



Post-2015 Data Test
country level experiences

Post-2015 Data Test

Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level

www.post2015datatest.com



NSI The North-South
Institute

Inception Workshop Report Canada

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Ottawa, Canada



CENTRE FOR POLICY DIALOGUE (CPD)
BANGLADESH
a civil society think tank



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Southern Voice
2015 On Post-MDG International Development Goals

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|------|------------------------------|
| CPD | Centre for Policy Dialogue |
| GDP | gross domestic product |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NSI | The North-South Institute |



Introduction

1. Project Overview

As the 2015 target date of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approaches, deliberations and negotiations are intensifying on what the successor framework – the post-2015 agenda – should be.¹ At the same time, governments agreed to establish Sustainable Development Goals as an outcome of the Rio+20 conference in 2012. There is broad consensus that the post-2015 framework and the Sustainable Development Goals should be one in the same, and should include goals, targets and indicators, as is the case with the MDGs.

But the architecture that frames the post-2015 sustainable development agenda looks set to differ from the MDGs in some significant ways. The framework will likely be universal, applying to *all* countries, not just developing ones. It appears likely that countries will have greater space to determine their own sustainable development targets, and the corresponding indicators by which they measure progress. The range of issues prioritised in the global framework will be broader, and in many ways more complex, than the issues captured by the MDGs. And to better understand how progress is distributed within society, progress against the goals will be measured in a disaggregated way. To support this framework, a “data revolution” has been called for, to enable governments and policy-makers to better track sustainable development progress and equip people with the information they need to demand more from their governments.

Against this backdrop, the [Centre for Policy Dialogue \(CPD\)](#) and [The North-South Institute \(NSI\)](#), in association with the [Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals](#) (Southern Voice), are leading an initiative titled “Post-2015 Data Test: Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level.” The initiative brings together research institutions from the South to examine how the universal post-2015 framework can be applied across a variety of country contexts and in particular how progress will and can be measured at country level. Six countries have been selected for the study representing a range of low, middle and high-income countries. These include:

- Bangladesh
- Canada
- Peru
- Senegal
- Tanzania
- Turkey

Complementing this initiative, the [Partnership for African Social and Governance Research](#) has launched a sister initiative that will include two additional country case studies in Africa – **Ghana and Sierra Leone** – using the same methodology.

¹ For more information on the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda, please see <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/publications/post-2015-development-agenda/>.

1.1 Objectives

In order to “road-test” the potential post-2015 framework, research teams will apply a select set of potential post-2015 goals, targets and indicators to their respective country. The overarching policy objective of this research is to inform post-2015 negotiations, and subsequently the emerging framework and architecture for its implementation, including the measurement components, with evidence of how a universal framework can be implemented in a country-specific way and what data and measurement constraints exist for doing so. The initiative will:

- Identify opportunities and challenges that may arise from the implementation of a universal, country-relevant post-2015 framework, specifically those relating to measurement components.
- Examine the feasibility and relevance of select candidate “global minimum standard” targets.
- Assess the adequacy of data, including disaggregated data, for measuring post-2015 progress at the country level, informing discussions on the architecture and priorities of the “data revolution.”
- Identify key opportunities and challenges at the country level to improving the quality, accessibility and transparency of data, including the role of technology therein.
- Enhance the capacity of Southern think-tanks to contribute to the global policy processes shaping the post-2015 agenda, while also ensuring that global-level decision-making, particularly on the “data revolution,” is informed by country-level realities.

1.2 Research Questions

Given these objectives, a number of questions will guide the research.

- i. What are some of the likely challenges of implementing a universal but country-relevant framework of post-2015 goals, targets and indicators, particularly from a measurement perspective? How could these challenges be overcome?
- ii. What is the adequacy of data, including disaggregated data, for measuring post-2015 progress across a selected set of goals at the country level?
 - In the absence of required data, can proxy indicators be used to meet the needs of the post-2015 framework?
 - What are the implications of data adequacy for setting the baseline that is used in the post-2015 framework?
- iii. How feasible and relevant are candidate “zero” or “global minimum standard” targets in different country contexts?
- iv. Where improvements in data quality, accessibility and transparency have been made in the past, what have been the drivers? Where gaps exist, why? What does this mean for improving data adequacy for post-2015?
- v. How could technology-enabled and non-traditional modes of data collection support measurement in the post-2015 agenda?
- vi. What expectations do different stakeholders have for a “data revolution”? What are likely opportunities and constraints?

The key programme components of the initiative include: country studies, publications, outreach and dissemination of the country reports, and strategic engagement with key players of the post-2015 landscape.

1.3 Methodology

A mix of research methods will be used to address the research questions outlined above. A literature review of relevant policy and academic literature will be used to inform the narrative on and selection of key targets and indicators for potential goal areas. Researchers will map the sources of data from a range of national and international sources and analyse the adequacy of the data and the feasibility of measuring post-2015 goals, targets and indicators.

Researchers will conduct key informant interviews with relevant experts and stakeholders at the country and global levels in order to assess perceptions of data gaps, challenges of a universal, country-relevant framework and expectations for the data revolution. In conjunction with key informant interviews, researchers will carry out focus groups with a broader number of stakeholders at country level. These will be used to identify key issues and perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders, as well as validate the study findings.

Throughout the research process, teams will engage with policy makers, data producers (national statistical authorities, for example), and data users – actors that use data to inform policies and programmes or play a role in holding actors to account for progress against desired outcomes (civil society, research institutions, civil servants, etc.).

1.4 Workshop Report

This workshop report is meant to highlight the issues and concretize the ideas that were discussed at the launch of the Canada case study of the multi-country initiative, “Post-2015 Data Test: Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level” (see Annex 2 for workshop agenda). The key objectives of the workshop were as follows:

1. introduce stakeholders to the post-2015 development agenda and what it means for Canada;
2. solicit feedback regarding Canadian priorities for each potential goal area under the initiative, including with respect to targets and indicators for measuring progress;
3. conduct an initial scoping of the key issues related to data availability and accessibility at country level for measuring progress on post-2015; and
4. identify key stakeholders with whom to further engage throughout the research process.

Workshop participants included members of government, civil society, academia, media, the private sector, and users and producers of data. Canadian government stakeholders were from the federal level, however, in later stages of the research process, consultation with provincial-level representatives is planned. During the workshop, stakeholders provided feedback on Canadian priorities within the key goal areas included in the study, defined targets and suggested quantitative and qualitative indicators for the Canada case study. See Annex 1 for a list of participating organizations.

The document is organized around the key sessions of the workshop. Each section corresponds to a session in the workshop and includes important background and context, as well as key questions or issues participants considered in advance. Conducted under Chatham House rules, the workshop was structured to maximize opportunities for discussion. The resulting report was prepared by The North-South Institute (NSI) and shared with participants, as well as on the initiative’s website, www.post2015datatest.com.

Session One

2. Introductory Session

The introductory session saw participants welcomed to the inception workshop on behalf of NSI, CPD and Southern Voice. The initiative and workshop objectives were presented, including next steps in the research project and final research outputs. The Canada launch of the “Post-2015 Data Test” was meant to provide an initial scoping of participants’ perspectives on Canada’s national priorities under the post-2015 agenda and solicit feedback from participants on key individuals and organisations to engage throughout the research process. The background, rationale, objectives and approach of the initiative were outlined. In addition to presenting the relevant aspects of the Methodology and Implementation Guide to participants, the first session emphasised the importance of the Canada case study as “uncharted territory.”

Though Canada supports the MDGs, it is not assessed against their progress in the same way as developing countries. The Canada case study will make a valuable contribution to understanding how a universal, country-relevant sustainable development framework could be applied in a high-income country. It will also provide a useful case for understanding the feasibility and relevance of “global minimum standards” for high-income countries. While issues related to data availability and accessibility are much more significant for the other countries in this project, the Canada case study will shed light on the data and measurement constraints associated with measuring progress in potentially new goal areas for which progress is not currently being tracked at the country level, for example, on global partnership for development. Finally, the case study will identify opportunities and challenges for implementing the post-2015 framework across various national and sub-national jurisdictions. As a federal state, Canada makes an interesting case for how the post-2015 framework might be implemented in countries where sub-national governments have jurisdiction over key goal areas, such as environment, social sectors and natural resource management.

The discussion among participants that followed first clarified assumptions about data for measuring progress on post-2015. The project is looking at whether data exists, and of good quality, to comprehensively measure progress against post-2015 goals. While the context for Canada is quite different from developing country counter-parts from the perspective of quality, it is possible that the post-2015 development agenda will include new areas for which Canada does not currently measure (such as in governance). For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics conducted an examination of the 54 illustrative post-2015 targets suggested by the [High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#), finding that for 54% of the targets, the statistics office would have to do considerable work. Evidently, high-income countries as well as developing countries face measurement challenges.

Participants noted that the European Union has experience establishing data on sustainable development, which may offer insights for how Canada might implement collective international goals at the national level. Nevertheless, qualitative components of measuring progress are difficult to capture and in many instances, datasets do not exist. To address this challenge, the methodology guide for the initiative includes a discussion on qualitative indicators, including structural and process indicators. Teams are encouraged to choose structural indicators which reflect the policy environment and governance arrangements (existence of legislation, for example) and process indicators which measure policy interventions or efforts made to address particular challenges (expenditures for example) in addition to the outcome indicators as appropriate.

Session Two

3. Goals, Targets and Indicators

Participants discussed the selection of candidate post-2015 goals, targets and indicators as well as what Canada's national priorities should be in the potential goal areas. Participants were encouraged to be more innovative by discussing goals on, for instance, governance and how to measure progress in ways in which governments will agree. NSI and CPD have pre-determined indicators that form a global set for all countries in the study to examine. In addition to these, participants were asked to suggest plausible nationally determined targets. From a measurement perspective, the project is about identifying and recognising gaps. This means that, for the selection of priorities, participants were encouraged to be innovative and identify priorities regardless of whether they are currently being measured.

Potential pre-determined goal areas to be examined in all case studies include:

- poverty
- employment and inclusive growth
- education
- global partnership for sustainable development
- energy and infrastructure
- governance and human rights
- environmental sustainability and disaster resilience

The goal areas were selected based on their prominence in selected post-2015 reports and proposals, think-tank partners' expertise and feedback from experts at a methodology workshop in November 2013. They reflect a mix of MDG-type goals and goals that are not included in the MDGs. In addition, the goal areas selected offer a mix of "zero" or "global minimum standard" targets and country-specific targets for examination. They also present a strong likelihood of posing particular acute data and measurement challenges.

Researchers will examine 5–6 targets and approximately 8–12 indicators for each candidate goal. CPD and NSI have pre-determined some targets and indicators to be examined in *all countries* for each goal area which will allow for comparison across country case studies.

All other targets and indicators will be chosen by country research teams, reflecting those that are most relevant to country context. At least one target (and corresponding indicators) will connect to another theme to support inter-sectionality between goals. Table 1 illustrates what this will look like in practice, using the poverty candidate goal.

| Table 1: Example of targets and indicators to be examined at the country level for poverty | | |
|---|---|---|
| Target and indicator type | Target | Indicator |
| <i>Examined in all countries</i> | End extreme poverty (zero/global minimum standard target) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population below US\$1.25 (PPP) per day • Proportion of population below US\$2 (PPP) per day |
| | Reduce poverty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of population living below national poverty line • Proportion of employed people living below the national poverty line |
| <i>Country-determined</i> | Reduce income inequality gap by x % by 2030 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of income/consumption of top 20 % to bottom 20 % • Ratio of incomes of top 10% to bottom 40% (Palma ratio) |
| <i>Inter-sectionality (also country-determined)</i> | Reduce multidimensional poverty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidimensional Poverty Index |

A list of targets and indicators was compiled for each candidate post-2015 goal examined under the project. These targets and indicators are available in the Methodology and Implementation Guide.

For the Canada case study, four breakout groups were organized to identify national priorities for Canada in the goal areas. These groups cover the following issues:

- Group 1: Poverty, Education, Employment and Inclusive Growth
- Group 2: Environmental Sustainability, Disaster Resilience, Energy and Infrastructure
- Group 3: Governance and Human Rights
- Group 4: Global Partnership for Development

The groups were instructed to consider what Canada's national priorities look like in the potential post-2015 goal areas, how the most important issues for Canada can be translated into targets for 2030, the relevance of candidate targets and indicators for Canada, other indicators for Canada to track progress, where data constraints exist and how constraints can be addressed. Box 1 lists the questions sent to participants in advance of the workshop.

Box 1. Session 2: Points Considered by Workshop Participants

What are the opportunities and challenges for applying a universal, country-specific sustainable development agenda in Canada?

Thinking towards 2030, what do Canada's national priorities look like in the potential post-2015 goal areas examined by this study? What are the most important issues for Canada? How might they be translated into targets for 2030?

How relevant are the post-2015 targets and indicators suggested in the Methodology and Implementation Guide for Canada?

What other indicators make sense for Canada to track its progress on implementing the post-2015 agenda?

Where data constraints exist and how can they be addressed?

Session Three

4. Goals, Targets and Indicators: Group Findings

The session was a continuation of Session Two, with each breakout group presenting the findings of their meetings. Participants were asked whether they had additional feedback on what had been presented by the breakout groups.

4.1 Poverty, Education, Employment and Inclusive Growth

Group 1 determined that the Canada case study demonstrates the importance of flexible indicators, given that targets in the Methodology and Implementation Guide were formulated as priorities, and not necessarily things that are quantifiable. Participants had a lively discussion on poverty targets and indicators. They suggested that while it is important for Canada to focus on extreme poverty, one of the pre-determined targets all teams will examine, the indicator of “proportion of the population living under \$1.25 (PPP) per day” does not make sense for Canada. At the same time, participants recognized the importance of asking what extreme poverty looks like in Canada and how marginalized groups should be addressed (by targets specifically for their communities or through presentation of disaggregated data, for example). Participants noted that indicators should move away from headcounts toward gaps and multidimensional poverty. With respect to priorities on education, the group pointed to focusing on Aboriginal peoples, especially boys, finishing high school. The group also noted that suggested indicators on expenditures in education, particularly those related to special attention groups, are not helpful if they are not connected to completion rates. The group maintained that targets on education in Canada should go beyond emphasizing literacy and numeracy to include areas such as problem-solving and critical thinking, which are key in post-industrial societies.

Participants agreed that reducing inequality and improving equal pay outcomes are critical issues for the goal on employment and inclusive growth in Canada. These issues are captured by the global targets and indicators pre-determined by NSI and CPD. However, participants also noted where additional indicators could be included. Unemployment rates and labour force participation should be coupled with indicators on underemployed and the working poor – these groups need to be accounted for. Notably, non-wage work, which would better capture women’s labour force participation, is not tracked by the proposed indicators and many observers believe that it should be. Indicators on social dialogue, workplace benefits, and social security could also be useful. Participants also acknowledged that while the success rates of individuals matter, generating inclusive growth is important and there is a need to identify how it can effectively be measured. Participants discussed the challenges to setting targets related to inequality. One participant argued that there is no optimal figure for inequality in terms of the Gini coefficient, for example, which may not be helpful. On the other side of the debate, another participant noted that an “optimal” figure could be defined based on qualitative and societal preferences for welfare, which are high in Canada.

4.2 Environmental Sustainability, Disaster Resilience, Energy and Infrastructure

Group 2 focused on five targets that are relevant to the Canada case study and their associated indicators in turn. On the topic of environmental sustainability and the target “safeguard ecosystems, species and genetic diversity by 2030,” participants agreed that an indicator on sustainable forest management is certainly relevant for Canada. The global indicator on loss of forest cover is appropriate,

particularly boreal forest cover (additional metrics could include limiting net loss of natural forest cover and the decrease of boreal forest cover). They argued that indicators on the loss of Arctic lands and wetlands need to be added for the Canadian context. Participants also agreed that it would be pragmatic to consider metrics on managed forest principles and key and endangered species, given that habitat damage hurts the effectiveness of ecosystems. The group also noted that the issue of reporting on environmental, economic and social impact deserves special attention because many comprehensive assessments done by the private sector are not made public. Participants emphasized that reporting related to the target “publish and use economic, social and environmental accounts in all governments and companies (capitalization above US\$100 million equivalent) by 2030” must go beyond gross domestic product (GDP) to include qualitative measures. Participants felt that it would be important to include targets and indicators on water and air quality, given that health problems are increasingly tied to these issues.

Regarding data collection on indicators for environmental sustainability, it should be noted that data is collected by municipal and private land owners. This creates a data-sharing challenge that could be addressed through mandates on data sharing.

In consideration of disaster resilience and the target “build resilience and reduce deaths from natural disasters by x % by 2030,” the group deemed disaster mitigation plans a priority for Canada. One participant noted that approximately 60 per cent of vulnerable infrastructure in the country is under provincial jurisdiction and many municipalities have disaster reduction plans on issues such as marine spills. This reality demonstrates the significance of sub-national participation in the implementation of the post-2015 framework. With regard to proposed indicators, “annual proportion of investment in disaster risk reduction in national budget reports” should be reformulated to be relevant to all levels of government. Some participants suggested that the number of people displaced by natural disasters is arguably as important as the number of deaths. Useful additional indicators proposed included metrics on insurance payments, insurance coverage and what is uninsurable, the percentage of public infrastructure owners who produce disaster mitigation plans as well as economic indicators related to the cost of disasters.

On the topic of energy, the group noted that Canada already collects and makes available considerable amounts of data in this area. Recognizing that it is a critical goal area for Canada, the group agreed that the target “ensure access to energy and improve efficiency and sustainability of energy supply, including renewable energy” must be coupled with indicators that link access with affordability. Additional indicators on higher building codes and fuel-efficient cars would be welcome. Disaggregated data are fundamental to measurement across this goal area, particularly given the variation that exists across provinces in terms of their energy production. Regarding infrastructure in the Canadian context, mobility was highlighted as an issue of particular concern in rural areas and the North. The group agreed that mobility should be seen in terms of affordability, accessibility, efficiency and safety. An additional indicator on the quality of roads that uses the ratio of life-span to initial investment in infrastructure or some other process indicator on efforts regarding maintenance of infrastructure was suggested, since infrastructure maintenance is a significant issue in Canada. Participants agreed that targets and indicators should be developed for water and sewage as well. In Canada, building affordable communication networks is a long-standing priority. As such the group suggested including an indicator on affordability.

4.3 Governance and Human Rights

Given the newness of governance and human rights in comparison to the existing MDGs, members of Group 3 examined the challenges of their measurability and shared the perspective that adopting progress indicators to address gaps in governance and human rights outcomes should be the priority for Canada, with many qualitative dimensions considered. Participants had lengthy exchanges on issues such as access to justice (which they underscored involves lay-person legal education that helps people identify problems), the importance of identifying the share of public funding that is subject to transparent bidding processes and the urgency of drafting legislation on large-scale corruption. They agreed that access to justice and the maintenance of open, accountable and effective institutions have been mired in difficulties in the country. Compliance with international human rights standards is a critical challenge with Aboriginal peoples. The disaggregation of data by social status is central to success on addressing gaps, one participant argued.

The group proposed a number of indicators. These included the number of human rights complaints at the federal and provincial levels and the extent to which government responds to external/independent human rights assessments. Numbers on the representation of women and minorities in legislative bodies as well as the existence of support systems for women and the disabled were also welcomed. Recognizing that the study cannot look at every issue related to governance and human rights, participants argued that if the number of indicators must be restricted, a useful intersection exists between the goal areas for governance and human rights and employment and inclusive growth. They argued that inclusive growth includes participation, policy dialogue with government, and, related policy outcomes and change. Indicators that reflect citizens' ability to affect change and government's ability to follow through on citizen demands would be welcomed.

The group noted that governments tend to have a bias toward measurements in areas *they* can show progress, so independent indexes deserve special attention. The group welcomed disaggregated data on who is participating in elections, institutionalized policy dialogue – numbers on consultations with citizens and civil society organizations should be publicly available – and how much uptake there is at the policy and legislative levels based on citizens' inputs.

4.4 Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Group 4 focused on how Canada can improve indicators related to the evolving global partnership for sustainable development in a context that is drastically different than when MDG 8 on global partnership was established. With regards to the target on reforming the international financial system to ensure stability and transparency, participants maintained that binary measures are not enough – tiered coverage that captures the differentiation across countries in terms of their contributions is necessary. For the target on contributing further to a fair and functioning trade and investment, one participant suggested that an indicator on foreign direct investment and portfolio flows is needed. Another suggested that a trade distortion or trade intensity measure would be more analytically useful in place of a trade-to-GDP measure. Participants noted the difficulty on capturing targets and indicators related to increasing official flows to developing countries. They noted that the definition of official development assistance is changing and emerging economies are establishing their own aid programmes. On/off-budget aid and aid for trade could therefore be considered as potential indicators. Continuous monitoring of both bilateral and multilateral flows and indicators that contribute to aid efficiency, especially for emerging economies, were also welcomed.

A particular focus of the group was the target “meet the special needs of developing countries.” The group noted that the typologies of developing countries can change – all countries are not either “developed” or “developing” – hence, in addition to addressing the needs of the least developed countries, there should be more focus on fragile states, small islands and landlocked countries. The intersectionality of environmental and development considerations for these countries, especially islands, is an important cross-cutting area that could be considered for a target that relates to the global partnership and the environmental and disaster resilience goal areas for the Canada case study.

The group was particularly concerned about the availability of quality, consistent data and the standardization of available data. Currently, many developing countries do not report on many of the indicators that have been put forward in Post-2015 discussions. Participants agreed that there may be room to include a target on data in the context of global partnership.



Session Four

5. Data and Accountability for Progress on Post-2015

This session looked at issues concerning data availability for measuring progress on post-2015, accessibility and capacity building. It also considered the role of data users in holding decision-makers to account. Participants from the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, and The Globe and Mail presented in turn. Box 2 outlines the key points for consideration provided to participants in advance of the workshop.

Box 2. Session 4: Points Considered by the Workshop Participants

Based on the targets and indicators being suggested for post-2015, what are the key measurement challenges Canada faces? What does Canada (or others) already measure that could be adapted to fit the needs of post-2015?

What is the current status of disaggregated data in Canada, and is it sufficient to meet the goal of “leaving no one behind” that underpins the post-2015 agenda?

What gaps exist, if any, in terms of transparency and accessibility of nationally-produced data?

What challenges and opportunities do users of data face in making use of nationally-produced data to hold decision-makers to account?

5.1 Existing Indicators and Initiatives

There is a rich history of work on well-being and sustainability indicators from which NSI can draw for the Canada case study. A lot of quantitative work has been done both internationally and in Canada. For instance, the European Union’s “Beyond GDP” initiative covers progress, wealth and well-being that is inclusive of social and environmental aspects, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has a global project on “Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies.” Indexes that could be helpful in the selection of indicators for the Canada study include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Better Life Index, which compares well-being across countries in the areas of material living conditions and quality of life, and the MasterCard Center for Inclusive Growth’s Inclusive Growth Index, which evaluates emerging markets in terms of their abilities to generate inclusive growth. In Canada, relevant quantitative projects include the Vital Signs project headed by Community Foundations of Canada, which produces annual reports on how communities fare in quality-of-life areas. The Centre for the Study of Living Standards produces the Index of Economic Well-being, which tracks a number of domains including income distribution. Such indicators and initiatives can be worked into the Post-2015 Data Test.

5.2 Tracking Challenges in Canada

Regarding the key measurement challenges that Canada faces and the current status of disaggregated data in the country, a participant maintained that Canada is world class in statistics. It has a great statistical system despite budget cuts and the recent abolition of the long-form census. Generally, however, well-being measures have not been a priority in Canada in the past 10 years. The National Household Survey, which replaced the census, lost a lot of disaggregated data and the status of time series data is currently unclear. The Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, which investigates poverty in Canada, may not have a relevant time series for the study as well since it was discontinued in 2011 and replaced the following year with the Canadian Income Survey. Notably, Aboriginal data is affected by people who have joined the Aboriginal identity (there has been a significant increase in recent years of people identifying as Aboriginal). It was also noted that micro-data files are available to the public without charge, though in cases where extreme levels of disaggregation are required, there is a fee.

Quality of data, consistency of data and identifiers are three critical elements to consider going forward. The use of administrative data in Canada is a trend that should be watched. The quality and consistency of these data must be investigated and understood. Regarding data for particular communities, Canada has improved response rates with Aboriginals living on reserves since data collection there is conducted face to face, not through the mail like in the rest of Canada. Nevertheless, a challenge remains to obtaining accurate data for Aboriginals living off reserves.

5.3 Nationally Produced Data and Accountability

With regard to the challenges of working with nationally produced data from the perspective of a data user, one participant highlighted the importance of data users to have the necessary capacity to make sense of data. Data can provide value beyond a narrative on plans and priorities. The Canadian government's Open Data portal is useful in this regard. Ability to access data on a timely basis is important, however challenges exist. While access to information legislation has provided an important channel to gain official data, response time to requests is slow.

Participants highlighted the link between having quality and consistent data, and people's ability to use data to hold governments to account. Linking the data revolution with accountability is fundamental to the success of the post-2015 framework, but that assumes capacity and the existence of actors who can hold governments to account. Capacity building should therefore be a global priority.

A final area discussed was the use of data across goals and indicators in the Canadian context. With a federal state, difficulties exist because provinces and territories play major roles. Harmonized methodologies would greatly help by enabling governments or volunteer organizations to collect more and better data.

Concluding Session

6. Conclusion

The Canada launch of the “Post-2015 Data Test” concluded with a discussion on the key messages arising from the workshop and next steps for the research initiative. A NSI Distinguished Research Fellow, who led the discussion, reiterated that the issue of data in international affairs is clearly complicated. It is an especially different issue for Canada than for developing countries. The field of data presents an opportunity for Canada to contribute to a global process, a universal exercise, a framework in which international actors can come together on a common agenda. Seizing this opportunity is necessary because Canadians’ well-being depends on what happens in developing countries, and increasingly emerging economies. Canada must be a meaningful part of the process that will shape the world to 2030.

Regarding the greatest challenge going forward, the participants identified that greater statistical detail is needed to eradicate poverty. Also, the vocabulary of inclusiveness is important as we proceed, even in Canada. Participants agreed that the country should be a more active member in ongoing negotiations. A commitment to quality and consistent data is a significant message for it to deliver. The status and nature of each society deserves recognition within a universal framework, but overarching lessons include that data are in many different hands, which makes comprehensiveness difficult, and the preferred disaggregated data will be a challenge to procure.

Annex 1. List of Participating Organisations

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
Canadian Council for International Co-operation
Canadian Forum on Civil Justice
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Teachers Federation
Carleton University – Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Carleton University – Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Centre for the Study of Living Standards
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development – Strategic Planning and Operations
Environment Canada
The Globe and Mail
Employment and Social Development Canada
International Development Research Centre
International Institute for Sustainable Development
Statistics Canada
Sustainable Development Technology Canada
The North-South Institute
Transparency International Canada
United Nations Association in Canada (UNAC)
University of Ottawa – Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
University of Ottawa – School of International Development and Global Studies

Annex 2. Workshop Agenda



Post-2015 Data Test: Unpacking the Data Revolution at the Country Level
Thursday, April 24, 2014
8:30 – 17:15
International Development Research Centre
150 Kent Street, 8th Floor, Room: David Hopper A

AGENDA

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 8:30 – 9:00 | Arrival and coffee |
| 9:00 – 9:15 | Welcome <i>The North-South Institute</i> |
| 9:15 – 10:30 | Introduction to the Initiative and Workshop Objectives <i>The North-South Institute</i> |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Break |
| 11:00 – 13:00 | Discussion of Goals, Targets and Indicators: Part One <i>The North-South Institute</i> |
| | Break-Out Groups |
| | <u>Group 1: Poverty; Education; Employment and Inclusive Growth</u> <i>Moderator: University of Ottawa</i> |
| | <u>Group 2: Environmental Sustainability and Disaster Resilience; Energy and Infrastructure</u> <i>Moderator: International Institute for Sustainable Development</i> |
| | <u>Group 3: Governance and Human Rights</u> <i>Moderator: Canadian Council for International Co-operation</i> |
| | <u>Group 4: Global Partnership for Development</u> <i>Moderator: Carleton University</i> |

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch

14:00 – 15:00

Discussion of Goals, Targets and Indicators: Part Two

15:00 – 15:20

Coffee

15:20 – 16:30

Data and Accountability for Progress on Post-2015

Centre for the Study of Living Standards

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada

Globe and Mail

16:30 – 17:15

Conclusion and Wrap-Up

The North-South Institute



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Southern Voice on Post-MDG International Development Goals

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