

# The Role of Third-Party Data in Follow-Up and Review for the Post-2015 Agenda

ORGANIZED BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF MEXICO TO THE UN, THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE UN, THE TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY & PARTICIPATION (TAP) NETWORK AND UN NON-GOVERNMENTAL LIAISON SERVICE (UN-NGLS)

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Transparency, Accountability & Participation in Post-2015



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## INTRODUCTION

On Thursday, 23 July 2015, the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN, the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN, the Transparency, Accountability and Participation (TAP) Network and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) co-hosted a side-event entitled *“The Role of Third-Party Data in Follow-Up and Review for the Post-2015 Agenda”* with participants and experts present from Member States, civil society and the UN system.

This side event provided an opportunity for a wide range of experts to take a deeper examination of the role of third-party data in complementing official sources of data for the Post-2015 agenda, and highlight ways in which these third-party actors are already contributing towards various UN-related processes, on a wide range of topics.

### Panel of Speakers:

- **Ms. Lisa Bersales**, [Head of Philippines Statistics Authority \(PSA\)](#); [Co-Chair of IAEG-SDGs](#)
- **Mr. Dámaso Luna**, *Deputy Director General for Global Affairs*, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico](#)
- **H.E. Mr. Peter van der Vliet**, *Deputy Permanent Representative*, [Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN](#)
- **Mr. Tom Wheeler**, *Conflict and Security Adviser*, [Saferworld](#)
- **Mr. Jose Manuel Roche**, *Head of Research*, [Save the Children UK](#)
- **Ms. Neli Esipova**, *Director of Research on Global Migration*, [Gallup](#)

**Respondent:** **Mr. Stefan Schweinfest**, *Director*, [UN Statistics Division](#)

**Moderator:** **Ms. Susan Alzner**, *Officer in Charge – New York*, [UN-NGLS](#)

## SUMMARY

**Ms. Lisa Bersales**, *Head of Philippines Statistics Authority (PSA)*; *Co-Chair of IAEG-SDGs* opened discussions by stating she is very interested in third-party data in monitoring the SDGs. She highlighted the strong engagement of third-party data with the PSA. The PSA engagement of third-party data was not only on data but also on developing methodology.

Ms. Bersales stated there were two collaboration between the PSA and third-party data: 1) developing sources of additional data and 2) developing methodology. This was done without any clear direction on how to integrate third-party data. The PSA is currently looking at enhancing third-party data at the national level in the context of the data revolution. She highlighted the Philippines is a pilot country for [Paris21](#).

Ms. Bersales underlined in monitoring the MDGs, the Philippines uses only official statistics. However, other data sources are available and have been used by the Philippines collected by industry, manufacturing, semi-conductor and agriculture associations. On third-party collaboration and

methodology development, civil society has been assisting in developing methodology. Academia has been helping the PSA review and develop methodology that can be used at the municipal level.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Bersales underlined the PSA is already looking at third party sources for monitoring the SDGs. She stressed the regularity of release and robustness of the statistical methodology is two criteria's they use in analyzing third-party data.

**Mr. Dámaso Luna**, *Deputy Director General for Global Affairs*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mexico noted the importance of having a robust, independent national institutions for the collection of data. Mr. Luna highlighted the progress made by Mexico in achieving the MDGs, but also stressed that you cannot fix what you cannot see – thus the need for robust data. Mr. Luna underlined we have two paramount advantages for the SDGs: 1) the unparalleled increase in services and quality of available data and 2) exponential progress in technology that allows for better analysis of data.

Mr. Luna stressed open governments must create space for cross-sectorial participation to publish open data to produce actionable results and improve decision-making and data driven policies at a global scale. He stressed to achieve the SDGs and leave no one behind the cooperation of governments, civil society, the private sector and academia will be crucial.

Mr. Luna stated Mexico supports the principle of open governments as a guiding framework for sustainable development worldwide. Mexico will promote [“Openness for All”](#) enabling sustainable development through open governments for this year theme for the [Open Government Partnership Summit in 2015](#).

In his closing remarks, Mr. Luna stated Mexico is committed towards developing an international data charter to be launched at the UNGA this September 2015. He stressed data should be open, reliable and comparable.

**Mr. Peter van der Vliet**, *Deputy Permanent Representative*, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN stressed he and the Government of the Netherlands shares a deep commitment towards third-party data. He underscored “effectiveness” is a key word for the monitoring framework of the SDGs because we have to be informed with strong and reliable data.

Mr. van der Vliet underscored the [Third International Conference on Financing for Development outcome document](#) highlighted the importance of open data from various stakeholders. He highlighted that we can learn from previous initiatives such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) as examples in providing access to open information and data around these issues.

In his closing remarks, Mr. van der Vliet stressed the need for multi stakeholder initiatives that work on open data, and that they can help with implementation and accountability with the SDGs.

**Mr. Tom Wheeler**, *Conflict and Security Adviser*, Saferworld opened his remarks by seeking to answer the question of: what is third party data? He stated third-party data is data produced by actors that are outside official statistical offices. He stressed that issues of governance and peace can be measured and are being measured in many instances. Mr. Wheeler emphasized that the priority of the IAEG-SDGs and

statisticians should be developing the best indicators to measure the post-2015 agenda and find data that can feed into those indicators.

Mr. Wheeler underlined, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are going to play a central role in compiling data for the SDGs because:

- NSOs are more experienced in gathering data that is relevant to the SDGs;
- NSOs can work at scale;
- Data is a public good, and public bodies such as NSOs should produce it;
- NSOs also follow the highest ethical standards;
- National ownership of data will likely increase its legitimacy and usage by policy makers;
- If the state is going to play a central role in implementing the SDGs it should utilize data from national bodies.

However, Mr. Wheeler emphasized states should not only rely on official data sources. Third-party data can:

- Fill data gaps; many NSOs don't have the capacity to monitor the entire SDGs;
- Inclusion of third-party data is consistent with the concept of multi stakeholder partnership;
- Drive innovation in data collection, deepen, widen and cheapening data, NSO won't deliver the data revolution on their own;
- Help address the issue of accountability, third-party data holder can provide checks and balances;
- Third-party data can play a complementary role around political sensitive issues;
- Help fill the intense demand for data for the measurement of the SDGs.

**Mr. Jose Manuel Roche**, *Head of Research*, Save the Children UK open his remarks by underlining we need to improve data coverage for marginalized groups. However, he highlighted some challenges in collecting data.

- Disaggregation is constrained by group size;
- Questionnaire space is limited;
- Oversampling particular groups is costly – and the costs are higher, the smaller the group in question.

Mr. Roche highlighted how the data revolution can help us address this problem.

- A renewed emphasis on linking administrative data with household surveys;
- New forms of community monitoring – using data collected through community score cards, community based monitoring systems and other forms of locally grounded reporting;
- Using mobile technology to oversample small groups;
- Exploring the potential of Big Data. Data collected from such diverse sources as call data records, satellite imagery and other varied sources holds promise.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Roche affirm that quality disaggregated data will be needed to monitor progress for the social and economic groups that are the furthest behind. He called for IAEG-SDGs to consider non-traditional indicators, including qualitative and perception based indicator where appropriate.

**Ms. Neli Esipova**, *Director of Research on Global Migration*, Gallup opened her remarks by highlighting that since creating the World Poll in 2005, Gallup has conducted studies in more than 160 countries that include a significant portion of the world's adult population. The Gallup World Poll tracks the most important issues worldwide, such as food access, employment, leadership performance, and well-being. The World Poll survey includes more than 100 global questions as well as region-specific items. This makes it possible to trend data from year to year and make direct country comparisons.

Ms. Esipova provided an example of how the Gallup poll was used to measure trends in Ukraine. In addition, she highlighted the World Bank and Legatum has been using Gallup data to analyze trends. In her closing remarks, Ms. Esipova underscored when gathering and analyzing data you need to take into account the quantitative as well as the qualitative aspects.

**Respondent: Mr. Stefan Schweinfest**, *Director*, UN Statistics Division responded to the panel by stating he came to the conclusion that the panelists all presented common language on data. He stressed we need to need to understand where the data is coming from and look at the information in a proper context, particularly regarding what it is being used for. Mr. Schweinfest emphasized that when looking at data, we should strive to create a data ecosystem that support all levels of decision-making. In his closing remarks, he underscored it is imperative we have certain rules, standards and norms to ensure comparability of data sources from all actors.

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

[TAP Network SDG Indicator Position Paper](#): This position paper focuses primarily on indicators to measure progress on Goal 16 providing recommendations on measuring governance, justice and peace but are applicable to all of the goals.

[TAP Network Review & Accountability Position Paper](#): This paper argues that participation and transparency are key principles for robust, effective, and inclusive accountability mechanisms for the Post-2015 framework at all levels – from the local through to the global

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