

Expert Group Meeting on Effective Data Generation for the Incheon Strategy Indicators

6-7 November 2013

Bangkok

Regional framework for developing national action plans: key issues for consideration

The EGM participants will consider, under agenda item 4, a regional framework for developing national actions plans to collect data for the Incheon Strategy Indicators. This paper was prepared to facilitate the discussion on this item, by proposing some key issues to be considered in developing national action plans.

1. Introduction

Disability statistics goes beyond prevalence data. It should reflect differences and inequalities in the situation of persons with disabilities as compared to the general populations in all areas of life encompassing, *inter-alia*, education, employment, health, income, social protection and accessibility¹. In addition, national and international statistical services should ensure that statistics related to persons with disabilities are collected, compiled, analysed and presented by sex and age to reflect the challenges girls and boys as well as women and men with disabilities are facing in society².

To address the data requirements for evidence-based policy making and monitoring, the Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific comprises 62 indicators - i.e., 41 core indicators and 21 supplementary indicators - needed to monitor progress in the implementation of 10 disability-inclusive development goals and 27 targets. The Incheon Strategy emphasizes the need for improving the reliability and comparability of disability data and called upon ESCAP members and associate members to establish reliable baseline disability statistics by 2017, the midpoint of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022 (Goal 8).

The new Decade provides an opportunity for national statistical systems to enhance data collection for generating reliable and comparable disability statistics. However, establishing a reliable baseline database for the Incheon Strategy Indicators by 2017 requires that Governments start developing national action plans for data collection in early 2014.

¹ United Nations (2007). “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. (A/RES/61/106)

² United Nations (1995). “Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995”

2. Suggested key issues for developing national action plans

A national action plan can be seen as a roadmap to identify gaps in data collection on persons with disabilities and provide a clear, coherent and systematic way of addressing those gaps.

As such, the national action plan should define data issues needed for the Incheon Strategy, identify existing data gaps as found through the stocktaking, prioritise and agree on key data needs to be met by existing data collection tools and determine most appropriate and cost-efficient data collection, including new collection formats, to fill the gaps. The action plan should also highlight the responsible agency, timeframe and budget requirement for the planned data collection activities. In addition, it should describe the modalities for building partnership, the capacity building needs and monitoring mechanisms.

It is thus proposed that government effort to develop a national action plan takes into consideration such key issues as described below.

A. National coordination mechanism on disability³ as responsible body to develop and monitor the national action plan

As a first step, Governments are required to determine which office assumes primary responsibility for developing and coordinating the implementation of the national action plan.

According to the Incheon Strategy, national coordination mechanisms on disability should develop, monitor and report on the implementation of national action plans on achieving the goals and targets of the Strategy. In this respect, national statistical offices, under the auspices of the national coordination mechanisms, are expected to assume the role of focal points for establishing baseline data for indicators and tracking progress in the implementation of the Strategy.

In the course of the past two Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons (1993-2002 and 2003-2012), many such mechanisms were established. While those mechanisms can be used as responsible bodies to develop and monitor the national action plans on data collection, it is recommended that a special task force be set up within the national coordination mechanism to address data collection issues on the Incheon Strategy Indicators.

If a national coordination mechanism on disability does not exist, it is recommended that a national working group be constituted to initiate a consultation process on the action plan. Similar to the national coordination mechanism, the working group should be a consultative body consisting of representatives from diverse stakeholders. An executive order from the Prime Minister's office may be required to establish such a body. The terms of reference of the working group should clearly define its broad purposes, mandate and membership.

³ A national coordination mechanism on disability is a consultative and coordination body, overseeing national disability policy, whose membership is composed of representatives of diverse sectoral governmental ministries/departments and organizations of or for persons with disabilities as well as representatives of other entities who attend and provide advice and inputs, as required.

Governments are requested to inform the ESCAP secretariat about the process and contact details of their responsible bodies for national action plans.

B. Stocktaking of the availability of national data for the Incheon Strategy Indicators

Developing a national action plan should start with checking the inventory of available data at the very beginning of the Decade. Knowing “where we are at present” is already half the work leading up to such a plan.

ESCAP carried out a regional survey on the availability of national baseline data for the Incheon Strategy Indicators from April to June 2013. Many countries/territories in the region completed the questionnaire as result of joint work by national statistical offices and disability focal points.

This kind of exercise is an indispensable necessity for all the countries including those that did not participate in the ESCAP survey. The above mentioned national coordination mechanism or national working group may provide a venue for considering and mapping out the data collection tools to monitor the Incheon Strategy Indicators.

C. Review of the definition of disability and/or persons with disabilities for data collection

A major issue in data collection on persons with disabilities is how to define disability. Although the operational definition of disability including the type of disability to be covered may change depending on the specific purposes of a data collection vehicle, it is important to note that a standard definition is required across all data collection activities to ensure data are comparable over time and to enable monitoring of the progress in national policy outcomes during the entire period of the Decade.

A review by the working group of the existing national definition of disability (or persons with disabilities) is a prerequisite to planning, designing and undertaking of any data collection. Such efforts should be aligned with international work to standardize disability measures, led by the Washington Group on disability statistics⁴.

E. Capacity building needs

Enhancing the human capacity to collect reliable disability data is a determining factor in establishing a quality database on the Incheon Strategy Indicators by 2017. The action plan should identify capacity building needs as an important factor for implementing the plan.

F. National, regional and international partnership

For effective implementation of national action plans on data collection, it is important to strengthen partnerships among national, regional and international stakeholders.

National partnerships

⁴ United Nations Statistics Division hosts a website on the Washington Group at: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/citygroup/washington.htm> . The details on the Washington Group’s work can be accessed at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/washington_group.htm .

At national levels, diverse sectoral ministries and departments at all levels should be involved along with the civil society including organizations of and for persons with disabilities, research institutions and the private sector for multi-sectoral and national-wide engagement in implementing the Incheon Strategy.

Under the auspices of national coordination mechanisms on disability or national working groups, it would facilitate the work if the Incheon Strategy be translated into national languages and published in accessible formats for wide dissemination. National and subnational campaigns, such as the Make the Right Real Campaign, should be undertaken to raise awareness throughout the Decade to foster positive perceptions of persons with disabilities.

The United Nations country teams should support the revitalization and functioning of national coordination mechanisms, including national working groups, with particular attention given to advocacy, coordination and technical cooperation directed at implementation of national action plans.

Regional partnership

ESCAP, the Asia-Pacific regional arm of the United Nations, will support its members and associate members in implementing the Incheon Strategy.

By exercising its convening power through, *inter-alia*, regular sessions of the Committee on Social Development or its equivalent, ESCAP will provide forums for its members and associate members to discuss the progress, challenges and good practices in implementing the Incheon Strategy and their national action plans. A regional Working Group on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, will meet regularly in the course of the Decade to provide technical advice and support for the full and effective implementation of the Decade. ESCAP will also deliver technical and analytical services to its members. The ESCAP Guidebook on data generation for the Incheon Strategy Indicators which is expected to be published in early 2014 is an example of such support. In 2008, ESCAP published a training manual on disability statistics⁵. ESCAP will also assist countries to build capacities to collect data for the Incheon Strategy Indicators and promote disability-inclusive development. An overview of ESCAP activities to be carried out over the next five years is in annex.

International partnership

The Washington Group on Disability Statistics is a United Nations Statistical Commission's City Group responsible for promoting and coordinating international cooperation in the area of health statistics by focusing on disability measures suitable for censuses and national surveys. A major accomplishment of the Washington Group was the development, testing and endorsement of a short set of disability questions that can be used in censuses and surveys⁶. With the backing of ESCAP, an extended set of questions was cognitively and field

⁵ ESCAP (2008). "Training Manual on Disability Statistics". Accessible online at: <http://www.unescap.org/stat/disability/manual/training-manual-disability-statistics.pdf>

⁶ In the ESCAP region, India, Philippines and Viet Nam participated in testing of the short set of six disability questions.

tested in six Asian countries: Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Philippines and Sri Lanka⁷. Under the Washington Group, a Workgroup on child disability was formed to develop specific question modules designed to measure disability among children.

ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank are among international stakeholders that provide technical backstopping for the country-level planning and implementation of population and housing censuses, education surveys, multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS), labour force surveys (LFS) and demographic health surveys (DHS).

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