

Interregional Workshop

Experiences and Lessons Learned from ECOSOC National Voluntary Presentations

December 2-4, 2015

Part II : Institutional and Capacity Issues in National Reviews

Session iv: IADGs/MDGs as Framework to Measure and Review Development Progress

Objective: To identify key capacity gaps that emerged from the NVP exercise to conduct goal-oriented, evidenced-based and participatory reviews of progress

Session V

Moderator: Ms Diana Alarcon, Chief Development Strategy and Policy Unit, DPAD/DESA

Mr Moderator I will attempt to state briefly what I think are the main capacity gaps encountered in Jamaica's experience in undertaking the NVP reviews. First, and probably one of the most fundamental is the lack of and/or inadequacies of the necessary data for doing the reviews. Data on education, poverty, and reproductive health including fertility and contraceptive prevalence are fairly well established and reliable. Data on infant, under-five and maternal health are also fairly good but reflect measurement and definitional inadequacies. These were used with a fair degree of accuracy. However, data on the environment, aspect of gender and settlement patterns were grossly inadequate and sometimes totally absent and or unreliable. In reporting in these circumstances, we resorted to proxies or did not report on the

indicators at all. For indicators that were inadequate because of definitional or measurement difficulties we relied on indirect estimates derived from the UNICEF MICS survey or the UN mortality estimation methodology but these too were considered imprecise. One attempt to correct the weaknesses in fertility and mortality data was to implement a comprehensive programme for the modernization of the civil registration system and to undertake an evaluation of the completeness of death registration. These exercises were undertaken from grant funding received from IDPs. In most other areas of weakness, capacity gaps still exist and these will pose severe difficulties for monitoring the indicators for agenda 2030. Extensive resources

Another major area of weakness and capacity gap relates to the adequacy and availability of local human resources to undertake the reviews which cut across disciplinary boundaries and requires a diverse set of skills that usually do not reside in a single individual or local firm. This should be seen in regards to the limited funding provided by ECOSOC to prepare the national report. This should also be seen in the context of the incapacity of the government to provide additional financial resources given its high debt repayment commitments and yearly vulnerabilities to weather events and other externalities. These conditions severely restrict the capacity of the government to assist as necessary. These constraints usually restrict the comprehensiveness and sometimes accuracy in our reporting on the MDGs. A case in point is the difficulty in applying and measuring the concept of slums in the Jamaican context.

Another area of weakness is the limited development of a robust electronic data base and indicator system for monitoring the MDGs. Most of the data that were required for the MDGs were document and paper-based manual systems existing in the ministries and agencies of government. Access was usually slow, time consuming and in some cases restrictive. The above situation contributed to the development of what has come to be known as JAMSTATS. JAMSTATS is the Jamaican version of the UNICEF multi-indicator system for tracking progress on selected indicators. Jamaica has expanded this to include a wide range of indicators including the electronic dashboard of indicators for Vision 2030.

Jamaica has also implemented a General Equilibrium Model (Threshold 21 T21) developed by the Millennium Development Institute. This is designed to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development. The Planning Institute of Jamaica has been using the model for guiding policy and planning scenarios. Further refinement and application of the model especially in light of Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and Vision 2030 Jamaica National development Plan will be required.

Thank you.

