



Call for Reflection

DEFICIENCIES OF SELECTED INDICATORS FOR GOAL 17 TARGETS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND ADDITIONS

Background

This Call for Reflection is an excerpt from the CSEND Working Paper No. 1/2015, “*Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Sustainable Development Goals through System Theory Perspectives*” by Roland Bardy/Raymond Saner/Lichia Yiu, retrievable at http://www.csend.org/images/articles/files/20150424_System_Perspective_on_SDG_Indicators_Measurements.pdf

The Working Paper is a response to the invitation by the UN Statistical Commission for “Stakeholder Feedback on the Recommended Indicators the Post-2015 Targets”. The indicators which are to be employed for measuring progress of the Post-2015 SD Agenda were recommended by the Commission during the Forty-Sixth session on 3-4 March 2015. CSEND submitted an upload to the Website provided by the Commission with suggestions for improvement and posted a link to the URL of the Working Paper on April 25, 2015.



The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are interrelated and this interrelatedness should be reflected by the targets and indicators listed in the Working draft of the Bureau of the UNSC. For the SDGs to succeed, an institutional infrastructure must be put in place that facilitates the interrelatedness of the SDGs. The CSEND group suggests that the SDGs can be made a reality provided three Strategies are applied to the SDGs namely a) Capability Approach, b) Capacity Development and c) Systemic Principles (see working paper listed above). This three-prone strategy can be successfully implemented through valuations that measure the stocks of Social Capital, i.e. the public goods that constitute a society’s social institutional infrastructure. The following list illustrates how this three prone strategy can be applied to SDG Goal 17.

Deficiencies of Goal 17		Suggested Corrections
17.1.1	Neither can be used to estimate whether a tax system is fair and equitable, nor if taxes are paid. as levied and if the tax system has changed. The indicators do not monitor the support effort.	(1) Composite indicator which captures tax equity and good governance
17.1.2		(2) Measure the support effort
17.2.1	Appropriate use and impact of the assistance should also be determined.	(1) Determine ODA targets aligned to the Busan Declaration and its “fit” with national conditions

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17.2.2		(2) Monitor the decision making process and fulfillment of ODA targets
17.3.1/2	Reducing the cost of remittances does not suffice to ease overseas transfers.	Determine other means that remove blockages for funds transfers
17.4.1/2	The HIPC Initiative is nearly completed.	Means should be explored to prevent HIPCs from falling into debt traps again, with careful gauging
17.5.1/2	Including SD orientated targets and changing investment policies may still conceal institutional deficiencies and other SD policy weaknesses.	Connect SD targets to targets that monitor institutional capacities and development.
17.6.1/2	Technology proliferation needs absorptive capacity and experimental spaces; if they are missing, exchange will fail.	Measure absorptive capacity and progression on institutional readiness
17.7.1/2	Measuring STEM investment as a percentage of GDP or per capita may not reveal whether sufficient innovation exists.	Indicators to include innovation-commercialization linkage and supportive mechanisms
17.8.1/2	ICT is fundamental for economic efficiency and productivity; but this resource only produces value if integrated into workforce	Indicators to include information technology literacy and workplace adoption
17.13.1/2	It may be questioned if GDP can really measure global economic stability and policy coherence	Indicators to include good governance, system risk and resilience
17.14.1/2	The indicators just score the number of countries which joined agreements and coordination mechanisms	Indicators to include how the agreements are implemented and whether enforcement mechanism is deployed
17.15.1/2	The indicators are given a non-feasibility ranking; this shows a wrong view on the positive effects of fiscal cooperation	More explication is needed on the issue which might revert the rating of the indicators
17.18.1/2	What is missing is an approach that relates macro-level indexes to the micro level	Develop macro-micro linkages in SD indexes and incorporate disaggregated data at regional / national level
17.19.1/2	The System of National Accounts to which the Nordhaus/Tobin Index connects does not fully cover the cost of public goods	Connect public goods usage with measuring performance and return of such public resources at the business level

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