



4th Meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) Report back

The 4th meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), was held at the United Nations Commission for Europe in Geneva from 15 to 18 November 2016.

The meeting was a good space to learn about the status of the indicators framework and to confirm that room to influence the indicators framework is pretty much closed. It was an a strategic opportunity to coordinate with wider civil society organizations from the economic, environmental and social fields who have been following this process more closely and to learn how much space there actually is in putting some of the issues around gender and SRHR on the table. Many of the civil society organizations present were open to include a gender lens and SRHR issues in their own statements. Civil Society present were allocated time throughout the Plenary Meeting to deliver their statements on the following agenda items:

1. Presentation of the tier system for the indicators and reclassification of indicators under different tiers
2. Review of plans for Tier III indicators and expression of interest from custodian agency for those indicators that do not yet have a Custodian Agency
3. Refinement of indicators and analysis from the consultations
4. Process for reporting from national to international statistical systems
5. Work plan on disaggregation and best practice to increase disaggregation of the SDGs indicators

Highlights from the meeting:

- The [tweaking and refinements of indicators](#) seem to [be focusing on weakening some of the indicators](#), particularly those related to gender and SRH+RR
- The IAEG met for two days prior to the Plenary Session with the larger CSOs, member states and UN agencies attending the meeting and there was no information shared/feedback shared with the larger group. This was an issue raised during the interactive session between the chair and Civil Society along with the lack of discussions on the baseline for the indicators framework

- There seem to be confusion about the Indicators classification and Tier System and some viewing Indicators under Tier III as second class indicators – the Chair assured the group that this was not the case and have expressed a desire to figure out a new way to convey the situation with indicators that are ready to be rolled out and those that need further work on methodology and coverage frequency (Indicators under Tier 3 and 2 respectively)
- For the Tier III indicators workplan the IAEG-SDGs will review them and identify those indicators whose development is quite advanced and can be ‘fast tracked’ into Tier II. The IAEG will review these ‘fast-tracked’ indicators in the March meeting in 2017
- Refinement of Indicators – there seemed to be some positive movement on indicator 3.8.2 on health coverage and agreement that 25% cap for household expenditure on health is too high
- As result of the consultations the IAEG made some changes on the Tier classification for some of the indicators under the health goal (3.3.1. # of new HIV infections; and 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate) and the gender goal (5.3.1 and 5.3.2 Child early and forced marriage, and the one FGM) moving them from Tier 1 to Tier 2 under the ration that there is not enough data coverage for them therefore (some people including government see this as a downgrade because indicators under Tier 1 are the ones supposedly ready to go and be adopted by governments at the national level. It would be good to see what others at the meeting say about this shift.
 - o This is problematic particularly because some countries will use this as way out of reporting. For example, some countries do not have enough data coverage on FGM because it is not predominantly an issue in a given region/country.
- Disappointing was the IAEG willingness to accept the addition of men to target 5.6.2 which is aimed to measure laws and regulation that guarantee SRH +RR to women; the refinement include men while also proposing to remove the upper age bracket and a Member State suggested adding “disaggregated by sex” to the end of the indicators. The original indicator read: Indicator 5.6.2: "Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education". A Possible Refinement to Indicator 5.6.2: "Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women and men aged 15-49 access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education"; suggested at the IAEG meeting: Number of countries with law and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 year and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education disaggregated by sex”

There was also general consensus among CSOs that many of the proposed indicators dilute [the aims of the targets](#) (this is a case in point with indicators under goal 10 and 17); another concern for Civil Society present was the [status of the indicators in Tier III](#) and the lack of clarity on the work plan for it to be considered ready to be rolled up (Please see statement by Civil Society delivered by RESURJ member,

Chantal Umuhoza). All statements made by Civil Society can be found [here](#) and the way forward/work plan [here](#). It is clear that the opportunity to influence discussions at the meeting is limited and CSOs and mobilization at the national level and in advance of these meetings are extremely important. Although there seem to be little room to influence strengthening the indicators, there seem to be a lot of work done within the IAEG to dilute the same. Therefore we must continue to be watchful in holding the base of what we currently have.