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Proposed set of indicators for the World Programme of Action for Youth

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 27 of the outcome document, adopted by consensus at the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (resolution 65/312), the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to propose a set of indicators linked to the World Programme of Action for Youth and the proposed goals and targets, in order to assist Member States in assessing the situation of youth.

2. In recognition of the growing need for youth development indicators, Member States in recent years have repeatedly called for a meaningful assessment of the situation of youth and for monitoring of the progress made towards implementing the World Programme of Action. Accordingly, two expert group meetings¹ were organized in New York in December 2011 by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular the Division for Social Policy and Development in cooperation with the Statistics Division and the Population Division.

3. The first expert group meeting, which was held on 12 and 13 December, addressed quantitative indicators for the World Programme of Action, and developed a draft list of indicators for countries to consider in monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Action. The list could be adapted to each country's social and economic circumstances and priorities for the purposes of policy analysis and review. The second expert group meeting, on the theme "Working towards a

* Reissued for technical reasons on 21 December 2012.

¹ The reports of the meetings are available from <http://social.un.org>.



framework for monitoring and evaluation of the World Programme of Action for Youth”, was held on 14 and 15 December and discussed criteria for Member States to consider when developing national monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the Programme of Action.

4. Participants at the meetings included youth development specialists, statisticians, and monitoring and evaluation experts from the United Nations system, academia and national statistical offices. Representatives of youth-led organizations and other civil society entities also participated in the discussions. The expertise of the participants covered the range of priority areas outlined in the World Programme of Action.

II. General principles and recommendations

5. The experts agreed that the proposed indicators should be focused, robust, policy relevant and of direct relevance to the World Programme of Action and stressed that the indicators had been selected for adaptation to national monitoring and evaluation frameworks and for implementation of the World Programme of Action at the national level, and not for international reporting. The indicators should therefore allow for short-term pragmatic use of existing national data sources, be precise, timely, comprehensive and comparable, accurately reflect the current key concerns related to youth development and not place an unnecessary reporting burden on Member States. Taking this into consideration, the experts agreed to focus on indicators that lent themselves most directly to quantification by Member States, namely, indicators for which national capacities and experience existed.

6. Throughout the meeting, the experts identified key aspects of youth development in the priority areas of the World Programme of Action and discussed how these could be monitored with the help of indicators that imposed little, if any, additional burden on Member States in respect of data collection.

7. In the area of education, for example, the experts acknowledged the progress made in the education sector while also identifying several current concerns, including the limitations placed on educational opportunities for girls, young women and marginalized and disadvantaged social groups. The indicators chosen provided important insights into the situation of youth development and educational opportunity at the country level.

8. Youth were seen as being especially vulnerable in the labour market as a result of their lack of prior job experience; the paucity of links connecting them to professional networks and contacts; their skills being mismatched to labour market demands; and the low-quality education or training they may have received. The proposed indicators on youth and employment therefore served to measure the underutilization of the youth labour supply and provide an indication of the extent to which youth were disproportionately affected by unemployment, as compared with adults. Moreover, they helped to assess the extent to which national economic activity created employment for youth and measured a country’s stock of youth who were working or trying to find work, as well as the extent to which employment for youth provided a decent income.

9. With respect to some of the other priority areas of the World Programme of Action, the experts mentioned that indicators on alcohol and tobacco use and on

obesity among youth were measures of health risk factors of growing concern in the field of public health. The experts suggested that indicators on information and communications technologies primarily should measure the digital divide among youth in developing and developed countries in accessing the Internet, as well as in accessing computers and mobile telephones, including tablets and mobile phones capable of providing Internet access.

10. The experts considered the priority area of girls and young women as cross-cutting area under each agenda item. In that respect, they highlighted the importance of disaggregating indicators by gender.

11. The experts believed that statistics in several of the priority areas of the World Programme of Action, namely, the environment, leisure activities, the full and effective participation of youth in society and in decision-making, armed conflict and intergenerational issues, were not sufficiently developed and tested to be considered as quantitative indicators, especially given the short duration of the meeting. Nevertheless, some possibilities were raised in the discussion.

12. In the light of their discussions, the draft list of 34 indicators referred to in paragraph 3 above was organized around eight of the priority areas identified in the World Programme of Action as being most quantifiable: (1) education; (2) employment; (3) poverty and hunger; (4) health; (5) drug abuse and juvenile delinquency; (6) globalization; (7) information and communications technologies; and (8) HIV/AIDS (see annex). Additional areas for indicators were also identified, which should be considered a stepping stone for future work.

13. In its discussion on general principles and recommendations, the group highlighted several points, including that:

- Proposed indicators were for the consideration of interested countries in developing their own programmes for monitoring implementation of the World Programme of Action, consistent with the national priorities for youth policy and the national social and economic circumstances in each country.
- Each indicator should be presented with documentation on the rationale for its inclusion in relation to youth policy, desirable scope and coverage, concepts, definitions and classifications, and methods of data collection and indicator calculation.
- Proposals of the group of experts should comprise both core and supplementary indicators. The latter should include indicators giving greater detail, or data that were generally less widely available, more difficult to compile and less well documented and tested with respect to concepts and methods.
- Indicators relating to the goals and targets of the Millennium Development Goals should be consistent with the related official national Millennium Development Goals indicators.
- Each country would need to adapt data sources and methods to the statistical practices and capacities in that country.
- Data compilation should be undertaken in a manner that ensures reliable results consistent with official national statistics and the overall monitoring framework.

- There should be clear determination for indicators in each priority area to reflect gender inequality, urban rural differences where applicable, and in certain cases relevant age groups within the 15-24 youth cohort.
- In the course of its development, the list of indicators should be open to broad participation by youth, including interactive discussions on the Internet and in social media.
- In compiling indicators, unofficial sources could usefully supplement official ones, where related documentation on methodologies was available and had been professionally reviewed and the population coverage was reasonably wide and representative.

14. In its discussion on the priority areas, experts considered a wide range of innovative as well as traditional indicators adapted for youth. There was broad consensus in particular on the value of traditional and emerging data sources and expertise for indicators on employment, unemployment and the growth of the labour force; expanding educational opportunities and achievement; mortality from transport accidents, suicide, civil conflict and maternal deaths; and long-run morbidity from tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse. The considerable importance and impact of emerging statistics and indicators on information and communications technologies was also especially noted.

Annex

Recommended indicators for the World Programme of Action for Youth, by priority area^a

Priority area	Proposed indicators (All indicators should be disaggregated by sex and urban/rural as far as possible)	
	Core	Supplementary
Education	1. Youth literacy rates, each sex (Goal 2, target 2A, indicator 2.3)	1. Proficiency in reading, mathematics and in science, each sex
	2. Transition rate from primary education to secondary education, each sex	2. Educational attainment of the population 15-24 years
	3. Gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, each sex	
	4. Enrolment rates of youth	
	5. Gross graduation ratio for upper secondary education, each sex	
	6. Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, each sex	
Employment	7. Youth unemployment rate, each sex	3. Youth employment-to-population ratio
	8. Ratio of youth to adult unemployment rates	4. Youth in vulnerable employment
	9. Youth labour force participation rate, each sex	
	10. Youth neither in education nor employment, each sex, urban and rural	
	11. Working poor youth, each sex (Goal 1, target 1B, indicator 1.7)	
Poverty and hunger	12. Percentage of young people living in extreme poverty/below national poverty lines (Goal 1, target 1A, indicator 1.1)	5. Access to electricity
	13. Percentage of youth deprived of adequate shelter, each sex	6. Access to transportation
	14. Percentage of youth deprived of sanitation, urban and rural (Goal 7, target 7C, indicator 7.9)	

^a Based on the report of the expert group meeting on quantitative indicators for the World Programme of Action for Youth, available from <http://social.un.org/index/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=C8BF0go-IZw%3d&tabid=756>.

<i>Proposed indicators</i>		
<i>(All indicators should be disaggregated by sex and urban/rural as far as possible)</i>		
<i>Priority area</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Supplementary</i>
	15. Percentage of youth deprived of protected water supply, urban and rural (Goal 7, target 7C, indicator 7.8)	
Health	<p>16. Youth mortality due to road traffic injuries, violent causes (homicide and conflict-related) and self-inflicted injury (suicide), each sex</p> <p>17. Maternal mortality ratio for all women aged 15-49 (Goal 5, target 5A, indicator 5.1)</p> <p>18. Adolescent birth rate (women aged 15-19) (Goal 5, target 5B, indicator 5.4)</p> <p>19. Proportion of births to mothers aged 15-24 attended by skilled health personnel, urban and rural (Goal 5, target 5A, indicator 5.2)</p> <p>20. Modern contraceptive use among sexually active youth aged 15-24 (Goal 5, target 5B, indicator 5.3)</p> <p>21. Percentage of youth who have “binged” on alcohol one or more times during their life, each sex</p> <p>22. Percentage of young people who have smoked one or more cigarettes in the previous 30 days, each sex</p> <p>23. Percentage of young people considered overweight (>1 standard deviation above mean by World Health Organization guidelines), each sex</p>	<p>7. Percentage of women aged 15-24 who are married or in a union and who have met their need for family planning</p> <p>8. Percentage of youth considered underweight (>1 standard deviation below age and sex average, using World Health Organization guidelines)</p> <p>9. Percentage of youth who report being physically active for at least 60 minutes per day, in the last seven days</p> <p>10. Percentage of youth who reported any serious injuries (road traffic, violence) in previous 12 months</p> <p>11. Percentage of youth 15-24 who have used health services at least once in the previous 12 months</p>
Drug abuse and juvenile delinquency	<p>24. Annual prevalence of illicit drug use and drug dependence among youth by drug type, each sex</p> <p>25. Number of youth held in custody by civil authorities in connection with drug-related crimes (annual), each sex</p> <p>26. Number of population 15-24 years in criminal detention as juveniles, each sex</p>	12. Percentage of youth who report cannabis use at least once in the previous month

<i>Proposed indicators</i>		
<i>(All indicators should be disaggregated by sex and urban/rural as far as possible)</i>		
<i>Priority area</i>	<i>Core</i>	<i>Supplementary</i>
Globalization	27. Youth migrants (number and as a percentage of total youth), each sex 28. Student outbound mobility ratio at the tertiary level, each sex	
Information and communications technologies	29. Percentage of youth with daily access to a mobile telephone, urban and rural 30. Percentage of youth who used a computer at any location in the previous week or month, urban and rural, each sex, 31. Percentage of youth who used the Internet from any location in the previous week or month, each sex (Goal 8, target 8F, indicator 8.16)	13. Provisions for the protection of youth from harmful aspects of information and communications technologies 14. Disaggregation of youth Internet use by location of use and by activity
HIV/AIDS	32. HIV prevalence rate among youth, each sex (Goal 6, target 6A, indicator 6.1) 33. Percentage of youth with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS, each sex (Goal 6, target 6A, indicator 6.3) 34. Percentage of youth who used a condom at most recent high-risk sexual activity (Goal 6, target 6A, indicator 6.2)	15. Percentage of sexually active youth accessing HIV counselling and testing and knowing the result