics for Development Division, Pacific Community

Distinguished Speakers

- **Ms Aishath Hassan,** Chief Statistician of Maldives Bureau of Statistics, Maldives
- **Mr Amenatave Yauvoli,** Ambassador of Fiji to Indonesia, Permanent Representative of Fiji to ESCAP
- **Ms Taggy Tangimetua,** Government Statistician, National Statistics Office of Cook Islands
- **Mr Leota Aliielua Salani,** Government Statistician, Samoa Bureau of Statistics

Short bio of moderator and speakers



Moderator: Mr Peter Ellis, Director Statistics for Development Division at the Pacific Community (SPC) brings more than 20 years of leadership experience in the public sector and consultancy, in Australia, New Zealand and Timor-Leste. He has particular expertise in helping teams of technical staff through change, including transformation of official statistics production. He holds a Master of Applied Statistics from the Australian National University and a Master of Development Studies from Murdoch University. He is an Accredited Statistician with the Statistical Society of Australia.



Ms. Aishath Hassan, Chief Statistician of Maldives Bureau of Statistics. was appointed as the Chief Statistician of Maldives Bureau of Statistics on 18th August 2021. She joined Maldives Bureau of Statistics in 2000 and held various positions in the field of Economic Statistics and have attended various trainings. Prior to her appointment, she held the position of Statistician, heading National Accounts and Economic Statistics Division of Maldives Bureau of Statistics.



Mr Leota Aliielua Salani, Government Statistician at the Samoa Bureau of Statistics, has 30 years of public service experience, including 14 years as Assistant Chief Executive Officer and 10 years at the Ministry of Finance. He has led initiatives in statistics strategy, capacity building, macro-economic statistics, and national accounts. Regionally recognized, he chairs the Pacific Island National Accounts Committee, is Vice Chair of the Pacific Statistics Methods Board, and is a member of ESCAP and UN expert groups on economic statistics.



Mr Amenatave Yauvoli, Ambassador of Fiji to Indonesia, Permanent Representative of Fiji to ESCAP, is a distinguished diplomat and seasoned professional with over 30 years of experience at national, regional, and international levels of engagements. He has held significant leadership roles, as Fiji's Roving Ambassador to the Pacific, Director General of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Secretariat, and Fiji's Lead Negotiator for Climate Change and Oceans. His contributions in these regional and multilateral forums reflect his commitment towards advocating and championing for sustainable development in Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS).



Ms Taggy Tangimetua, Government Statistician & Chief Electoral Officer, Cook Islands, has over 20 years of experience as both a Government Statistician and Chief Electoral Officer. She holds a BA in Economics and Management, a Postgraduate Diploma in Economics, and a Masters in Business Administration, reflecting a solid academic foundation that complements her extensive practical experience. Throughout her career, Taggy has contributed to the fields of statistics and governance, supporting initiatives to improve data collection, analysis, and utilization. She is

committed to fostering evidence-based decision-making and maintaining transparency in electoral processes. With a wealth of experience in managing big projects such as Population Censuses, Household Surveys, Parliamentary Elections, Local Government Elections, Taggy focuses on improving national statistics and upholding electoral integrity, helping to strengthen public institutions.

Contact details

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