

Post-2015 Data Test

Initial Findings from Tanzania

www.post2015datatest.com

In-Progress Note No. 11

Date: 21 October 2014

OVERVIEW: ENGAGEMENT ON POST-2015

Discussions on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda are currently ongoing in Tanzania, both within government and among think tanks. Within the government, the planning commission is leading the process. An important focus of discussions is how to localize the envisioned global targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Within think tanks, REPOA (Policy Research for Development), through the Southern Voice Network on the Post-MDG International Development Goals, is leading discussions, including consultations with various stakeholders such as data producers and users. The REPOA research team has identified specific targets and indicators for Tanzania.

Discussions in Tanzania show that, with the exception of a few cases, most of the targets in the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remain valid. Stakeholders are looking forward to seeing targets and indicators that are practical within the local environment and can be quantified so that progress is easily measured. In terms of focus, issues related to science, technology, and innovation as well as research and development are critical and priority issues that need to be integrated in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda for Tanzania.

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL POST-2015 PRIORITIES

The post-2015 targets and indicators identified for Tanzania through this study are similar to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development's (OWG) proposed list of global goals in the sense they both provide a broad framework for sustainable development that encompasses a variety of issues. In this sense, the content does not vary greatly. However, what is different is the timing to achieve targets. It is important to recognize that countries have different baselines, but also different levels of resources to invest into achieving targets. While global priorities are similar to national priorities in many aspects, Tanzania may need more time to achieve targets than what has been specified in the OWG's draft SDG framework.

DATA AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

MDG implementation increased both the demand and the supply of data for measuring progress. A lot of data have been and are still being collected. Nevertheless, the challenge of ensuring the quality and reliability of data that is collected remains.

Data availability and quality

Notwithstanding improvements in data collection, data availability and consistency will likely be a key challenge for implementing the post-2015 framework. Indicators for targets related to governance and the environment are scarcely available and are not nationally representative. These targets are also difficult to quantify and accurately measure. For example, data on governance often comes from perception surveys. Perceptions can change within a very short span, making recommendations and implementation of policies challenging.

The challenge of consistent data for monitoring progress is also obvious. Datasets for similar issues are often collected using different methodologies which makes it difficult to compare similar variables across datasets. For example, poverty data is obtained from the Household Budget Survey (HBS) in Tanzania, which is conducted after seven years. Between the HBS, the National Bureau of Statistics conducts a smaller national panel survey (NPS). While the NPS provides information between HBSs, it is not necessarily comparable to the HBS.

Disaggregated data

Most of the data sets, particularly those collected at the national level, are disaggregated by gender and location (urban, rural). However, unless surveys are designed to address a specific issue for a particular social group, broader forms of disaggregation by social groups are not available. Also, most of the data sets currently available cannot be disaggregated by lower administrative levels of government.

Global minimum standards

The concept of zero targets or global minimum standard was appreciated by stakeholders consulted in this study. However, they may be too ambitious and not practical in the context of a developing country like Tanzania. This is mainly because zero targets will require both financial and human resources, which the country is lacking at the moment.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While data for most indicators are available either directly from surveys or through imputation, there are some indicators for which data availability remains a challenge. The study found that data was lacking for more of the indicators examined under this study for governance and accountability, and the environment. From this perspective, the data revolution has a potential role to play in addressing key data gaps for specific SDG areas.

It is also clear that data availability in terms of frequency of data collection and disaggregation is a problem at all levels. While efforts are in place to make sure that data is available as frequently as possible, sometimes technical and financial challenges lead to breaks in frequency. Disaggregation to lower levels is difficult. This reality means that data in Tanzania only provides a general picture of the national context. Given the size of the country and its diversity, location specific data is important for establishing effective policy options. Moving forward, efforts will be needed to address the lack of location specific data.

Overall, the data mapping conducted for the Post-2015 Data Test suggests a need for more frequent data collection, with a robust sample sizes to allow lower level analysis and comparison by location and gender. Improvements in these areas would greatly assist in enabling Tanzania to provide realistic assessments of progress on the post-2015 SDGs.