



Side-Event to the 8th Session of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals
Measuring Democratic Governance: The Art of the Possible
Conference Room E (NLB), United Nations Headquarters
Thursday, 6 February 2014, 1:15 PM – 2:30 PM
Light lunch offered in former Vienna Café area, 2nd floor (12:45 to 1:15 pm)

DRAFT AGENDA

- 1:15-1:30 Introduction *Democratic Governance as both an end and a means of sustainable development : the case for a stand-alone goal*
- HE Ambassador Od Och**
Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the UN
Experiences, lessons learned and further developments on MDG 9, a voluntary goal to advance human rights and democratic governance in Mongolia.
- Member of Parliament (tbc)**
Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
Parliamentary perspectives on democratic governance as a pillar of sustainable development.
- 1:30-2:00 Technical Discussion *Measuring democratic governance: the feasibility of indicators and assessments*
- Mr Anders Johnsson**
Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
Assessing the effectiveness of parliaments as pillars of democratic governance: indicators of representation, transparency and accountability
- Ms Margot Wallström**
Chair of the Board of Advisors, International IDEA
Citizens led assessment of the state of democracy at the national and local level: the value of perception-based surveys as a methodological tool
- Mr. Nicholas Leader**
Governance and Public Administration Advisor,
Democratic Governance Group, Bureau for Development Policy,
UNDP
Latest findings from expert consultations on indicators of democratic governance: aspects to be measured; categories of indicators, and other technical questions.
- 2:00-2:25 Interactive Exchange
- 2:25-2:30 Closing remarks **Mr Massimo Tommasoli**
Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the UN



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Governance variously defined has long been considered a key element of sustainable development. Most recently, the outcome declaration of the Special Event on the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda last September reaffirmed the need for “democratic governance”, along with the rule of law and human rights, to be promoted through the new SDGs. However, there remains some uncertainty as to *how* governance should be incorporated in the future agenda: as a stand-alone goal or as a principle to inform all other goals?

The report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons in May of this year recommended a stand-alone goal “*to ensure good governance and effective institutions*”; a similar call for a goal “*to transform governance for sustainable development*” came the following month from the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. At the same time, several organizations, including the IPU and International IDEA, have expressed their support for a stand-alone goal. A number of grassroots surveys, including the UN’s My World survey, revealed a desire by people everywhere for key dimensions of governance to be strengthened.

In spite of growing support for a clear commitment to governance in the new SDGs, many members of the Open Working Group remain of the view that a stand-alone goal may not be feasible because of the difficulty in arriving at a common definition as well as practical indicators of progress. From this perspective, governance is seen mainly as an intangible *enabler* of development that is too hard to measure given each country’s own institutional set up and political culture.

This event will serve to illustrate that there are today many possible ways to measure the strength of democratic governance in all countries, developed and developing alike, and to track progress overtime. The early example of Mongolia, which gave itself an MDG 9 on human rights and democratic governance, clearly illustrates the possibilities. More recent research provides further evidence that democratic governance is not just a means but also an *end* of sustainable development, with roots in the existing international human rights framework, and that it can be assessed based on the application of key principles of transparency, accountability and participation at all levels.

After introductory remarks to discuss the general topic and particularly the definition of democratic governance as a more comprehensive concept, a technical panel of three or four practitioners will follow in which a number of indicators of democratic governance will be introduced.

The overall approach of the panel will assume the need for a dashboard of national indicators of democratic governance from which countries can select the most relevant ones given their own specific circumstances and baselines. The technical presentations will focus on a few examples that apply to both developed and developing countries and for which data already exists or can easily be provided, including through national surveys.