

Mothers First question to the IAEG-SDG Meeting on the 20th June 2020

We have two questions both of which refer to the Independent Review carried out by Mothers First of the indicator selection process in Bangkok in 2015. The review centred around the 30 minute period that SDG 2 was discussed at these meetings.

This review was a retrospective analysis on the process and was presented to the UNSD Secretariat in November 2018. The review formed part of our submission to the June 2019 public consultation for the Comprehensive Review. We have sent this question and a copy of our review to the Co-Chairs of IAEG-SDGs Viveka Palm and Albina Chuwa as well IAEG-SDG member Kevin McCormack from Ireland who represents both our country and region.

Our review was based on video footage and documentation publicly available on the second IAEG-SDG meeting in Bangkok. The review highlighted that 5 key indicators that were due to be discussed at the meetings were never actually discussed. The review further highlighted the key reasons for this included knowledge deficits by the IAEG members which was exacerbated by the Chair having significant challenges in moderating the process.

In the only formal acknowledgement of our review on the 5th of November 2019, Viveka Palm stated:

'While the discussion at the meeting might only have been minutes for the indicators in which you are interested, all indicators were thoroughly reviewed prior to the meeting, and all IAEG members came prepared to review and discuss based on very extensive inputs from their national experts and different parts of their respective national system'

This fundamentally misses our key point that no discussion whatsoever took place for 5 key indicators. It is unclear from the response if the key indicators excluded from the discussion were,

A Based on a decision prior to the meeting that the 5 indicators pertaining to SDG 2 would not be discussed.

B If as we outlined in the review that the indicators were intended to be discussed but inadvertently not done so.

C Another reason.

Question 1

We ask for clarity from the IAEG-SDG the nature of the process which led to 5 key indicators not being discussed. The indicators were:

- Anemia in women,
- Body Mass Index for adolescent girls and pregnant mothers,
- Women's Dietary Diversity Score.
- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 5 months.

- Percentage of women 15 to 49 who consume less than 5 out of 10 defined food groups.

It is worth noting that all of these indicators referred to women's nutritional status.

Question 2

Background

We sent our review to the UN Ethics Office in Feb 2018 where we were referred to The Investigations Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). They outlined that after 'carefully reviewing' our report they took the decision to refer the matter to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). We were later informed that the matter was referred to Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This referral was sent on the 16th of July 2019.

It is our understanding that DESA has made contact with the UNSD regarding our review. We ask for clarity around the nature of the correspondence between DESA and the UNSD secretariat and secondly the contact details of the person from DESA that is dealing with our concerns.

Conclusion

It needs to be clear that we are not necessarily calling for additional indicators for SDG 2, rather we are highlighting that due process was not followed. Our submission for the 2020 comprehensive review recommended that all 5 indicators not discussed in 2015 be siloed through the process for discussion at the 10 IAEG-SDG meetings in Ethiopia. In not taking this opportunity the process has in our opinion failed to act on the underlying principle of fairness which underpins the Sustainable Development Goals.