

Statement by Mr. T.C.A. Anant, Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, on Agenda Item 3 (a). Data in support of the post-2015 development agenda and Item 3 (a) (i). Broader measures of progress at the 46th Session of the Statistical Commission on March 11, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor.

Congratulations on your election as the Chair of the Session.

Let me start by echoing my colleague from China and emphasizing the fact the development of goals and targets is fundamentally a political process and that is how it must be.

The Statistical Commission has received the mandate for this work from the political process and should not editorialize about the goals and targets formally. It is not our mandate to second-guess the goals and targets that have come out through a political process.

Unlike the SDGs and their targets, the development of indicators is an important technical process and it is in this process that we are playing this role.

This being a technical and not a political process also means that the indicators cannot be seen as a closed list. It needs to be understood clearly that the process of development of indicators will be subject to improvements and amendments as we gain knowledge going forward.

Mr. Chairman,

The experience of the Friends of Chair of which I was fortunate to be a part of shows that there is a large number of areas where even with indicators there remain significant gaps in the required quality and disaggregation.

Therefore the process of development of indicators must be seen as a continuous effort and not a one-off one. There will necessarily be areas for which we do not have indicators at the moment. These will be subject to analysis, research and development.

This is a more in the nature of a work programme which we are agreeing to and committing to for the next many years.

Mr. Chairman,

While undertaking this task, the Statistical Commission should prepare and communicate a set of processes and frameworks and do this in line with the approach that the Statistical Commission has followed throughout; i.e. it should involve consultations with the experts, but the formal ownership of the process must be that of

the Commission at the aggregate level and of the national statistical offices at the national level.

This point is central to having an indicator framework which will reflect the aspirations of all the countries and to ensure national ownership.

Mr. Chairman,

Another issue which came out strongly in the Friends of Chair report, is that this work is going to be very challenging particularly for the developing countries due to a 'capacity deficit'.

Therefore, enhanced support for capacity development in developing countries is going to be critical for us to meet this challenge. A number of my colleagues have made this point as well. As we undertake the process of development of indicators, we must continuously see also how the means of implementation are being developed.

It is of central importance that the development of indicators for the SDGs leads to a strengthening the statistical system. The MDGs certainly took us a long way and I think the next 15 years will be revolutionary in the statistical system if we were to take it in the right spirit.
