

Informal Meeting of the General Assembly
Briefing on the Global Indicator Framework of the SDGs
Intervention by Amit Narang, Counsellor, on January 28, 2016

Thank you **Mr. President** for organizing this meeting and for your presence today.

Let me also thank the two Co-Chairs of the IAEG for their useful briefing as well as our colleagues from the Statistical Division for their work behind the scenes on this very important task.

Mr. President,

We deeply appreciate the work of the IAEG so far, of which India is also a member.

To us the work of this group over the last year has shown how complex this process really is. If anybody had any illusions that once the normative agenda is done other things will fall into place, has only to look at the list of the proposed indicators to understand how complex, how deeply rigorous this process is.

The list that we have in front of us also shows us why and how it is so important to get this right.

We are very comforted by the briefing given by Mr. Pulinger and his Co-Chair and by the assurances given on the technical robustness of the discussions so far.

We note however - and I think it is very clear no matter if you were listening to the briefing or if you were to glance through the list of indicators produced by the group so far - that this clearly is a work in progress. This is certainly not a complete list. We are clearly far from our final destination on this important work.

From our perspective here in New York, we have taken and we will continue to take a hands-off approach to the development of the indicators. This is the work of technical experts and our professionals are engaged on this, as they should be.

Saying that however, I would note and concur with several issues in this list that have also been pointed out by the Co-Chairs and other delegations.

The issue of measurability was mentioned. The issue of data availability will of course be a crucial concern going forward. The issue of lack of capacities on several of these indicators also needs to be borne in mind as we go forward.

There are also issues about the methodologies behind the measuring approaches on some of the indicators. Several of the indicators tend to rely on more of 'perception surveys'. We do not know how exact these are and how some of their potential issues will be overcome.

Besides, the focus mostly seems to be on national action. This goes contrary to the spirit of the agenda which is about international cooperation. We also find that the indicators for Goal 17 are rather weak.

There was also the issue of political ambition mentioned by another delegation earlier today. While we agree that there might be a case of low political ambition, there also might be a case of high political ambition. There are some indicators for example which clearly seem to go beyond the remit of the targets themselves. Cases of Tobin tax and carbon pricing which are difficult political issues would be some such examples.

A note of caution that while one of the goals may be more popular in terms of the indicators, it is very important that all goals get adequate and enough attention.

Mr. President,

I have a couple of questions for the two Co-Chairs.

Looking at the incompleteness of the list - as many as 80 indicators are marked with an asterisk requiring further work - would it be more appropriate for this exercise to be extended to allow the IAEG to consult more on the issues that they have encountered? Once it is adopted by the membership in the GA, would the IAEG be able to continue this work adequately? Would it not be better for some more space to be given to experts to do this right?

Finally, even when the indicators are adopted, given all the issues that the Co-Chairs have laid out, would it not be more appropriate to have an acknowledgement these indicators are meant as a reference set and that they will continue to evolve? That they are not set in stone? As methodologies improve, as capacities improve, we suppose some improvements will always be taking place in these areas.

And of course, whenever these are adopted we feel that a clear acknowledgement of the need for statistical capacity building in developing countries would certainly be very helpful.

I thank you Mr. President.