Commentary and Points for Discussion
(Child wellbeing session)

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Outline

- Children and public policy

- Child wellbeing measurement: Concept, approaches and data sources

- Indicators versus pointers

- Putting things together: Towards a global child wellbeing observatory

- Points for discussion
Children and public policy

Where do they stand in public policy prioritization?

- Every society is concerned about its children
- Improvement in evidence-based public policy formulation and implementation
- The UNCRC - a major stimulus in bringing children's issues in public policy agenda
- International development framework (such as MDGs) contributed to drawing attention to children.
- Still a long way to go towards this end
Children and public policy . . . (cont’d)

- Budgets are true reflections of priority
- The theme for our second report: *Budgeting for Children*
- It will examine how the budget process affects child wellbeing
- Intends to come up with policy recommendations for increased allocation and child sensitive budget processes
Child wellbeing measurement: Concepts, approaches and data sources

- Difference in conceptualizing child wellbeing
- Conceptual difference has pros and cons

**Pros**
- Spurs more research, discussion and thinking
- Leads to more clarity and better understanding
- Results a conceptually coherent and exhaustive definition
- Leads to refinement of the measurement of child wellbeing that we are aspiring for.

**Cons**
- Confusion
- Barrier for comparison
- Lack of a unified framework (we have different "OECD", UNICEF or any others framework).
Child wellbeing measurement: Concepts, approaches and data sources

- Child wellbeing is a multidimensional construct
- The word ‘multi’ shows that we are not and could not be sure of how many dimensions would adequately capture it
- It expands with the body of knowledge
- More research to identify new components and dimensions that have bearing on the wellbeing of children
Indicators versus Pointers

- We need “Pointers” of child wellbeing and not “Indicators”
- Implied in the word “Indicator” is an element of giving in for imprecision
- “Pointers” directly and precisely point where we are and where we heading to
- At least conceptually, we need to aspire for a more direct and relevant "pointers"
- We have to avoid, as much as possible, use of proxy measures
Indicators versus Pointers . . . (cont’d)

This, ideally, means that:

- We have to select/identify a more direct “pointers” and develop a method/protocol for data collection.
- We also need to come up with an exhaustive model of child wellbeing that captures every dimension of wellness, life circumstances, including all subjective components.
- Incorporate measures of environment, context and other aspects that have bearings on wellbeing.
- Maintain timeliness.
What should be the criteria of selection?

- The principle of non-discrimination
- The best interests of the child, and
- Child participation

What other considerations?

- Relevance and directness to the phenomenon/dimension they are referring to
- Consistency in order to be able to track progress over time
- Reliability
- Involving children in their development
Regarding the taxonomy

- An indication of the growing numbers of indicators for measuring child wellbeing
- Need for a detail rules/procedures for classification within each context
- Developing a guideline on the definitions, rationale, concepts, techniques of measurement and sources for each indicator
- Child participation (how the indicator was developed)
Putting pieces together: Towards a global child wellbeing observatory

Why do we need a global child wellbeing observatory?

- Enhances monitoring and evaluation to track progress in child wellbeing
- Helps harmonises concepts, definitions, indicators, techniques of measurement, etc.
- Avoids duplication of efforts
- Improves accessibility
- Encourages and fosters collaboration
Putting pieces together: Towards a global child wellbeing observatory . . .

→ Serves as a one-stop-shop for everything on child wellbeing
→ Serves as a model and serves technical guidance for national and regional observatories
→ Facilitates comparison at regional and international levels

The initiatives are there:

✓ Multi-National Project for Monitoring and Measuring Children’s Wellbeing
✓ UNICEF’s initiative, Wiki, Africanchild.Info, Childinfo, etc..

What is lacking…

✓ Putting the pieces together and organising
✓ Creating a comprehensive collection including documents referring to legal and policy framework
Points for discussion

- Do we have a comprehensive and well defined definition for child wellbeing?
- How do we harmonise conceptual differences?
- Are the indicators sharp and pointing?
- What can we do to improve precision?
- How effectively have we communicated results of wellbeing measurement to policy-makers?
Thank you for your attention!