

Post-2015 Data Test Turkey Validation Workshop

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TURKEY VALIDATION WORKSHOP

The Turkish validation workshop took place on December 1, 2014. It was attended by 26 participants that included experts and representatives from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), the national statistical agency, the Development Ministry's branch tasked with coordinating the Post-2015 process in Turkey, various academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, including several think-tanks and the media. The workshop began with an introduction to the Post-2015 process followed by a presentation of the Post-2015 Data Test project and related findings. Participants provided feedback on the work and offered a number of suggestions to improve the final report.

Given the general lack of engagement on the Post-2015 process among the wider Turkish society, participants had a number of clarifying questions on the emerging agenda and international process. Participants tended to be far more familiar with the climate change negotiations and required clarifications on the role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Rio+20 process and how these relate to the follow-up from the Millennium Development Goals. Representatives from the Development Ministry also shared valuable insights on the internal preparatory processes at the United Nations, including Turkey's participation therein, and provided feedback on Open Working Group on Sustainable Development's (OWG) proposed set of SDGs.

Following these initial clarifications, a lively discussion ensued on the SDG process, the Data Test project, and the question of data availability. With regards to the SDGs, participants highlighted the difficulty associated with the universality of the goals and the likelihood of missing important targets. They found it difficult to envisage identical goals and targets for countries at very different levels of development, which would leave some targets unattainable for all countries. Understandably, these reflected the same type of concerns that were expressed by the negotiators in the OWG. A general worry among participants is that the SDGs will be highly aspirational in

comparison to what most countries are actually willing to do at the country level – put differently, words will be bigger than actions. Nevertheless, many participants emphasized the potential usefulness of the SDGs in providing a platform through which best practices and lessons learned for reaching goals and targets can be widely disseminated.

With respect to the Post-2015 Data Test project, participants raised questions regarding the project design, the representativeness of the countries covered, and the relevance of the targets and indicators listed. The Turkey research team was able to address these comments by revisiting the background of the project and the selection process along with its related constraints. The researchers also explained the rationale behind the evaluation of the targets and indicators as well as their proposal for adding new ones for Turkey. Here, participants showed unanimity on the necessity for cross-referencing between some targets, such as education and child labour. The participants suggested the inclusion of four additional targets for Turkey (Table 1).

Goal area	Target
Employment and inclusive growth	Extent of unionization
Governance	Respect for the rights of mentally and physically disabled
Environment and disaster resilience	Action to prevent disasters
Global Partnership	Acceptance of international arbitration

The workshop also gave due attention to data availability and quality. Some individuals raised questions regarding challenges related to coverage of the informal sector and the extent to which surveys are being designed to account for this gap. TurkStat experts explained that in some cases, although information was largely unavailable and would not be collected owing to the cost of conducting surveys, very useful proxies could be found and utilized for making similar assessments. Participants also stressed the issue with inadequate disaggregation of data

that often fails to capture different ethnic and social groups. Given that such inadequate disaggregation is generally a consequence of government policy stemming from social sensitivities, it is not an issue that can be addressed at the level of statisticians.

Overall, the validation workshop served to confirm the findings in the draft study. The importance of monitoring, following up, and reporting both at the national and the international levels, was underlined by all participants. A significant outcome of the workshop, and one stressed by participants themselves, was that the Post-2015 Data Test helped elucidate the Post-2015 process both from a global and a local standpoint. Participants noted that prior to the meeting they had limited understanding about the nature of the Post-2015 agenda and the multiplicity of issues therein. They noted that the meeting would cause them to take the process more seriously in their work and participate more actively in the future.