



Climate Action Network

Measuring what matters in the Climate Change SDG

April 2015

Briefing Paper

CAN welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Statistical Commission and the Friends of the Chair group on the preparatory work on an indicator framework, for the draft SDGs formulated by the Open Working Group (OWG).

In order to keep global warming below dangerous levels and to massively scale up actions to adapt to climate impacts, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must contribute to a global low-carbon climate resilient development pathway. Moreover, adequate implementation is necessary to achieve greatest ambition possible on climate change through the SDGs. Well-designed indicators are crucial in order to guide adequate action, monitor progress, help raise ambition, and measure what matters. Indicators need a clear timeframe with intermediate goals to measure progress, i.e. on a three-year basis, providing enough time to adjust and improve.

Much work has been already conducted to define various climate change indicators and the main challenge may be not to design new indicators but rather to select and refine existing ones. Ideally these would be the best in fitting the purpose of the SDGs and already applied in relevant circumstances, while remaining measurable and practical.

As an example, the basic indicator from MDG7 (CO₂ emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)) is completely missing in this set of new proposed indicators. There is also no indication as to progress towards the aim of staying below 2 or 1.5 degree of warming.

In addition to having climate indicators for the climate change goals, CAN recommends also having carbon/emissions indicators for other relevant SDGs, including energy, infrastructure, transport and forests. Reducing emissions in all these sectors is crucial for achieving emissions reduction goals and therefore for achieving sustainable development. These indicators will complement the Nationally Determined Commitments (NDCs) countries are making under the UNFCCC. For many countries, the UNFCCC NDCs provide economy-wide goals; having sectoral carbon/emissions metrics under the SDGs helps to ensure that progress is being made in the sustainable development of all sectors in these countries. For countries offering sectoral NDCs in the UNFCCC, these would be identical to or complement the achievements they would seek to make towards their SDG commitments. Reporting for these SDG indicators should be able to use data already gathered as part of reporting for the UNFCCC to avoid creating an additional administrative burden for countries.

The Climate Change SDG proposed indicators

Target 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

- *Proposed Indicator 1: # of countries that report having progressed from a perceived low to an intermediate or from an intermediate to a high level of adaptive capacity in relation to a two-degree world.*
- *Proposed Indicator 2: # of casualties and amount of economic losses.*

We welcome the inclusion of indicators for strengthening the adaptive capacity of all countries to climate-related hazards and natural disasters. In its work, the Statistical Commission should also take into account the contributions from technical bodies under the UNFCCC, in particular the Adaptation Committee and other expert groups.

Regarding indicator 1, it has been argued that “national indicators fail to capture many of the processes and contextual factors that influence adaptive capacity, and thus provide little insight on adaptive capacity as the level where most adaptation will take place.”¹ Also it is important to take into account that the capacity to adapt to climate change is not evenly distributed within nation and must be differentiated within countries.²

It is unclear what criteria/metrics would be used to evaluate whether a country has moved from a lower to a higher range of adaptive capacity. More clarity on the evaluative framework to be used to measure progress within this indicator is required in order to make it operational. A clear baseline and indicative definitions of “low”, “intermediate” and “high” would be required for each country. In addition, quantitative approaches for assessing adaptive capacity need to be complemented with qualitative approaches to capture the full complexity and the various tangible and intangible aspects of adaptive capacity in its different dimensions.³

In order to ensure that the level of adaptation support rises commensurately if mitigation action is lacking, the indicator needs to take into consideration the gap between emission reduction action and the emission reduction trajectories that are necessary to limit warming to below 1.5 degree

Finally, we recommend that a 1.5 degree limit to global warming should be used as the ceiling here, in order to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

The meaning of indicator 2 is unclear. Does it refer to the casualties and economic losses from all “climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries” or primarily to losses from all climate-change related disasters? Does it include all climate change impacts including slow-

¹ Adger et al. (2007): Assessment of adaptation practices, options, constraints and capacity. Climate change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of WG II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC: <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-chapter17.pdf>, Chapter 17, 17.3.2.

² Ibid. Chapter 17.3.2.2

³ Van Aalst, M.K et al. (2012) Determinants of risk: exposure and vulnerability. In Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation, pp.65-108: http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/special-reports/srex/SREX-Chap2_FINAL.pdf

onset events? How would it plan to look at the attribution of damages, to climate change or only climate variability? In terms of a comprehensive assessment of damages, which is important, there is no adequate data basis yet available on why, for example, the UNFCCC Loss and Damage Mechanism will undertake work in this regard.

Measuring economic losses in general is suited to impacts that are linked to market transactions and directly affect GDP. However, non-economic losses or indirect losses or expenses, e.g. on ecosystems, health, biodiversity and gender inequality are more difficult to measure.

In addition, it is not clear if this indicator measures progress on achieving the target to increase adaptive capacity. Losses can just be smaller because less events have occurred in a particular region, but this is not an expression of a change in adaptive capacity. To make this indicator relevant, countries would need to agree on what to measure.

Target 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

- *Proposed Indicator 1: Percentage of countries which have formally communicated the establishment of integrated low-carbon, climate-resilient, disaster risk reduction development strategies (e.g. a national adaptation plan process)*

The indicators fail to measure what impact the policies and planning has, which ought to be the desired outcome of the goal and target. In particular, the indicators fail to address the issue of the goal objective: Take urgent action to combat climate change. We would also support that the strategies be required to:

- Define clear nationally-determined mitigation and adaptation goals for 2020 and 2025
- detail a realistic and achievable emissions reduction trajectory through 2030, 2040, and 2050, that will have the country achieving (near-)zero emissions by 2050
- identify the transformation strategies, and policies and measures the country plans to implement to transform all relevant sectors of its economy to meet its emissions reduction commitments in the UNFCCC and be on a realistic trajectory towards near zero emissions by 2050. The greatest detail on planned actions will be on how the country intends to meet its quantified emissions reduction commitment for the 5-year commitment period in the UNFCCC, but this framework and its longer term trajectories allows countries to think beyond the commitment periods and to think strategically to avoid sub-optimal emissions reduction pathways and lock-in of unsuitable infrastructure
- include the measures that the country has put in place to address emissions from all relevant sectors, and how this will allow the country to be on the right path to meet emissions reduction indicators under relevant SDG goals, including, *inter alia*, those for energy, transport, infrastructure and forests

We would suggest to have a disaggregated approach here, which distinguishes between mitigation-related and adaptation-related strategies (including those which address both in combination) and additional information on if the area's most prone to risk have been included.

Target 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

- Proposed Indicator 1: # of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula
- Proposed Indicator 2: % of population with increased knowledge on climate change, disaggregated by sex and age

We think the proposed indicator 1: is a good first step to measure target 13.3. The indicator could however be strengthened by giving greater importance to the second part of the target “improve (...) human and institutional capacity”. It will be necessary to not only include the issues of climate change in the school curricula but also to train teachers and professors to enable them to explain climate change causes and effects in a comprehensive manner.

On indicator 2, we suggest adding qualitative approaches to measuring climate change knowledge and institutional capacity such as evidence of government capacity and coordination mechanisms or human capacity to respond to climate change related issues including adaptation, mitigation and resilience building.

Target 13.a Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate fund through its capitalization as soon as possible

- *Proposed Indicator 1: Mobilized amount of USD per year starting in 2020 accountable towards the USD 100 billion commitment*
- *Proposed Indicator 2: % of GCF funded projects finalized and sustained afterwards through national funding to produce climate neutral solutions*

Climate finance should be specifically marked and tracked in order to assure that it is predictable and additional to resources provided towards existing aid commitments (such as the 0,7% target) or to current flows where these aid commitments are already being met. Also, the \$100 billion commitment does not start in 2020, but should be reached by 2020 (scaling-up from current levels), which is why the measurement of the indicator should not only begin in 2020. Measuring the public finance increase within the 100bn would be a more effective approach.

It is important to take into account the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance work in this regard, which in 2015 is mandated to further work on the question of “mobilization”. It is not yet defined and therefore difficult to measure.

The GCF-related indicator goes far beyond what the target indicates because it would measure the extent to which national finance would sustain programmes funded by the GCF. This is inappropriate. A better indicator would be to measure the:

- Amount of public finance provided by developed countries in a given year, disaggregated into grants, concessional loans, non-concessional loans and other flows (to be specified) and disaggregated by sector (adaptation, mitigation, REDD+, cross-cutting, other).

- Amount of additional private finance flows mobilised in a given year, disaggregated into flows mobilised through the provision of public finance, through policy interventions and through other means (to be specified) and disaggregated by sector (adaptation, mitigation, REDD+, cross-cutting, other).
- Amount of finance disbursed by the Green Climate Fund, in a given year, disaggregated into grants, concessional loans, and other flows (to be specified) and disaggregated by sector (adaptation, mitigation, REDD+, cross-cutting, other).

Target 13.b Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

- *Proposed Indicator 1: # of LDCs that are receiving specialized support for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth, local and marginalized communities.*

Solely looking at the number of LDCs does not address the purpose of this target. A way of quantifying the support would be more adequate. We suggest adding % of women, youth and local and marginalised communities participating in climate change related planning, training and management bodies/mechanisms.