



Human Rights Commission
Te Kāhui Tika Tangata

Human Rights Commission Submission to Stats NZ on Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand

28 September 2018

Contact:

John Hancock
Senior Legal Adviser
Human Rights Commission
JohnH@hrc.co.nz

Eleanor Vermunt
Legal Adviser
Human Rights Commission
EleanorV@hrc.co.nz

Submission of the Human Rights Commission to Stats NZ on Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand

Introduction

1. The Human Rights Commission¹ (Commission) welcomes this opportunity to provide Stats NZ with this brief submission on Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand (Indicators Aotearoa)
2. One of the primary functions of the Commission is “to advocate and promote respect for, and an understanding and appreciation of, human rights in New Zealand society.”² This includes promoting and advocating for the advancement of human rights through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as the SDGs are underpinned by binding international law obligations and principles under UN human rights treaties.
3. The Commission accordingly strongly supports the development of Indicators Aotearoa as the framework through which New Zealand will measure wellbeing and sustainable development, against both Treasury’s Living Standards Framework and the SDGs. The Commission considers that Indicators Aotearoa will provide an invaluable source of data for monitoring New Zealand’s progress towards meeting the 2030 SDG targets and its related international human rights treaty obligations.

Summary of Position/Recommendations

4. The Commission supports the adoption of the economic, social and environmental indicators set out in the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) Framework. Our recommended approach in this respect is set out in **Tables 1 and 2** that are annexed to this submission.
5. We have set out in **Table 1** the themes and indicators contained within the CES Framework³ that the Commission considers are of particular importance in the New Zealand context. However, in doing so, we do not discount the potential application of

¹ The Commission is New Zealand’s National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). NHRI’s form part of the UN human rights system by promoting and monitoring the domestic implementation of international human rights standards. The Commission is accredited as an “A Status” NHRI, meaning that it meets the required standards of practice and independence set by the Global Alliance of NHRIs and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

² Human Rights Act 1993, s 5(1).

³ <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/press/pr2013/Annex1.eng.pdf>

other themes and indicators within the CES Framework. We also suggest additional complementary indicators based on the relevant SDGs.

6. In **Table 2** the Commission identifies additional core indicators that are not contained in the CES Framework, together with secondary SDG indicators that Stats NZ may wish to consider for inclusion in Indicators Aotearoa.
7. Furthermore, in order to ensure that Indicators Aotearoa is aligned as closely as possible with international human rights benchmarks, the Commission **recommends** that Stats NZ adopt disaggregated indicators and data sources, wherever possible. Data is not always collected or disaggregated in a manner that enables the accurate monitoring of human rights outcomes. The 2018 census, for example, did not collect data on self-identified sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or sex characteristics. UN treaty bodies have recommended that the New Zealand Government improve its practices, including that it consider applying the conceptual and methodological framework set out by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.⁴
8. We also note the development by the Office of Disability Issues of an Outcomes Framework for measuring and monitoring progress against the New Zealand Disability Strategy⁵. We recommend that, where relevant, the outcomes indicators that arise from this Framework are used to inform Indicators Aotearoa.

Human Rights and the SDGs

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

9. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is explicitly “grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties” and envisages a world of “universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination.”⁶
10. While the SDGs are not framed in human rights language, they seek to “realize the human rights of all.”⁷ As stated by the UN Secretary General, most of the SDGs correspond to

⁴ UN CPRD Committee, CRPD/C/NZL/CO/1, 3 October 2014 at 69, CRC Committee CRC/C/NZL/CO/5, 21 October 2016 at 10(a)-(c),

⁵ <https://www.odi.govt.nz/nz-disability-strategy/measuring-progress/>

⁶ UN General Assembly Res 70/1. 25 September 2015, ¶¶ 8, 10.

⁷ *ibid.* Preamble.

key human rights, particularly those found in the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:⁸

*Many of the targets under the Goals explicitly reflect the content of relevant international human rights standards. Many address availability, accessibility, affordability and quality of education, health, water and other services related to those rights. The goals include targets on access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all, universal health coverage, free equitable and quality primary and secondary education, access to safe and affordable water, sanitation, hygiene and housing, and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.*⁹

11. Most of the 169 targets that support the 16 goals are linked to human rights standards. The Danish Institute for Human Rights has created a useful online interactive tool that can be used to map human rights against the SDG targets.¹⁰

Human rights-based approach to data collection and disaggregation for the SDGs

12. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) guidance note on a human rights-based approach to data collection and disaggregation for the SDGs,¹¹ provides a preliminary set of principles, recommendations and good practices, which include:

- a. Participation
- b. Disaggregated data
- c. Self-identification
- d. Transparency
- e. Privacy
- f. Accountability.

13. Data disaggregation and collection by population group allows for comparison of different population groups with a focus on the most disadvantaged or marginalised and on

⁸ See Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Question of the realization in all Countries of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, UN doc A/HRC/34/25. 14 December, ¶¶ 8, 14.

⁹ Ibid. ¶10.

¹⁰ <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/>

¹¹ A Human Rights-Based Approach to Data: Leaving No One Behind in the 2030 Development Agenda, Guidance Note to Data Collection and Disaggregation, February 2016, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf>

inequalities among the population.¹² The Guidance recommends that data should be disaggregated by key characteristics identified in international human rights law.¹³ These include sex, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

14. International treaty body committees have repeatedly called for States to provide disaggregated data on vulnerable groups.¹⁴ The Commission also notes that the OHCHR has produced a comprehensive Human Rights Indicators guide that emphasises the need for disaggregated data.¹⁵

Comments on Conference of European Statisticians Framework

15. The Commission understands that Stats NZ will select approximately 110 indicators, made up of 20-25 core indicators to provide a broad overview of progress, and 80-90 second tier indicators to provide more detail on each of the dimensions. The starting point will be the CES framework.

16. The Commission welcomes Stats NZ intended adoption of the thematic categorisation of “here and now”, “later”, and “elsewhere” indicators set out in *Annex 1: The framework for measuring sustainable development: indicators*¹⁶ of the CES Framework. Further to this point, we recommend that Stats NZ also consider adopting relevant “policy-relevant indicators” contained within the framework. These include important social, environmental and economic indicators such as housing affordability, numbers of early school leavers and climate change-related emissions.

¹² Ibid. pg 6-7.

¹³ Ibid. pg 7.

¹⁴ UN Committee for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and UN Committee for Civil and Political Rights require State parties to identify disaggregated statistics and indicators for the rights under the International Covenant for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, taking into account the OHCHR Guidance on Indicators. See E/C.12/2008/2 and CCPR/C/2009/1; Committee on the Rights of the Child. General comments No. 4 (2003) on adolescent health and development in the context of the Convention and No. 5 (2003) on general measures of implementation of the Convention; Convention the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, art 31.

¹⁵ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Human_rights_indicators_en.pdf

¹⁶ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/press/pr2013/Annex1_eng.pdf -

Table 1: Comments on CES Framework

Key CES Framework Themes	Key CES Suggested Indicators	HRC Comments
TH2: Consumption and income	Income inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Commission suggests that a separate theme of Gender inequality is adopted, which includes the indicator of gender pay gap (see Table 2)
	Gender pay gap	
TH3: Nutrition	Obesity prevalence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TH3 Nutrition and the indicator obesity prevalence could be added as a health indicator
TH4: Health	Life expectancy at birth	<p>The Commission recommends the following SDG Goal 3 (<i>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</i>) indicators be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5.2 Harmful use of alcohol, defined according to the national context as alcohol per capita consumption (aged 15 years and older) within a calendar year in litres of pure alcohol 3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries 3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group
	Suicide death rate	
	Health expenditures	
	Smoking prevalence	
TH5: Labour	Employment rate	<p>The Commission recommends the following SDG Goal 8 (<i>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</i>) indicators be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities 8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training <p>The Commission also recommends that unemployment rate is disaggregated by ethnicity.</p>
	Distributed by females and youth employment rate	
	Hours worked	
	Average age exit from labour market	
TH6: Education	Educational attainment	<p>The Commission recommends the following SDG Goal 4 (<i>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</i>) indicators be included:</p>
	Expenditures education	
	Competencies	

	Early school leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex • 4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex • 4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex • 4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
	Lifelong learning	
TH7: Housing	Living without housing deprivation	<p>The Commission recommends the following SDG Goal 11 (<i>Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</i>) indicator be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.1.1 Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing
	Housing in stock	
	Investment in housing	
	Housing affordability	
TH9: Physical safety	Death by assault/homicide rate	<p>The Commission recommends the following SDG Goal 16 (<i>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</i>) indicators be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months • 16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live • 16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month • 16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18 • 16.3.2 Unsentenced detainees as a proportion of overall prison population
	Expenditure of safety	
TH11: Water	Water quality index	<p>The Commission recommends the following SDG Goal 6 (<i>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</i>) indicators be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services • 6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater safely treated
	Water resources	

TH16: Trust	Generalised trust	
	Bridging social capital	
	Contact with family and friends	
	Participation in voluntary work	
TH17: Institutions	Voter turnout	
	Percentage of women in parliament	

Table 2: HRC's suggested additional core and secondary indicators

Core Indicator	Secondary Indicators (from SDGs)
Poverty	<p><i>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2.1 Proportion of population below the national poverty line, by sex and age • 1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable • 1.a.1 Proportion of resources allocated by the government directly to poverty reduction programmes • 1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups
Inequality	<p><i>Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities
Gender equality	<p><i>Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age • 5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence • 5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location