EU PROPOSAL TO SUPPORT UK PROPOSAL ON DISABILITY POLICY MARKER

Informal meeting of the Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT)
January 30-31 2018, OECD Boulogne

At the formal meeting of the Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT), 20-21 June 2017, the United Kingdom presented a room document (DCD/DAC/STAT/RD(2017)9) in order to discuss the introduction of a policy marker for persons with disabilities in the Creditor Reporting System.

The aim of this document – presented by the European Union - is to support the UK proposal and bring additional arguments in favour of the adoption of an OECD-DAC disability policy marker.

This document is presented FOR DISCUSSION under item 4 of the draft annotated agenda DCD/DAC/STAT/A(2018)1/REV1. This document is available in PDF format only.

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Room document on a disability policy marker for (informal) WP-STAT meeting 30-31 January 2018

At the formal meeting of the Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT), 20-21 June 2017, the United Kingdom presented a room document (DCD/DAC/STAT/RD(2017)9) in order to discuss the introduction of a policy marker for persons with disabilities in the Creditor Reporting System. The aim of this document from the European Union is to support UK proposal and bring additional arguments in favour of the adoption of an OECD-DAC disability policy marker. An international marker recording aid activities that target inclusiveness of persons with disabilities as a policy objective would indeed be pivotal to turn words into deeds in the donors’ community and meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda.

Key issues

- According to the 2011 World Report on Disability (WB/WHO, 2011), more than one billion people (15% of the world’s population), experience some form of disability, with 80% of them living in developing countries. Persons with disabilities face many barriers preventing them from fully participating in society on an equal basis with others and are more likely to suffer poverty and exclusion than those without disabilities.

- At the international level, there has never been such a strong political focus on persons with disabilities. The SDGs include seven targets which explicitly refer to persons with disabilities, including data disaggregation. More broadly, persons with disabilities are also included in six additional targets referring to persons in vulnerable situations as well as in universal targets that are all relevant for persons with disabilities. Disability inclusion is therefore a decisive cross-cutting element to achieve the 2030 Agenda's objectives to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind.

- Most DAC members have ratified and all of them have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which commit parties to ensuring that "international cooperation, including international development programmes, is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities"¹.

- However, these high ambitions contrast strongly with the absence of an appropriate statistical tool that measures the extent to which persons with disabilities are effectively included in official aid flows. Whereas persons with disabilities already face barriers to implement their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights on an equal basis with others, they also suffer from statistical invisibility in Official Development Assistance.

- In order to seize the momentum generated to address this issue, the timing seems right to support the proposal to introduce a policy marker for persons with disabilities in the CRS at the earliest opportunity, i.e., with 2018 ODA statistics reporting.

1. **Absence of an appropriate statistic tool in the current CRS**

Currently, the reporting of Official Development Assistance towards persons with disabilities is not done specifically. Such projects are usually, but not exclusively, encoded under "15160 (human rights)", which includes action towards specific groups, among which persons with disabilities:

- Measures to support specialised official human rights institutions and mechanisms at universal, regional, national and local levels in their statutory roles to promote and protect civil and political, economic, social and cultural rights as defined in international conventions and covenants; translation of international human rights commitments into national legislation; reporting and follow-up; human rights dialogue.
- Human rights defenders and human rights NGOs; human rights advocacy, activism, mobilisation; awareness raising and public human rights education.
- Human rights programming targeting specific groups, e.g. children, persons with disabilities, migrants, ethnic, religious, linguistic and sexual minorities, indigenous people and those suffering from caste discrimination, victims of trafficking, victims of torture.

The collection of information is not efficient by requiring a keyword search using "handicap", "disability", project by project, across the different programmes, and also the data collected may only give an incomplete overview of development cooperation whose main objective is addressed towards persons with disabilities.

In other words, the current purpose code usually used (CRS 15160) can help track disability-specific projects and programmes only in the important area of Human Rights. However, it cannot identify Official Development Assistance aimed at mainstreaming disability in development cooperation at the time when the 2030 Agenda commits us to include persons with disability in all aspects of society across all development goals. Therefore, as it stands, the current purpose code cannot account on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development cooperation, nor it can serve to measure the progress made in order to strengthen donors' efforts towards the achievements of the disability-inclusive 2030 Agenda.

2. **A policy marker for persons with disabilities would be a relevant tool to cover the needs and fill the gaps identified in the current reporting system**

At the formal meeting of the Working Party on Development Finance Statistics (WP-STAT), 20-21 June 2017, the United Kingdom presented a room document in order to discuss the introduction of a policy marker for persons with disabilities in the CRS.

Based on a simple marking system similar to the existing gender equality policy marker, the new policy marker for persons with disabilities would comprise three levels of targeting: principal / significant / project not targeting persons with disabilities:

- **Principal (score 2)**: inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities is the primary objective and motivation of the project and integral to its design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation;
- **Significant (score 1)**: project contains deliberate activities / mechanisms to support the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in design, delivery and monitoring and evaluation, even where disability inclusion is not one of the stated project objectives;
- **Project will not address disability inclusion (score 0)**: the project has been screened against the disability inclusion policy marker and has been found not to have a deliberate focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities.
In addition, a ‘not screened’ category would cover activity where disability is not applicable or screened.

As stated in the document presented by the United Kingdom:

"An activity is classified as being inclusive of people with disabilities (scores Principal or Significant) if it has a deliberate focus on ensuring people with disabilities are included in, and able to share the benefits on an equal basis to people without disabilities. Projects that address poverty reduction or growth would not be considered to be disability inclusive unless deliberate activities/mechanisms have been included in the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation to promote and secure the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities. (...)

The definition does not cover programmes that prevent disabilities – such as immunisation or road safety programmes. These would continue to be marked as health/infrastructure programmes.

The new marker could either replace the participatory development/good governance (PD/GG) policy marker or be additional. The UK feels strongly that the scale of need and underinvestment in supporting people with disabilities would justify the new marker should it be decided to retain the PD/GG marker.”

For the European Union, such a policy marker would be a relevant tool to cover the needs and fill the gaps identified in the current reporting system:

- It would provide qualitative data of support through Official Development Assistance that targets and mainstreams disability across different aid modalities. Subsequently, it would help implement more effectively a rights-based approach in development cooperation, comprised of a twin-track approach to disability-inclusion, combining specific actions (score 2) with disability mainstreaming (score 1);

- Based on donors' intentions at an early stage of programming, it would also provide an early warning tool if Official Development Assistance is at risk of leaving persons with disabilities behind across all sectors of society, saving years before it starts to appear in results;

- It would allow donors and recipient governments to monitor progress and make informed decisions; it would also give an incentive to strengthen efforts and share knowledge among donors on the different approaches to disability inclusion;

- In combination with specific purpose CRS codes, it would make possible in-depth data analyses for sector policies, in order to reflect more accurately the inclusion of persons with disabilities in essential public policies (Health, Education, Employment, Agriculture,...) and enhance donors’ capacity to adapt planning and budgeting accordingly;

- It would complement and encourage developing countries' efforts to gather data on persons with disabilities and overcome the weaknesses of their national statistics system, for example by using the set of instruments developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, thus giving a strong incentive to the adaptation of legal frameworks and the implementation of national policies inclusive of persons with disabilities;

- Based on the model of the existing gender equality policy marker, and building on several national initiatives at donors' level to experiment with a disability policy marker, the proposed marker would be straightforward to implement.
3. A policy marker for persons with disabilities can be adopted independently from the markers’ review and the SDG reporting, it is high time to move forward

The proposed policy marker for persons with disabilities does not overlap with existing markers or purpose codes which would already address specifically persons with disabilities, as there isn’t any. Among the proposals for the introduction of potential new markers and purpose codes, the proposal from the United Kingdom is the only one to address persons with disabilities, and this document shows how relevant it is to fill the gaps and cover the needs.

The SDG reporting does not address comprehensively the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the achievement towards the SDGs. As shown in the introduction of this document, when it comes to the inclusion of persons with disabilities the 2030 Agenda is much more ambitious than the seven targets referring specifically to disability. It places marginalised and vulnerable groups, among which persons with disabilities is one of the largest, at the centre of poverty eradication throughout all the goals and targets.

Of the 231 indicators defined to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, enshrined in the global indicator framework adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2017, only 11 indicators specifically mention persons with disabilities.

Despite the introductory message to the global indicator framework, recalling that SDG indicators "should be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location", there is a real risk, given the lack of disaggregated data by disability in the existing statistical system, and in particular with regard to development cooperation, that SDG reporting will focus on averages that will not reflect the reality for different groups of persons, including those with disabilities.

The SDGs report 2017 shows the extent of the challenges that have to be addressed to properly and comprehensively monitor and account the progress made towards the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the SDGs. The report makes it very clear that, so far, progress is not equitable and inclusive enough. One of the main challenges highlighted is the lack of disaggregated data, which undermine the capacity to identify and measure the discriminations faced by specific and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, and as a consequence take action to tackle them.

"The lack of sound disaggregated data for many of these vulnerable groups—including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and those internally displaced—exacerbates vulnerabilities by masking the extent of deprivation and disparities. What's more, a lack of rigorous evidence and comprehensive data has long compromised the ability of governments and the international community to accurately document the discrimination faced by various groups. As a result, planning and budgeting for necessary services along with effective policymaking have suffered. Children living outside of family care, persons with disabilities and older persons, for example, have largely fallen off the statistical “map”."³

Conclusion

For all the reasons exposed above, the European Union supports the proposal made by United Kingdom to introduce a disability policy marker, as it would be a key statistical tool to monitor and

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account of donors' efforts to include persons with disabilities in Official Development Assistance in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

Subsequently, the European Union recommends the Secretariat to formalize a proposal for a policy marker for persons with disabilities to be approved in 2018 for reporting on 2018 ODA statistics.