

Meeting Report: Measuring Progress in the Implementation of SDGs, the Role of Data and Statistics in Monitoring Land Administration and Management

28 February 2019
Palais des Nations, Building A, Salle XII



Background

Agenda 2030 recognizes the importance of land in achieving the sustainable development goals, including SDG1: Ending Poverty in All Its Form; SDG2: Eradicating Hunger; SDG5: Achieving Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women; and SDG11: Building Inclusive and Resilient Cities. The New Urban Agenda further underscores the importance of land governance in urban planning and development. Improving land administration and management practices often results in the long-term and sustainable investment opportunities; both in rural and urban areas with sectors like agriculture and infrastructure development at the core for most economies in UNECE region and globally.

With the inclusion of land in the SDGs, including a robust monitoring framework to measure progress through specific land indicators 1.4.2 and 5.a.1. governments are challenged to provide robust and comparable data, both administrative and survey data to measure progress against targets 1.4 and 5.a.

The UN Custodian agencies for these two indicators – UN Habitat, World Bank and FAO – have joined forces to align methodologies for monitoring these two indicators and developed a joint module that could be attached to household surveys for data collection. Both indicators are now classified as Tier II by the UN Interagency Expert Group on SDGs (IAEG-SDGs) and custodian agencies are disseminating the approved methodologies while supporting countries to achieve timely and regular data collection and reporting on these indicators.

Building on the work of UNECE, member States were given the opportunity to reflect on progress made in the implementation, monitoring and reporting on SDG1 and 5 and share their experiences in land data production and reporting. The Custodian agencies presented the approved methodology and the joint module for computing the two indicators. Building on highly developed

country data infrastructure from UNECE member States, participants also reflected on the new emerging requirements for monitoring land in the SDGs and their application in the region.

The event was organised jointly by the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration and the UN Custodian Agencies for Land Indicators in the SDGs (UN-Habitat, FAO and the World Bank), and the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII) of GLTN

Mr. Frederik Zetterquist, the Chair of the Working Party on Land Administration, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. In the opening speech, together with the Co-Chair of the meeting, **Ms. Everlyne Nairesiae**, the Coordinator of Global Land Indicators Initiative, **Mr. Zetterquist** introduced the initiative and the idea behind “the SDGs and the role of Custodian agencies. Reflecting on the distinctiveness of the UNECE region, **Ms. Everlyne Nairesiae** highlighted the strength of the region in terms of its data-gathering capacity, noting that other countries are looking up to the UNECE member States for best practices. At this point, she singled out the key questions with respect to data gathering, analysis and reporting that need to be addressed – namely, what, who, when and why for comparability, better coordination, synergies and complementarity of related data efforts – adding that land indicators in the SDGs framework and related efforts towards global monitoring of progress on land tenure and governance issues is well positioned increase access to land data and statistics for policy decisions.

Professor Dr. Rudolf Staiger, the President of FIG, joined the Chair and Co-Chair on the floor by delivering a presentation on the background and current activities of FIG related to SDGs. In his speech, he spoke about the FIG Task Forces, created with purpose to produce reports on topics deemed as most pressing for the surveying community. In his remarks, he briefly reflected on the work of the FIG Task Force on SDGs and its two main goals: 1) to identify the SDGs goals where the community may have the biggest impact, which have included SDG1 covering land among others that are strongly linked to geodata 2) to coordinate their work on whose SDGs among the existing 10 FIG Commissions¹.

Mr. Kees de Zeeuw, the Director of Kadaster International and Co-Chair of the Expert Group on Land Administration spoke about the status of land administration agencies in the implementation of land-related SDGs, focusing in particular on current achievements, challenges and opportunities. Reflecting on the paradigm shift from MDGs to SDGs, he noted the importance of actually achieving the SDGs, without getting lost in monitoring and measuring. He then presented a number of examples to illustrate how land administration can contribute to sustainable development goals; in Kenya, working with local surveyors to introduce smart devices that allow people to deal with land administration in a quick, cheap, and effective manner; in Colombia, showing how using smart devices and Real-time kinematic positioning (RTKs), together with training young people on how to use them, can help overcome the problem of lack of access to land data in certain areas given natural obstacles or minefields. He further added in Mozambique, where programmes focused on capacity-building substantially increased user participation; in Nepal, where new technologies were used to allow the locals to identify their land on satellite images to allow for its registration; or Indonesia, where the process of participative mapping has yielded palpable results, citing the application of GLTN tools like Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM). Touching upon the example of the Netherlands, **Mr. Kees de Zeeuw** observed that while the Netherlands is faring quite well in terms of some SDG targets – such as economy and labour, health, water sanitation, aid and trade, when it comes to the targets related to climate and energy, gender equality, the environment and education, the overall picture becomes considerably different. Finally, by re-emphasising the commitment of Dutch Kadaster to the SDGs, he finished by noting that good land governance and administration is a prerequisite for the SDGs.

Mr. Steven Vale, Regional Advisor at the UNECE Statistics Division, provided an overview of the work of UNECE done to assist the member States in measuring and monitoring their SDGs achievements. He began by reflecting on the existing challenges in coordinating the data for SDGs, most notably, complex infrastructure and diverse actors. This complex landscape means that there

¹ <http://fig.net/organisation/comm/index.asp>

currently exist 232 indicators, based on data provided by 193 countries, from 30+ agencies from each country, compiled by 50 international organisations. The aim of the UNECE Statistics is to try work through this complexity to upscale efficiency for SDGs statistics, and produce the SDG indicators through collaboration between all UNECE work programmes. Central here has been the UNECE Roadmap on Statistics for SDGs, a guidance document on how to set up an efficient system of SDG statistics, which was endorsed in 2017 by over 65 national statistical offices. Moreover, UNECE has also developed guidance on national reporting platforms (NRP) which can be used to collect data on SDGs from many national agencies, and provide national statistics to users, including to international organisation. At present, 24 countries have or are in the process of setting up the NRPs. He finished by reflecting on the stratification of existing indicators into three tiers and their respective custodian agencies, and by briefly reflecting on the ongoing and future events.

Ms. Elena Busch, Senior Engineer at Norwegian Mapping Authority, spoke about linking national mapping agencies and national statistical offices, and built her presentation around the Norwegian support to the land sector in Kyrgyzstan. She briefly reflected on two main phases and aims of the project, specifically 1) securing ownership of land in Kyrgyzstan, a project implemented between 2013-2016, which contributed to improved accuracy of cadastral maps and developed specifications for a new IT system for registration of property rights 2) geographic information for statistics, project implemented between 2018-2020, which involved preparing for population and housing census 2020, reporting achievements on SDGs in Kyrgyzstan, preparation of photomaps for 22 000 m², preparation of large scale topographic maps for Bishkek, including the airport, and a national geoportal for distribution of geographical information on Internet. At the Q&A Session, **Ms. Elena Busch** clarified that such between-country projects constitute important part of their work, and that they have had and planned them in Kazakhstan, Moldova, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, and Ukraine, among others.



Next, the Custodians introduced the SDGs joint module for monitoring and land tenure indicators 1.4.2. and 5.a.1. **Mr. Robert Ndugwa**, from UN-Habitat, set the stage by presenting an overview of the process and milestones achieved on the said indicators, and how this inspired the need for a joint methodology developed by the Custodians. For instance, the indicator 1.4.2. focuses on the proportion of adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with 2 basic components: a) legally recognized documentation b) who perceive their rights to land as secure, disaggregated by sex and by

type of tenure. Similarly, 5.a.1. focuses on a) percentage of people with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land (out of total agricultural population), by sex, and b) share of women among owners and rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.

At this point, it is key to go back to the initial question of “who, what, where, when” raised in the beginning and try to clarify who is doing what in global SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting. Hence, the national statistical systems collect the data according to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and provide data and metadata for global reporting. Regional mechanisms are in place to facilitate, as appropriate, the data and metadata transmission process from the national to the global level. The role of Custodian agencies is to develop internationally agreed standards, methodologies and coordinate on the indicator development, facilitate capacity development for country level data collection, analysis and reporting standards for SDGs through National Statistical Organisations, Land and other data agencies at countries (or regional organisations as appropriate); calculate global and regional aggregates; and support increased adoption and compliance with internationally agreed standards at the national levels; and finally, to strengthen national statistical capacity and improve reporting mechanisms.

He then reflected on some of the main challenges. With respect to data limitations 1) tenure insecurity is partly caused by limited capacities for land management, data collection and monitoring, and inadequate existing sex disaggregated data and information system, poorly kept land registers, limited data on large or densely populated geographical areas 2) coverage of administrative data may be geographically skewed 3) logistical constraints in the implementation of household surveys 4) realisation of women’s land right can be affected by interplay of intra-household and community level inequalities, along with different land regimes that do not recognize women’s land rights. Some of the possible solutions include expanding sex disaggregated data collection, targeting 50% of all countries and populations and by region by 2020; increased advocacy, integrating the SDG module in the upcoming household surveys; harmonizing capacity building materials, e-learning, and so on.

Finally, **Ms. Sydney Gourlay** from the World Bank and **Ms. Yonca Gurbuzer** from the FAO presented on the content of the joint module. The emphasized on the importance of the joint module increasing data collection efficiency, reducing costs and enabling countries to collect data required to compute and report on both SDG land indicators 1.4.2 and 5.a.1. With respect to reasons for harmonization, they observed that while indicator 5.a.1 focuses on gender parity in ownership and tenure rights over agricultural rights, indicator 1.4.2 recognizes the importance of strengthening secure tenure rights for all. So, there is similarity in data needs: SDG 1.4.2: perception of tenure security, legally recognized documentation, SDG 5.a.1: alienation rights and legally recognized documentation. Harmonization allows for more effective and hassle-free approach to data collection. However, there are also differences in these indicators: both of them deal with land and individual rights and promote sex-disaggregated data. However, they are different in that 1) they look at different types of land (1.4.2 all types of land, 5.a.1. focus on agricultural land) 2) they look at different populations (1.4.2. whole adult population in the country, 5.a.1. at agricultural population) 3) they differ in the span of land tenure rights definitions (1.4.2. looks at legally recognized documents and perceptions on tenure security, 5.a.1. looks at de facto tenure rights by considering both legal documentation and alienation rights.)

FAO, UN Habitat, and the World Bank have collaborated to align concepts, definitions and data collection tools, to facilitate countries in the collection and generations of these indicators for SDGs reporting. They also discussed in greater depth strategies for data collection, including advantages and disadvantages of most common surveys used, noting that these have to be tailored to individual country’s needs and context. Customization is one of the most delicate aspects to take into account when dealing with global level indicators. There are two main principles that need to be balanced: 1) ensure comparability of results across countries 2) adapt to the characteristics and needs of specific contexts. In their concluding remarks, they discussed the next steps for the Custodians, including continuing joint workshops and events, and the release of a joint publication on Measuring Individuals’ Right to Land, and supporting countries in their identification of the most appropriate data collection vehicle for indicators 1.4.2 and 5.a.1 and inclusion of the joint questionnaire module in upcoming surveys as may be relevant.

At the Q&A segment of the meeting **Ms. Everlyne Nairesiae** once again raised the question of how can the UNECE take the lead in this regard and asked the present countries for their comments on the Custodians' presentations. The intervention by **Russia** stressed its achievements in the field of sustainable housing, and registration and counting system in Russia; noting that emphasis needs to be placed on technology to pull out information in a more efficient way as a way of complementing the administrative data that is already there. The delegates from **Belarus** expressed interest in the Custodians' initiative and noted that would welcome future cooperation. The need to pay adequate attention to specificities of local context when it comes to components of SDG land indicators was repeatedly stressed, illustrated by example provided by Belarus delegates, who noted that, owing to the legacy of Soviet era, there are more properties registered on female than male owners; whereas the **UK**, on the other hand, do not even record the owner's gender in property registration. In his concluding remarks, **Mr. Steven Vale**, Regional Advisor at the UNECE Statistics Division welcome the conversation and its relevance to the UNECE – WPLA, advising that the conversation should continue and that UNECE region already has sufficient administrative data but lag behind in survey data, a gap that can be filled to ensure compliance with SDGs reporting. The meeting ended with Co-Chairs thanking everyone for their contribution and expressing hope in future fruitful cooperation on SDG land indicators with UNECE Member states and globally.