

THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKMENISTAN

THE UNITED NATIONS

REPORT

on

Findings of the National Consultations in Turkmenistan
for the topic of “How to Strengthen Capacities and Build Effective
Institutions”



Ashgabat – 2014

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I. Introduction

In September 2000, 189 countries attending the UN Millennium Summit adopted the **Millennium Declaration** that reflected the issues of human rights, peace, security and the environmental protection as a set of *Millennium Development Goals* or *MDGs*.

Whereas the Millennium Declaration presented a general action plan to achieve the global development, the MDGs presented a set of quantitative criteria to measure progress in key development areas around the globe. A full set of MDGs initially consisted of **8 goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators**, but later (in 2008) the number of indicators increased to 60.

Most of these goals and targets have been set to be achieved by 2015. However, as it was stressed in the UN General Assembly Resolution 65/1 of 22 September 2010, though many developing countries “*have made significant efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and have had major successes in realizing some of the targets, much more needs to be done in achieving the Millennium Development Goals as progress has been uneven among regions and between and within countries*”.

Given that the MDGs implementation will come to an end in 2015, the United Nations called for conducting national consultations in different countries around the world on what the next development agenda should be for the period up to 2030. The purpose of those consultations was to identify priority areas for global development within the next 15 years and, based on them, to get a vision of the world, which people would like to live in. Initially, 50 countries were selected for such consultations, subsequently another 38 countries, including Turkmenistan, were entered on that list, i.e. in general, the national consultations were conducted in 88 countries. In the course of 2013, the national consultations were held in all those countries engaging representatives of various groups of population.

In total, over 1 million people participated in the 1st round of post-2015 consultations. The findings were published in the UN Global Report “**A Million Voices: The World We Want**”.

The United Nations have decided to hold the 2nd round of national consultations in order to study views and opinions on how to localize global goals, but most importantly, to determine the vision of people from the selected countries of the world on the most effective ways to implement the development goals. Fifty six countries were selected by the UN for the second round of national consultations.

Note: In Turkmenistan, 1,818 people have participated in the national consultations, including government employees, members of the Parliament, entrepreneurs, including business women, farmers, schoolchildren, parents of children under 7 years of age, and representatives from vulnerable groups. The findings of the discussions were published in the national report of Turkmenistan and submitted to the United Nations.

The following six main themes for the 2nd round of national consultations were identified:

- 1. Localizing the post-2015 development agenda;*
- 2. Helping to strengthen capacities and institutions*
- 3. Participatory monitoring, the existing and new forms of accountability;*
- 4. Partnerships with civil society and other actors;*
- 5. Partnerships with the private sector;*
- 6. Culture and development.*

The list of countries selected for the second round of national consultations also included Turkmenistan as a state that has long been engaged, as the President of Turkmenistan says “**in directing its efforts to maximize support for sustainable development processes, in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and establishing effective models of multilateral cooperation for finding solutions to the most essential global challenges**” (Statement by Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov at the 19th plenary session of the UN General Assembly, September 23, 2011, New York).

Out of the suggested topics, Turkmenistan has chosen to discuss the following theme: “**How best to strengthen capacities and build effective institutions**”.

The following issues were identified as the main objectives of consultations:

- To engage countries in discussion on how best to implement the new post-2015 goals and targets. This is done in order to assist nations to implement the post 2015 goals and targets more effectively, with a particular emphasis on the topic “Helping to strengthen capacities and institutions”.

- To understand how the United Nations agencies in Turkmenistan can assist the Government to integrate relevant Post 2015 goals and targets into their National and ministries plans and assist them monitor progress over the years 2016- 2030.
- To understand how the United Nations can assist the Government in the area of strengthening capacities and effective institutions for the implementation and monitoring of those post 2015 global goals and targets that are relevant for Turkmenistan.
- To make contribution to the global discussions on how best to implement and monitor the post-2015 goals and targets by hearing the voices of a select number of counties around the world.

Based on this list of objectives, and in order to get sufficiently full information on them, it was decided to establish relevant target groups composed of exactly those government institutions, which in their capacity were competent in the abovementioned issues. As a result, upon agreement with the Government of Turkmenistan, the UN Country Team in Turkmenistan selected **four target groups** for the national consultations:

I. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;

II. Ministry of Economy and Development; National Institute of Strategic Planning and Economic Development;

III. Ministries of Education; Health and Medical Industry; Labor and Social Protection of Population; Interior; and Nature Protection

IV. State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan.

The reasons for conducting consultations in these particular four groups were founded on the following considerations:

- ✓ *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter - MOFA) is considered as a government structure, which on behalf of the Government of Turkmenistan and due to its status may officially present the country's position on both recognition and acceptance of the global post-2015 goals for implementation, as well as an agency entrusted to coordinate activities of all international organizations represented in Turkmenistan, including the UN;*
- ✓ *The Ministry of Economy and Development (hereinafter referred to as MoED) and the National Institute of Strategic Planning and Economic Development (hereinafter - NISP) are the agencies responsible for the*

development of national strategies and plans. Therefore, it is these agencies who will decide how the post-2015 global development goals will be integrated into the effectively implemented current national programs and plans, namely: the National Program of Socio-Economic Development of Turkmenistan for 2011-2030; National Programme of President of Turkmenistan for improving social and living conditions of the population of villages, towns, cities in districts, districts, and district centers till 2020; Strategy of economic, political and cultural development of Turkmenistan till 2020; Sectoral Programs of socio-economic development for the period 2011-2016; and all new national programs and strategies which would be adopted in future.

- ✓ *The Ministries of Education; Health and Medical Industry; Labour and Social Welfare; Interior; and Nature Protection* are considered as agencies which due to their functions directly implement main national policies and programs, including the targets from the global goals and targets specified in the MDGs;
- ✓ *The State Statistics Committee (hereinafter referred to as SSC)* was considered as a government agency responsible for collection and analysis of practically all of statistical information with the exception of strictly internal departmental statistics. In addition, the choice for engagement of SSC into consultations was based on the fact that this institution is a government agency, which co-operates almost with all international organizations having their offices in Turkmenistan.

The consultations in these ministries and departments were held according to the Schedule of meetings (*See Appendices to this report*), which was agreed on 4th of July 2014 at the MOFA of Turkmenistan during the meeting of the UN heads of agencies with the deputy ministers and directors included into the list of participants.

II. Methodology

In total, four consultations in the form of nine focus-group discussions were held within the period of **7-12 July 2014**¹ in the ministries and national institutions selected for consultations. All consultations were conducted in full compliance with the methodology suggested by the UN Country Office in Turkmenistan.

All consultations were held based on the similar scenario. Prior to the beginning of consultations each participant had to fill in a short questionnaire aimed at obtaining only quantitative data on his/her status, sex, age, length of service and education background. In addition to those issues, the questionnaire also included questions to identify the level of the participants' knowledge of MDGs in general and their involvement into preparation of national and sectorial reports on MDGs implementation.

After that, a presentation, which briefly described MDGs, the aim and format of national consultations was made for the participants. Before the beginning of the discussions a preliminary list of post-2015 global goals and targets was presented to the participants.

In conducting the discussions, for each ministry and institution, which participated in consultations, there was used a relevant questionnaire containing general questions and questions directly related to their mandates. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section included the questions related to MDGs, whereas the second one covered the questions related to the global post-2015 goals and targets. At the same time, for the participants of discussions from ministries and institutions in relevant target groups the choice of primary goals and targets was based on those ones, which directly referred to their activities.

The following table below presents the suggested questions put forward for discussions in the target groups (see Table 1):

Table 1

Target group	Ministry or institution presented in the group	General Questions	Questions directly related to the activities of the ministry
I	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u> 2. What lessons did Turkmenistan learn from participation in the MDGs	<u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u> 1. Did the Government of Turkmenistan adopt MDGs and how it was done?

¹ **Note:** The consultation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan planned for 11 July 2014 was held on 4 August 2014 (O.M.).

		<p>implementation up to 2015?</p> <p>3. Was a special mechanism used to monitor MDGs implementation process in Turkmenistan? If yes, what kind of mechanism it was?</p>	<p>II. On post-2015 goals and targets, 2016-2030</p> <p>1. Will Turkmenistan participate in global political discussions and negotiations on defining the post-2015 goals and targets?</p> <p>2. Will Turkmenistan formally adopt the post-2015 goals and targets? How will it be done?</p> <p>3. If yes, will these post-2015 goals and targets be reflected in the national strategic programmes? If yes, in what form?</p> <p>4. Using what mechanisms could be effective to carry out monitoring of post-2015 goals implementation in the country as a whole and in the regions?</p> <p>5. Is there a need to create new structures for more effective implementation of tasks of the social-economic development of the country (including the post-2015 goals) after 2015? If yes, what are they and for what purpose?</p> <p>6. In which direction is there a need to carry out work to strengthen available capacity of structures responsible for implementation of tasks of the social economic development, including the post-2015 goals?</p> <p>7. What specific post-2015 goals and targets could be addressed with participation/engagement of civil society (including the private sector)?</p> <p>8. In your opinion how best could the UN system organizations support the Government of Turkmenistan in integration, implementation of the post-2015 goals and targets in Turkmenistan and reporting on the achievements?</p>
<p>II</p>	<p>2.1. Ministry of Economy and Development</p>	<p><u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u></p> <p>1. What lessons did the Ministry of Economy learn from participation in implementation of MDGs?</p> <p>2. Did the Ministry of Economy use a special mechanism to monitor MDGs implementation in Turkmenistan? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p> <p>3. Did there exist a specific national strategy on implementation of MDGs in Turkmenistan?</p>	<p><u>II. On post-2015 goals and targets, 2016 - 2030</u></p> <p>1. Will the Ministry of Economy integrate post-2015 goals and targets to the national strategies and plans by substantially amending them (plans and programmes)? Do you foresee any challenges in doing so? If yes, what can such challenges be associated with?</p> <p>2. Should the mandate (area of authority) and competencies of the Ministry of Economy be expanded to achieve greater efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to further strengthen the Ministry of Economy capacities (<i>personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc</i>)? What and whose capacities, please specify?</p> <p>4. Is there a need to establish any new structures for more effective implementation of social-economic</p>

			<p>development objectives (including the post-2015 goals) after post-2015? If yes, what structures and for what purpose?</p> <p>5. The use of what mechanisms of monitoring post-2015 goals implementation could be more effective in the country as a whole and in the regions? Is there a need to establish a new state body for this purpose?</p> <p>6. Will the Ministry of Economy monitor how best the post-2015 goals and targets were reflected (or will be reflected) in the sector plans and strategies of other ministries and institutions of Turkmenistan?</p> <p>7. In your opinion how best could the UN system organizations support your institution in integration and implementation of the post-2015 goals and targets in Turkmenistan?</p>
	<p>2.2. National Institute of Strategic Planning</p>	<p><u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u></p> <p>1. What lessons were learned by Turkmenistan from participation in realization of MDGs from 2000 to 2015?</p> <p>2. Was a special mechanism to monitor the process of MDGs implementation in Turkmenistan used? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p>	<p>I. On MDGs, 2000- 2015</p> <p>3. Did a specific national strategy exist in relation to MDG implementation in Turkmenistan?</p> <p>II. On post-2015 goals and targets, 2016 - 2030</p> <p>1. Will NISP integrate the approved post-2015 goals and targets to the existing national strategic plans and programmes by substantially amending these programmes and plans? Will there be any challenges in doing so? If yes, what will such challenges associated with?</p> <p>2. Is there a need to expand the mandate (area of authority) and competencies of NISP to achieve greater efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to further strengthen the NISP capacities (<i>personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc</i>)?</p> <p>4. Is it necessary to create some new structures for more effective implementation of tasks of the country's social-economic development (including post-2015 goals) for the period after 2015? If yes, what kind of structures and for what specific purpose?</p> <p>5. Using what specific mechanisms for monitoring of post-2015 goals and targets implementation could be more effective in the country as a whole and in the regions? Should a separate body be created for this purpose? Could NISP assume this responsibility?</p>
<p>III</p>	<p>3.1. Ministry of Health and Medical Industry</p>	<p><u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u></p> <p>1. What lessons were learned by the Ministry of Health from participation in MDGs implementation?</p>	<p>II. On goals and targets, 2016 - 2030</p> <p>1. Will the Ministry of Health integrate health related post-2015 goals to the national and sector strategies and plans by substantially amending them (plans and programmes)? Do you foresee any challenges in</p>

		<p>2. Was a special mechanism to monitor process of implementation of MDG targets in Turkmenistan in the area of population health used? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p>	<p>doing so? If yes, what can such challenges be connected with?</p> <p>2. Should the mandate (area of authority) and competencies of the Ministry of Health be expanded to achieve greater efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to further strengthen the Ministry of Health capacities (<i>personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc</i>)?</p> <p>4. Should some new structures be established for more effective implementation of tasks related to improvement of the national healthcare system? If yes, what kind of structures and for what specific purpose?</p> <p>5. How would the Ministry of Health ensure accessibility of quality medical services for all including vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, elderly, children from families with one parent or low-income families, marginalized layers of population)?</p> <p>6. How (through what means) would the target of the notably improved quality of medical services to population be achieved? How would the adequate high quality of medical services be achieved in all regions of the country? What specific measures in this direction will be taken in the near, medium and long term?</p> <p>7. Is there a need to establish a new, more complete system of baselines and indicators to monitor progress in the sphere of healthcare? If yes, what kind of indicators would be appropriate to include into such system?</p>
<p>3.2. Ministry of Education</p>		<p><u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u></p> <p>1. What lessons did the Ministry of Education learn from participation in implementation of the MDGs?</p> <p>2. Was a special mechanism used to monitor MDGs implementation process in Turkmenistan in the sphere of education? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p>	<p><u>II. On post-2015 goals and targets, 2016 - 2030</u></p> <p>1. Will the Ministry of Education integrate education related post-2015 goals and targets to the national and sector strategies and plans by substantially amending them (plans and programmes)? Do you foresee any challenges in doing so? If yes, what are these challenges associated with?</p> <p>2. Should the mandate (area of authority) and competencies of the Ministry of Education be expanded to achieve greater efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to further strengthen the Ministry of Education capacities (<i>personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc</i>)?</p> <p>4. Should any new structures be established for more effective implementation of tasks related to improvement of the national education system? If yes, what kind of structures and for what specific</p>

			<p>purpose?</p> <p>5. How would the Ministry of Education ensure realization of the right of every person to life-long education, ensure universal and equal access to educational services for all, including vulnerable groups of population (people with disabilities, old-age people, children from families with one parent or low-income families, marginalized layers of population)?</p> <p>6. What measures would be taken to achieve a goal of considerable improvement of the quality of educational services to the population? How would the adequate uniform high quality of preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education be ensured in both rural and urban areas? What specific measures in this direction will be taken in the near, medium and long term?</p> <p>7. Is there a need to set up a special system of baselines and indicators to monitor progress in the sphere of education? If yes, what specific indicators will be appropriate to include in it?</p>
	<p>3.3. Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population</p>	<p><u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u></p> <p>1. What lessons did the Ministry of Labor learn from participation in MDGs implementation?</p> <p>2. Was a special mechanism used to monitor progress in MDGs implementation in Turkmenistan in the area of employment, social protection? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p>	<p><u>II. On post-2015 goals and targets, 2016 - 2030</u></p> <p>1. Will the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection integrate labor and social protection related post-2015 goals to the national and sector strategies and plans by substantially amending them (plans and programmes)? Do you foresee any challenges in doing so? If yes, what are such challenges associated with?</p> <p>2. Should the mandate (area of authority) and competencies of the Ministry of Labor be expanded to achieve greater efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to further strengthen the Ministry of Labor capacities (personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc)?</p> <p>4. Should any new structures be established for more effective implementation of tasks related to improvement of the social protection and employment system? If yes, what kind of structures and for what specific purpose?</p> <p>5. How is the Ministry of Labor going to achieve full employment and job provision with decent wages, eliminating cases of open and hidden discrimination in the labor market, protection of the rights of migrants coming from rural areas to cities seeking for jobs, etc?</p> <p>6. What specific social protection measures will the Ministry carry out to ensure decent life for vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, old-age people, children from families with one parent or low-income families, marginalized layers of population, single mothers, etc)?</p>

		7. Is there a need to establish a new, more complete system of baselines and indicators to monitor progress in the sphere of employment and social protection? If yes, what kind of indicators would be appropriate to include into such system?
3.4. Ministry of Nature Protection	<p>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</p> <p>1. What lessons did the Ministry of Nature Protection learn from participation in implementation of the MDGs?</p> <p>2. Was a special mechanism used to monitor MDGs implementation process in Turkmenistan in the sphere of nature protection, ecosystems protection, biodiversity preservation and development of strategies aimed at ensuring the climate sustainability? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p>	<p><u>II. On post-2015 goals and targets, 2016-2030</u></p> <p>1. Will the Ministry of Nature Protection integrate post-2015 goals and targets in relation to their mandate to the national and sector strategic programmes and plans by amending them (plans and programmes) accordingly? Do you foresee any challenges in doing so? If yes, what are these challenges associated with?</p> <p>2. Should the mandate and competencies of the Ministry of Nature Protection expanded to achieve greater efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to further strengthen the Ministry of Nature Protection capacities (<i>personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc</i>)? What and whose capacities, please specify?</p> <p>4. Should any new structures be established for more effective implementation of tasks related to improvement of the national environment protection system? If yes, what kind of structures and for what specific purpose?</p> <p>5. How would the Ministry of Nature Protection ensure realization of environment protection goals, establishment of the balanced ecosystem, preservation of biodiversity, prevent desertification and soil erosion, water resources and atmospheric pollution?</p> <p>6. How would the Ministry of Nature Protection engage voluntary and non-governmental organizations to participate in environment protection activities and introduce elements of public-private partnerships to its activities? If yes, what areas it will cover?</p> <p>7. Is there a need to set up a special system of baselines and indicators to monitor progress in the sphere of ecosystem protection, biodiversity preservation, prevention of desertification and soil erosion, water resources and atmospheric pollution? If yes, what specific indicators will be appropriate to include in it?</p> <p>8. In your opinion, how could the UN system organizations assist your ministry in integration and implementation of the post-2015 goals and targets in Turkmenistan?</p>
3.5.	<u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u>	<u>II. On post-2015 goals and targets, 2016-2030</u>

	Ministry of Interior	<p>1. What lessons did the Ministry of Interior learn from the participation in the implementation of MDGs for the period of up to 2015?</p> <p>2. Was a special mechanism used to monitor the MDGs implementation progress in Turkmenistan in the sphere of public order and security? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p>	<p>1. Would the Ministry of Interior integrate post-2015 goals and targets relevant to their mandate to the existing national and sector strategic plans and programmes by amending them accordingly? Can any challenges be encountered in this process? If yes, what would it be associated with?</p> <p>2. Should the mandate (area of authority) and competencies of the Ministry of Interior be expanded to achieve greater efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to further strengthen the Ministry of Interior capacities (personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc)?</p> <p>4. Should any new structures be created for more effective implementation of tasks related to improvement of the national law enforcement system?</p> <p>5. How would the Ministry of Interior achieve goals aimed at protecting constitutional rights, ensuring safe private life and property of citizens? How would tasks of preserving civil accord and peaceful life in the society be solved?</p> <p>6. How would the Ministry of Interior take measures aimed at enhancing the prestige of police among public at large as an important social institution staffed with honest people, in accordance with law, and safeguarding the constitutional rights of citizens?</p> <p>7. Is there a need to set up a special body and system of indicators allowing the Ministry to monitor progress and achievements in ensuring public order?</p>
IV	State Statistics Committee	<p><u>I. On MDGs, 2000-2015</u></p> <p>1. What lessons did the SSC learn from participation in realization of 2000-2015 MDGs?</p> <p>2. Did SSC use a special mechanism to monitor the process of MDGs implementation in Turkmenistan? If yes, what kind of mechanism?</p> <p>3. Were any difficulties encountered in monitoring the MDGs implementation progress? If yes, what kind of challenges were they and how can they be overcome in carrying out monitoring post-2015 goals implementation?</p>	<p><u>II. On post-2105 goals and targets, 2016 - 2030</u></p> <p>1. Will SSC take part in integration of targets of the approved post-2015 goals in the existing national strategic plans and programmes by substantially amending these programmes and plans? Can any challenges be encountered in this process? If yes, what can it be connected with?</p> <p>2. Should the SSC mandates and competence be extended to achieve more efficiency of its activities?</p> <p>3. Is there a need to strengthen the capacities (personnel, research, material and technical base, possibilities of effective interaction with superior bodies of power and with other ministries, for international cooperation, etc) of SSC and its subsidiaries in the field?</p> <p>4. Should new bodies be set up in the SSC structure for more efficient monitoring of the progress of implementation of the country's social-economic development objectives (including post-2015 goals) for the period until 2030?</p> <p>5. Could SSC develop a system of baselines for</p>

			<p>implementation of the post-2015 goals and targets? How could SSC do it? If yes, how difficult can this work be?</p> <p>6. Could SSC assume responsibility to create a system of regular reporting of national and regional bodies on the implementation of post-2015 goals and targets?</p>
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III. Participants

In all, 83 participants from nine government agencies participated in the national consultations. The number of participants from each agency was approximately the same, i.e, from 8 to 10 people.

a) Out of all participants from four target groups 23 percent held senior management positions (at least one deputy minister and the heads or deputy heads of divisions, as well as heads of departments). Sixty five percent of participants were employees from the middle level and 12 percent from the junior level (see Fig. 1).

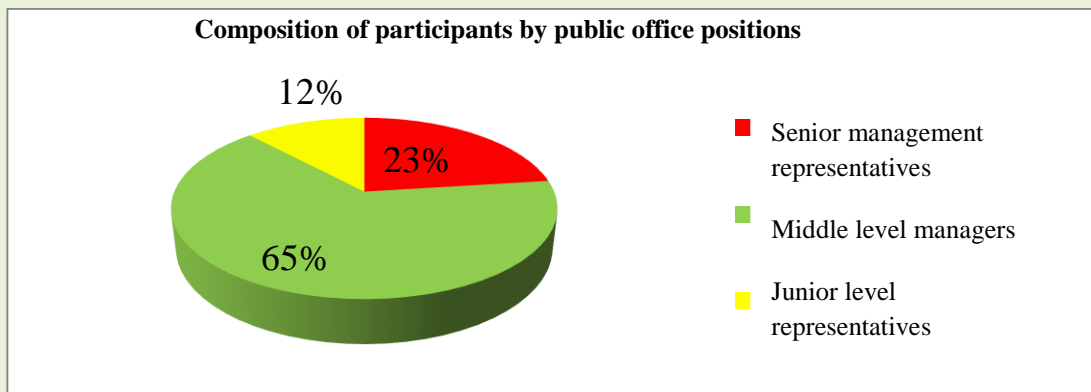


Figure 1.

b) Gender-related index. The share of women exceeded the share of men with females constituting 55 percent of the participants (See Fig. 2)

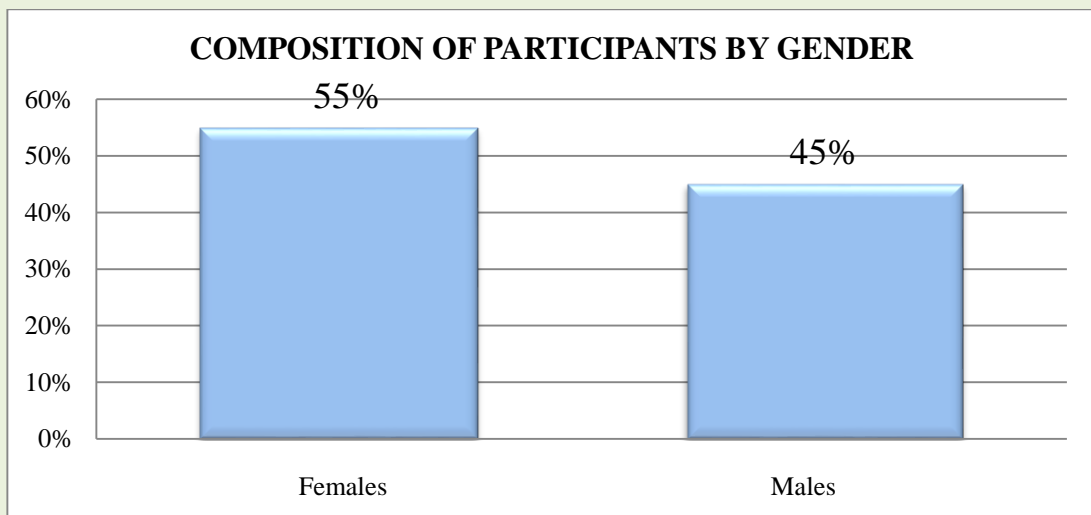


Figure 2.

However, it should be noted that distribution of participants based on gender in each target group turned to be different. For instance, the first target group presented by the MFA consisted of only male participants, whereas the fourth target group represented by the SSC included only females. Much

more women were in the second target group (nearly 70 percent) and in the third target group consisting of the participants from the 5 ministries and institutions. In particular, the majority (nearly 2/3) of the participants from the Ministries of Education, Economy and Development and Healthcare were females. However, at the Ministries of Interior and Nature Protection the share of female-participants was less than 30 percent.

c) Age-related index. Exactly one-third of the participants (33 percent) were between 30 and 40 years old, almost as many were the participants aged from 41 to 50 years (31 percent). The participants over 60 years old represented 5 percent, whereas the share of participants below 30 years old amounted to 4 percent. (See Fig.3)

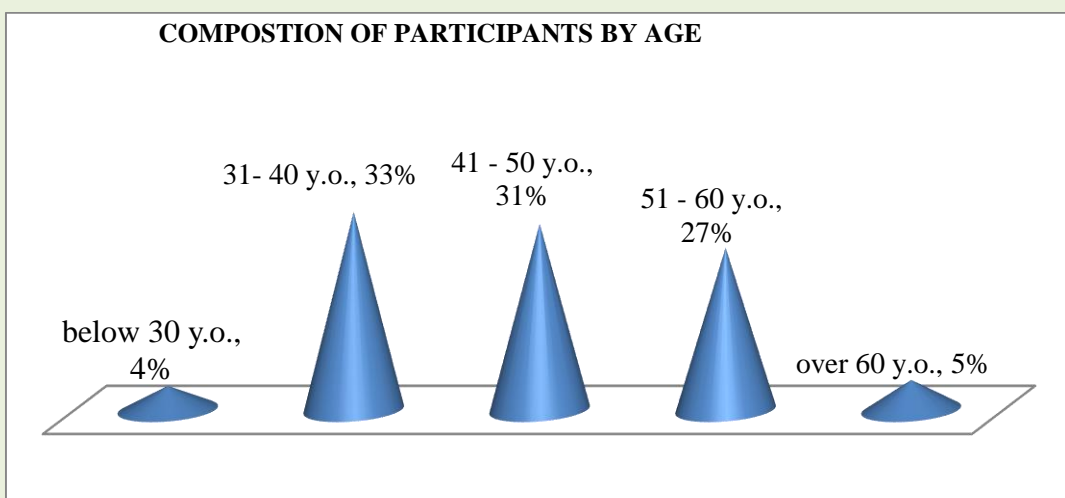


Figure 3.

d) Total length of service. The highest share of participants had employment record of 20 years and above. In total, their share amounted to 2/3 of the total number of participants (See Fig. 4)

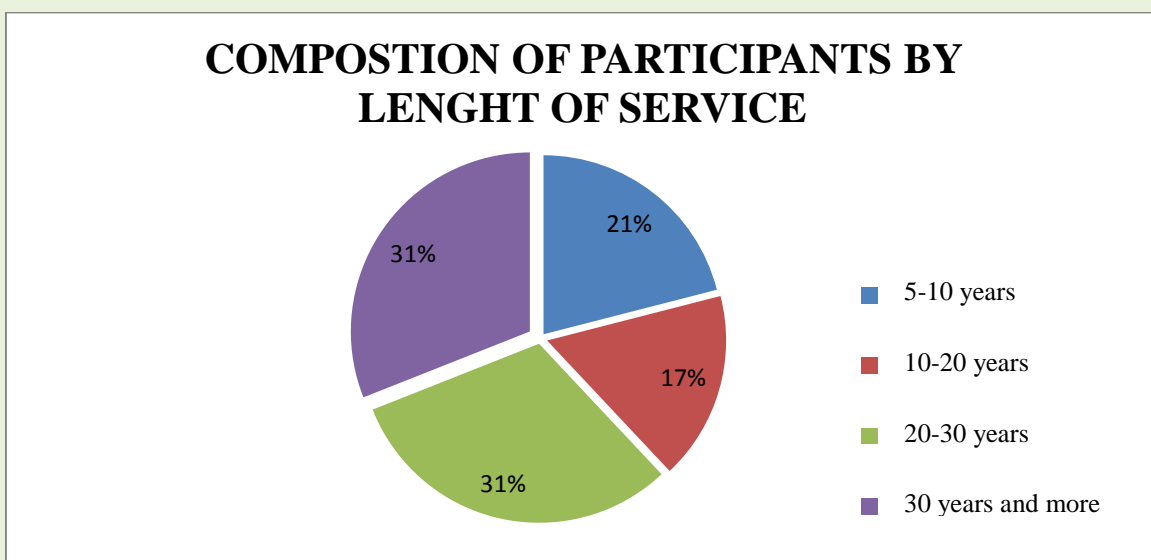


Figure 4.

e) The questionnaire contained a question aimed at identification of the main field of study at the higher educational institutions. Based on the responses to the relevant question of the questionnaire, the largest share of participants had higher education in Economics (45 percent). This is most likely due to the fact that the majority of ministries and institutions selected for the consultations presented the socio-economic sector (Ministries of Economy, Labor and Social Protection, SSC, NISP) (see Fig. 5).

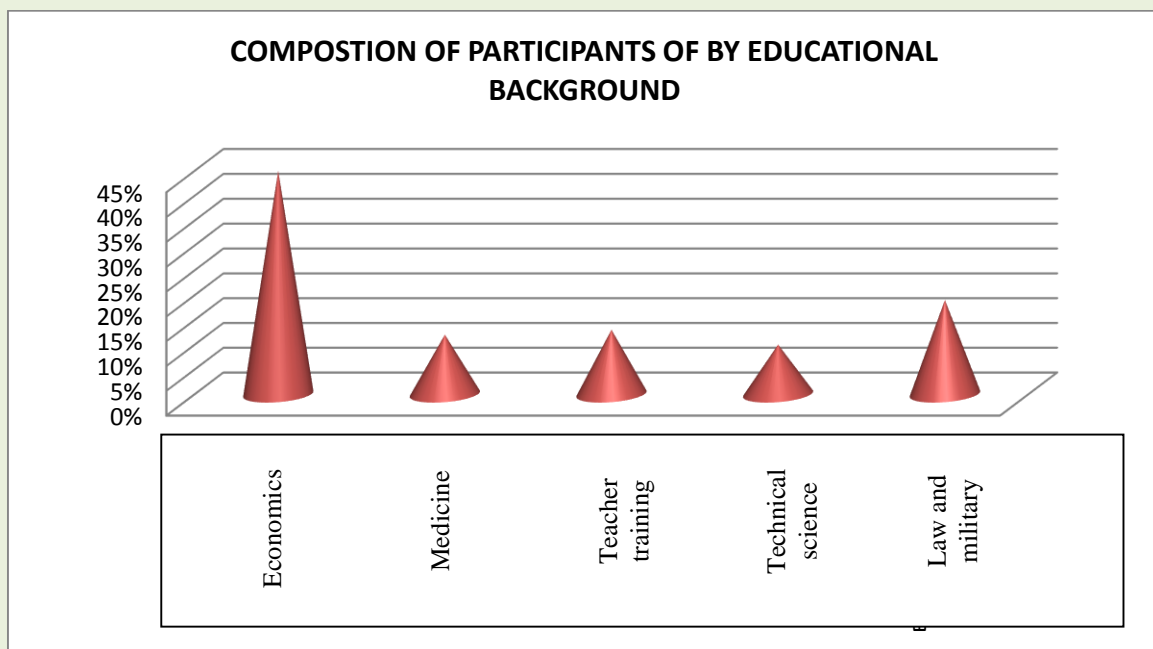


Figure 5.

As demonstrated in the above data, the participants of consultations both by their official status and by all other characteristics (age, length of service, educational background) were rather competent to participate in the discussions of issues proposed as a subject for the debates.

However, it should be noted that the analysis of responses received from the participants to the relevant questions in the questionnaire **showed their insufficient level of MDGs awareness and knowledge**. Only 5 percent of respondents indicated that they had fairly complete knowledge about this particular global programme, 75 percent reported they had basic knowledge about MDGs, and the remaining respondents indicated they had very little knowledge about MDGs.

However, it should be stressed that the awareness level of the participants significantly varied in different target groups. For instance, the share of participants informed on MDGs in the first and fourth target groups amounted in average to 50 percent, whereas their share in the second group was 5-10 percent. The share of the informed participants was less in the

third target group where the majority of the participants from some ministries, in particular, the Ministries of Social Protection, Interior and Nature Protection stated that their awareness on MDGs was insufficient.

The findings of the data analysis on the personal involvement of the consultation participants in the preparation of national and sectoral MDG reports turned to be interesting. The share of participants involved in preparation of such reports was no more than 12 percent (see Fig. 6).

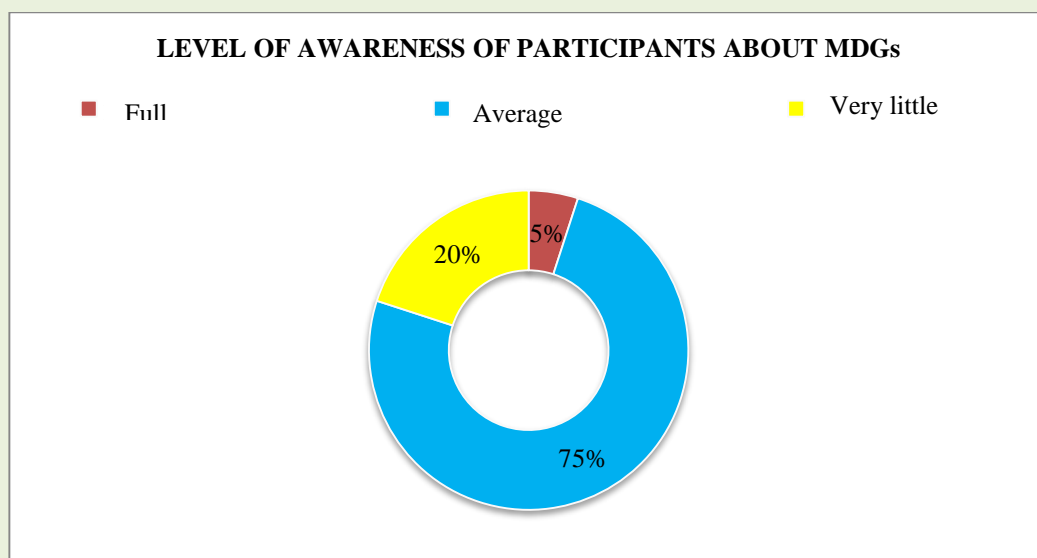


Figure 6.

In general, there were more persons among the participants of consultations in the first and fourth target groups who personally participated in preparation of MDG national reports, though, in our opinion, it was the representatives of the Ministry of Economy and Development and the NISP who had to be involved more into the preparation of the national reports, including MDG reports due to their capacity.

Based on those data it was natural to assume that insufficient awareness and low level of personal involvement of officials in the preparation of MDG reports would affect the process and findings of the consultations.

Nevertheless, the discussions were held with active involvement of all participants and enabled to collect extensive information on the participants' views and assessments regarding both the progress made in the MDG implementation and issues related to the post-2015 goals and targets.

IV. Findings

4.1. The participants' assessment of Turkmenistan's participation and measuring of progress in the implementation of the MDGs and lessons learned

The participants of the national consultations in all four target groups have positively assessed participation of Turkmenistan in the implementation of targets within the framework of MDGs. At the same time it should be noted, as mentioned above, a significant proportion of participants lacked awareness of MDGs and about specific objectives of the United Nations that initiated the global programme.

The analysis of responses provided by participants during consultations regarding participation of Turkmenistan in the implementation and measuring progress of MDGs and their opinions about the lessons learned as per each target group can be summarized as follows:

4.1.1. Assessments and opinions of the first target group

First of all, it should be noted that most of participants in the consultations were quite well informed about the MDGs as a whole, and how, what and why the goals had been adopted for implementation by the countries of the world. Of course, such a high awareness made an impact on discussions of the wide range of issues concerning the MDGs.

The participants of the consultations have noted the main difference between the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, while paying attention to the fact that the Millennium Declaration was a joint plan of action to address global challenges, the MDGs include a set of quantitative criteria to measure and monitor the global achievements in making progress in key areas. Defining of time-bound targets and measurable targets for a number of MDG indicators and the generally accepted understanding of the urgency of achieving them, the MDGs served as a kind of a statistical baseline for reliable tracking of progress for countries. Thus, as noted by participants of the consultations of the first focus group, the MDGs have served their purpose, primarily as a motivational tool for action.

The consultation participants in this group emphasized that Turkmenistan's participation in the implementation of the MDGs began from defining its own national goals, as planned by the UN, which allowed countries to use global objectives to solve their national problems.

The consultation participants had a unanimous opinion that most of the tasks planned by Turkmenistan were successfully achieved to date, owing to the fact that the goals from the outset were included into the long-term and medium-term national socio-economic development programs.

According to their opinion, the fact that MDGs were integrated into national programs, had contributed to their smooth implementation as well as easy monitoring and the measurement of their progress.

As a key lesson learned by Turkmenistan during participation in the implementation of the MDGs, the participants indicated that Turkmenistan as a young state had an opportunity to personally see and compare its achievements at the global level, and set new benchmarks for itself taking into account the development of the world civilization.

4.1.2. Assessments and opinions of the second target group

This target group, in contrast to the first one, had relatively less informed participants about the MDGs and its progress of implementation in Turkmenistan. Although we have to note that this fact did not very much impacted the process and the results themselves of this focus discussions held in the Ministry of Economy and Development and National Institute of Strategic Planning, which were included in this focus group. This was manifested primarily by the group members' active engagement in the discussion of relevant issues, which, unfortunately, lacked in other groups.

The participants of the consultations in this group differed from other groups by a relatively extensive knowledge of the process of development, adoption and implementation of national programs, as well as in monitoring the progress of their implementation. In particular, the participants spoke in detail about the basic methodological principles that underlay the development of long-term national socio-economic development programs. They talked about selected baselines, how to construct a dynamic range of the desired performance and other so-called "secrets of the kitchen", used in the process of drafting national development programs.

4.1.3. Assessments and opinions of the third focus group

In the third target group, better informed about the MDGs were those participants who represented the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, and who had not only demonstrated their relatively high awareness of the MDGs, but also supported the positive assessment of participation of Turkmenistan in the implementation of the MDGs, by giving examples of specific activities undertaken by their ministry. The participants of the consultations from this ministry have indicated that their Ministry's participation in MDGs implementation had largely taken place through elaboration of a series of national public health programs, which, after being adapted to the national context, represented MDG targets in the health area. They also reported that participation of the Health Ministry in MDGs had been achieved through drafting of progress reports, which, by the way, largely conjunct with the targets of the MDGs. There was consistent progress in achieving some of the MDG indicators related to public health.

For example, there has been some reduction in the level of maternal and infant mortality, elimination of malaria and other diseases.

The participants of the consultations from the Ministry of Education stated that Turkmenistan's participation in the implementation of MDGs has contributed to fundamental changes in the national education system. The participants from the Ministry of Interior underlined the importance of Turkmenistan's participation in the reforms of the national law enforcement system.

During the discussions held at the Ministry of Nature Protection the participants have underlined that involvement of Turkmenistan in the implementation of MDGs significantly changed the national approach to environmental management in the country. According to the participants, Turkmenistan's participation in the MDG implementation has increasingly stimulated the adoption of new environmental protection laws such as "On the Protection of the Ozone Layer" (2009), "Forest Code of Turkmenistan" (2011), "On Specially Protected Areas" (2012), "On Flora" (2012), "On Fauna" (2013). The Parliament of Turkmenistan has ratified various international environmental conventions related to climate change, desertification, biodiversity, ozone depleting substances, and so on. It was due to Turkmenistan's participation in the MDG implementation that provided a ground for Turkmenistan to put forward a number of initiatives during the UN General Assembly sessions which were aimed at addressing environmental problems in Central Asia region, in particular, related to the Aral Sea and environmental security in the Caspian Sea basin.

Example of opinions expressed during consultations:

"It is our participation in the realization of the global development framework that has pushed us to make fundamental changes in the education system. It is not by chance that we have now adopted 12-year long secondary education universally applied throughout the world. After all, given the rapid development of science and technology globally, and the latest technology and innovations taking firm root in the global economy, we simply have to ensure full secondary education coverage for the growing generation, and also substantially transform the national education system in line with international standards". (D.K. 58 years old, participant from the Ministry of Education)".

4.1.4. Assessments and opinions of the fourth target group

The fourth group of participants in the consultations indicated that Turkmenistan's participation in the implementation of the MDG goals and objectives was carried out by adapting the MDGs to the national context. For example, globally, the MDG Goal 2 obliges countries to ensure full primary education for all children (boys and girls) of the world by 2015. However,

given that this problem is not relevant to Turkmenistan anymore it was decided on a national scale to formulate a new goal: "Improving access to quality education at all levels and the achievement of international standards in the field of education." Similarly, the entire list of MDG goals was revised. As a result, Turkmenistan has defined 13 new targets goals, taking into account the progress already achieved by the country.

To measure the progress of new goals and to monitor their progress, the State Statistics Committee has created a database «TurkmenInfo» with MDG indicators; the program uses DevInfo 5.0 and comprises 69 indicators, including 30 indicators for MDG targets. The main suppliers of information for the database are the SSC, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Nature Protection, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Economy and Development.

Most of the participants in the target groups indicated that the main lessons learned for Turkmenistan in participation in the MDGs implementation, was a possibility to assess the country's real progress in its socio-economic development (including MDGs implementation) and compare it with the achievements of other countries, and secondly, define which problems were of priority in the short, medium and long terms.

4.2. Participants' views on ways of integrating the post-2015 global development goals and targets into national strategies and programs

The next segment of issues that was put for discussions in the focus groups was aimed at identifying views of the participants on ways to integrate the goals of the global development into the ongoing and future national strategies, programs and plans.

However, prior to discussing results of discussions, opinions and positions of the participants on this issue, it is worthwhile to briefly describe national strategies, programs and plans which are being talked about and how they are being developed and adopted.

From the very first days of its independence, Turkmenistan began to address socio-economic development challenges through the adoption and implementation of medium and long-term national strategic programs. As a rule, the President of Turkmenistan endorses all national strategic programs. It should be noted that while the state programs define the main development strategies, the relevant national plans developed on the basis of the national programs and approved by the President indicate the exact deadlines for achieving the goals, the specific indicators and relevant government agencies responsible for achieving the national goals. Sustainable development is the underlying principle used for drafting national strategies, plans and programs. In accordance with the national slogan of the state ideology "State for the people", the final objective of all national programs and plans is to ensure the well-being of the nation. Being reflected in the national priorities, they primarily focus in the areas of education, public health and environmental protection. The central and, in fact, a fundamental strategic document of the country is "Strategy of socio-economic development of Turkmenistan for the period 2011-2030", that was adopted in 2010. In government circles, this document is also referred to as "Strategy-2030". The Strategy is an updated version (significantly revised to adjust to the current socio-economic realities in the country in recent years) of the previously adopted "Strategy of socio-economic development of Turkmenistan for the period 2003-2020".

Being a comprehensive document, it is the "Strategy-2030" that serves as a national strategic guidance for the development of the short-term sectoral plans and programs. Currently, the sectoral programs for the period 2012-2016 are being implemented, at the same time the drafting of programs for 2017-2021 has also commenced.

The position of most of the participants of the national consultations converged as per opportunities and techniques of integrating the new post-2015 goals into national strategies and plans, once the new global development framework is formally adopted by the international community and launched for implementation worldwide. Almost all target groups have had the similar opinion. At the same, time the main supporting argument, as was mentioned above, and that has become a tradition for Turkmenistan, was that almost from the first years of its independence the country practiced the implementation of all social and economic reforms based on national, regional and sectoral programs, which will certainly comprise global objectives of the post-2015 period adapted to the national context. It should also be noted that during the discussions a number of other opinions were expressed that were slightly different from the general point of view with regard to this segment of questions.

4.2.1 Position of the participants from the first target group

The participants of this target group indicated that Turkmenistan not only will take active part in the discussions and negotiations for elaboration of the final version of the post-2015 global development goals, but will officially adopt them for implementation following their global endorsement.

The participants consolidated their confidence by noting that Turkmenistan since the first days of its independence committed to the fundamental principles of the UN, has always advocated and supported the need to build a constructive dialogue in important areas such as protection and promotion of universal peace in the world, cooperation in the energy and transport sectors, as well as on humanitarian issues and problems, related to human rights, environment protection, creation of an enabling environment for sustainable development at the regional and global levels.

According to the participants, the process of integration of global goals and targets for the next 15-year period into the national policies and programs will take place without any difficulties since most of them are as significant as the national priorities.

Turkmenistan started to implement large-scale projects in the energy, transport and logistic sectors at the regional and inter-regional levels by investing own and foreign resources for the implementation of large scale projects. Turkmenistan has genuine interest, for example, in the maintaining the global peace and security, which is one of the main pre-requisites to

ensure sustainable development. Turkmenistan has already been recognized by the international community as a nation dedicated to put forward specific initiatives to tackle environmental problems and challenges in the area of energy security (initiatives were universally supported at the international Rio+20 conference). According to the participants of the national consultations, Turkmenistan is determined to put forward new initiatives in these important areas at the upcoming 69th session of the UN General Assembly. The participants of the first target group stated that all of the above indicate that many of the post-2015 global targets will be reflected in national policies and programs.

4.2.2 Position of the participants from the second target group

The participants of the second target group represented those key government agencies that are responsible for the development of national strategic programs. While discussing integration of the post-2015 goals and targets, the participants also expressed the common position that most of the global targets will be adapted to the national context and be reflected in the national strategies. According to them, the new global targets should be set out more clearly, without the rarely used terminology. They should be measured by verifiable indicators and data comparable at the international and national levels, as well as easy for monitoring. New goals for the next period of 15 years, according to the participants, will not become by themselves a means to address social, economic and environmental problems in the world. The global targets, even being attractive enough, cannot replace the detailed provisions or multilateral international treaties containing carefully balanced results. Therefore, there is a need to develop internationally binding documents reflecting the globally adopted post-2015 goals. But in spite of such assessments in relation to the new global goals, the participants from this target group were unanimous that the new global targets for the post-2025 period will find their rightful place in the national policies and programs.

4.2.3 Position of the participants from the third target group

Almost all participants from the ministries forming the third target group expressed confidence that the global post-2015 goals will find their reflection if not in the long-term strategies but at least in the short- and mid-term sectoral programmes and plans. The participants also expressed their misgiving in integrating the global development goals into the existing national long-term strategies. According to them, the goals would require the

adoption of new decisions on their adjustments at the highest national level, the process of which, in their opinion, will perhaps be somewhat difficult.

Discussion of this aspect motivated the participants to express some of their wishes related to the drafting process of national programs. For instance, in the discussion held in the Ministry of Nature Protection, the participants expressed their concern that the implementation of a number of national economic programs may create potential risks to the environment and should be adequately addressed. Some programs fail to include a package of necessary preventive and compensatory environmental measures. According to the participants, a set of special measures for ecological compensation have to be indicated in the national policies, for example in the national agricultural support programs. The measures aimed at improving the situation of farmers and increasing the agricultural productivity through providing various incentives and subsidies, or by providing virtually unlimited amount of water for irrigation often may result in pollution or depletion of water resources, decrease soil productivity or lead to similar negative environmental consequences.

Brief introduction of the preliminary list of the newly proposed 17 SDGs stimulated discussions of the issue. The substantive discussions took place after the participants had been introduced to the targets under each of these goals. For instance, the participating representatives from the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry noted that the new global goals and targets will certainly contribute to the progress in Turkmenistan, firstly, because of their relevance to Turkmenistan, and secondly, many of them are in par with the national priorities. According to the participants, these national goals pursue, for instance, significant reduction of premature mortality from non-communicable diseases, or ensuring effective implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, providing access to quality medicines and vaccines for the whole population, particularly, for the most vulnerable groups of population. At the same time, the participants of the discussions optimistically noted that some of the new post-2015 goals and targets could be achieved by Turkmenistan much earlier than indicated by the global goals. For instance, the European countries have planned to eradicate smoking by 2035; Turkmenistan plans to achieve the same goal by 2025.

The similar optimism for the successful integration of the global goals into the national programs was shown by the participants from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Interior. They

noted the similarity of most of the global targets mentioned in the preliminary list of the program of goals with the national priorities.

Quotes:

“Personally, I think that there will be no difficulty in incorporating the global goals into national programs. Firstly, our country has always supported the initiatives of the United Nations, and secondly, many of the goals which are found in the global list, as we may see, similar to our national development objectives” (D., 46 years old, NISP)

“I think that the main instrument for the integration of global goals into the national programs could be national short-term sectoral plans, we may easily adjust and accommodate them at our sectoral level, if necessary”. (K., 34 years old, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Population).

4.2.4 Position of the participants from the fourth target group

The participants of this group, at the session held in the State Statistics Committee, as well as participants in other groups stated that Turkmenistan can integrate the global post-2015 targets into the national strategies and programs because, first of all, the global goals mostly pursue the same objectives as the issues being addressed currently in Turkmenistan. Secondly, it is in the national interests of Turkmenistan to make the national achievements part of the global progress, and thirdly, Turkmenistan is actively participating in addressing global, inter-regional and regional challenges.

4.3. Participants' views on potential areas for strengthening capacity, powers and responsibilities of their agencies

According to the theme of consultations in Turkmenistan, one of the key issues considered was strengthening of national capacities. It was expected that different target groups would have different views while discussing a range of issues with regard to strengthening the national capacities. However, during the discussions, the opinions of participants primarily coincided, although some participants expressed views which differed with the views of others, sometimes even contradicted. Due to the fact that most of the statements about capacity strengthening almost in all four target groups were identical, it was found appropriate to present them in the generalized form.

Some participants of the consultations held a view that the institutions they represented had sufficient capacity, others, on the contrary, noted the limited capacity of their institutions to better address their functional tasks. If the former saw the need to enhance the effectiveness of existing capacity, i.e. through efficient use of available resources and authority, the latter emphasized the need to further strengthen the capacity pointing out specific areas where the upgrade was needed.

First of all, most participants stressed the necessity to strengthen the staff capacity in their institutions. This will contribute to improving efficiency of the reforms being undertaken in civil service and public administration. According to the participants of consultations, nowadays, there is high demand in highly professional civil servants. It is required by the society and by the dynamic complexity of public administration in the progressive transition of the national economy to market economy, as well as by conditions of a constant expansion of international trade and economic relations of Turkmenistan.

The following key areas to further strengthen the human capacity in government institutions were identified:

- review of the current and the development of improved legal and regulatory framework for the public administration in general and the civil service in particular;
- further expansion of the system of vocational training, retraining and advanced training of civil servants;
- creation of effective mechanisms for combating corruption and protectionism in public service.

As an immediate action in this regard, the participants from the Ministries of Health and Interior pointed out, could be measures to increase public trust in government agencies, in particular, to the professionalism of health care workers, honesty and integrity of law enforcement bodies.

The participants of the national consultations in the session held in the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection indicated the need to improve the capacities of the state employment agencies, since they are lagging behind private recruitment agencies which currently are more successful in finding jobs for unemployed. The participants also discussed the necessity to adopt more effective measures for development of medium and large businesses in the country. Until now, the conditions have favored the development of private entrepreneurship with its inherently low volume of sales, employment, income and investments.

An important step in this direction should be taken in creating a fundamentally new approach to the division of powers between the state and private businesses. In this regard, apparently, there will be a need to define priorities of all ministries and agencies in supporting private businesses by providing access to raw materials, increasing the level of industrial production specialists, assisting in finding investors and attracting businesses to fulfill important national plans. According to the Ministry of Labor participants, still insufficient attention to the private sector development to some extent hinders the emergence of new larger private enterprises that would provide employment on a large scale, rather than individual businesses.

Many of those taking part in the consultations indicated that they consider increasing research and analytical capacity as the main area of capacity strengthening for their agencies (SSC, NISP, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Ministry of Education). In their opinion, the low level of this capacity significantly reduces the efficiency of their work. The representatives of other ministries and agencies expressed the need to establish within their structures, in the long term, special units which would directly engage in scientific and analytical research activities.

For instance, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection participants suggested to establish an Employment Research Institute within the structure of their ministry, and the participants from the Ministry of Education proposed to create specialized research institutes of higher, secondary and vocational education within their Ministry, pointing out to the lack of highly proficient scientific, analytical and methodological staff at the

National Institute of Education, which still limits itself to the areas of pre-school and secondary education.

Similar debates were held with regard to expanding the powers of the ministries and departments. While some ministries expressed some satisfaction with their mandate, the others, on the contrary, supported the broadening their powers.

For example, the Ministry of Nature Protection representatives indicated that the Ministry's mandate is limited to a certain extent due to attribution of their Ministry to the cluster of agricultural and agro-industrial institutions. This fact, according to the participants, significantly affects the Ministry's control and supervisory functions. The Ministry of Education representatives suggested that their Ministry is given independence in making decisions about publication of textbooks and manuals and that the current practice of getting the Academy of Sciences approvals for such kind of activity is replaced.

The participants representing the Institute of Strategic Planning and Economic Development also stated about their relatively limited autonomy in their horizontal interactions with both central and regional executive authorities. In their view, that became so due to subordinating the Institute to the Ministry of Economy and Development. This interaction was less challenging when the Institute was a research agency under the Government of Turkmenistan.

In general, the participants of consultations in almost all focus groups were inclined to assess their institutions as self-sufficient. Most important, according to the participants, is the ability to effectively use the assigned authorities when dealing with building their management, analytical and staff capacities.

Quotes:

"We are empowered to conserve and protect nature, however, supervision of fishery is carried out, for some reason, by the State Committee on Fisheries."

(A., 53 years old, MoNP)

"The state recruitment agencies have fewer advantages in employment of persons who apply to them than have the private recruitment agencies." (M., 32 years old, MoLSP)

"Why not to entitle higher educational establishments to make their own decisions on publishing textbooks, at least for specialized learning disciplines which are taught only at those institutions, whereas the ministry will make decisions on publishing textbooks only on the disciplines compulsory for all higher educational institutions?" (T., 67 years old, MoE)

4.4. Participants' views on ways to measure progress in implementation of new global goals and targets

The next set of questions discussed in the target groups involved in the national consultations was aimed at getting to know opinions of the participants on methods and set of indicators, which can be used in monitoring and measuring the progress of implementation of the post-2015 goals and targets at the national level (once they are officially approved by the United Nations and adopted by countries worldwide).

In the course of the discussions, the majority of participants of the consultations concurred that this activity would be carried out mainly by using the current traditional methods and system of indicators.

At the same time, some ministries and departments expressed the view that there might be a necessity to use special methodologies and indicators to monitor progress of the specific goals and targets. The participants from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Nature Protection discussed the possibility of elaborating a new system of indicators both for monitoring of the implementation of new goals and targets, and measuring the achieved progress. For instance, the participants of the consultations at the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education discussed the development of new quantitative and qualitative indicators related to measurement of progress in the healthcare and educational spheres. In particular, the participants indicated the necessity to use the traditional quantitative indicators used in the field of education along with developing qualitative indicators. In support of this proposal, it has been suggested to move from the practice of using the indicator on the total number of winners of international Olympiads for secondary schools (the number is increasing annually) to the indicator showing the percentage disaggregated by the types of schools and regions. This method would serve as a qualitative assessment of the achievement of the secondary school education in the country.

At the Ministry of Economy and Development, the participants of consultations stated that considering the situation in Turkmenistan it would be appropriate to use a system of indicators reflecting the dynamics of increase in the well-being of population taking into account the achievements of Turkmenistan in this area, instead of the indicators centered, for instance, on overcoming poverty. With regard to measuring the progress on the global goal on overcoming poverty, SSC suggested that the lower thresholds of absolute and relative levels of poverty should be differentiated (defined differentially for developing, developed and highly developed countries). SSC also suggested using indicators for Turkmenistan, which are different of those provided for in the suggested list of the global post-2015 goals and targets.

The participants of consultations in the second target group suggested reducing the number of high-priority goals and objectives for the post-2015 global development agenda, rather than having the proposed 17 goals with more than 150 targets required to implement. At the same time, the consultation participants noted that the new global program must set concrete dates for implementation of the proposed goals and objectives along with specific measurable indicators. It was also the view of participants to reduce the period of fifteen years to ten, which is important given the rapid changes taking place in the contemporary world.

The representatives from the State Statistics Committee stressed that while developing the new system of indicators there will be a need to take into account the indexed wage levels, minimal wage thresholds, and the whole complex of social transfers allocated by the state to the population of the country.

Similar proposals were made by the participants in relation to measuring progress in addressing gender inequalities and discrimination against women. The participants also paid attention to still found cases of indirect or veiled forms of discrimination, for example, when some vacancy announcement stipulate specific gender and age limits for job applicants.

During the discussions at SSC and NISP on the methods of monitoring the progress of implementation of the new global goals, it was suggested to create a special governmental structure, which will be directly engaged in monitoring and measuring progress in the implementation of the new goals and targets at the national level. However this proposal did not find adequate support of most of participants.

On the contrary, a suggestion on the possibility of the State Statistics Committee assuming the functions of centralized collection and consolidation of information on the goals implementation progress in Turkmenistan, including monitoring activities, was widely supported. Nevertheless, the participants noted SSC could undertake such assignment only by a special decision made by the Government. Such decision should clearly specify the tasks of SSC, establishment of a new unit/department within the SSC structure with a specific number of additional staff members, as well as responsibilities of the relevant ministries for timely submission of the required information to SSC. A new unit/department could be assigned with collection and consolidation of information on the post-2015 global goals, and also carry out other similar tasks, for instance, collecting data on implementation of human development indicators in Turkmenistan.

4.5. Participants' vision of areas of cooperation with the UN system agencies in implementation and measuring progress of the post-2015 goals at the national level.

The majority of ministries and institutions where the national consultations were held belonged to the group of government institutions, which have a long and close cooperation with UN agencies. In the course of consultations, the participants noted not only the specific areas of cooperation with the UN agencies but also praised the importance of such cooperation.

At the session held in the Ministry of Interior the participants talked about the achievements made in their work within the framework of 2010-2015 UNDAF implementation under the component on “Promoting Peace and Security”. The following objectives were identified as national priorities: combatting illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, improvement of forensic examination, improvement of quality of medical services at the penitentiary institutions, juvenile justice reform.

The participants from the Ministry of Nature Protection, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection stressed the successful cooperation with UN agencies, and gave examples demonstrating high efficiency of jointly conducted activities.

For instance, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection highly appreciated the UN technical and advisory assistance, which allowed achieving significant progress in the national pension reforms.

The participants from the State Statistics Committee highly appreciated assistance of various UN agencies in the preparation and conducting the 2012 Population and Household Census of Turkmenistan.

The participants of the consultations also unanimously agreed on continuation of cooperation with the UN agencies, including issues of the implementation and measuring the progress of post-2015 global goals in Turkmenistan, pointing to specific areas of cooperation.

The participants identified the following key areas where their ministries and institutions could cooperate in the future with the UN agencies in implementation and measuring progress of the post-2015 global goals²:

- *Conducting workshops aimed at studying best international practices of integrating global goals into the national strategies and sectoral programmes (MoHMI, MoED, NISP, MoE)*

² **Note:** The names of the ministries and institutions where such opinions were expressed are indicated in the brackets (O.M.)

- *Getting expert assistance in development of a system of indicators to measure the progress in the implementation of the global goals at the national level (SSC, MoHMI, MoE)*
- *Getting methodological and technical support in carrying out monitoring of the implementation of global goals for the post-2015 period in Turkmenistan (SSC)*
- *Launching a special project to develop a concept for the MoNP institutionalization taking into account expansion of its powers and responsibility in addressing issues related to nature protection activities (MoNP);*
- *Providing technical support in procurement of licensed software programs specifically for measuring the progress in the implementation of the global goals, as well as conducting relevant trainings to use these software programs (SSC);*
- *Continue cooperation through special programmes aimed at strengthening capacity of law-enforcement institutions (MoI).*

Conclusions

The above findings indicate that participants of the 2-nd round of national consultations in Turkmenistan have demonstrated a big interest in discussing the issues related to global development goals and targets for the post-2015 period. They have also noted the positive lessons learnt from the successful participation of Turkmenistan in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals.

All participants of the consultations in all target groups have unanimously noted that integration of the new global goals and targets into the national strategies and programs can be successfully made since most of them converge with the development programmes currently implemented in Turkmenistan.

The participants of the consultations also expressed confidence that global goals and targets for the post 2015 period adapted to the context of Turkmenistan will be fully reflected in the national and sectoral programs, which are being drafted currently or planned in the future.

During the consultations, the participants have made proposals that are closely linked with the activities of their respective ministries and institutions related to strengthening capacities to ensure quality implementation of their functions as special institutions of the central executive power. In discussing these issues the participants pointed out to the need of strengthening staff and personnel, research and analytical capacities which are among high priority tasks in strengthening capacity of their institutions.

The participants of the consultations have not expressed precise proposals regarding further expansion of the powers of their institutions. Most of the participants were of opinion that the current level of powers of their institutions was quite sufficient, whereas others, on the contrary, stressed the need for their further expansion.

Regarding the issue of establishing new institutions and the issue of institutionalization in general, the participants of the consultations have made proposals which are of practical importance for their current activities and improving the efficiency of their work in the future.

Based on the focus-group scenario, the participants of the consultations have also discussed issues related to measuring the progress of implementation of the post-2015 global goals and targets once they are

officially approved. These proposals included mainly two aspects of work. First, the participants assumed that monitoring the progress of implementation of the post-2015 global goals and targets requires setting a system of indicators for each group of countries, including Turkmenistan, according to the level of their development (underdeveloped, developing, developed and highly developed). Second, while discussing this issue the participants have touched upon the aspect related to the centralized collection of information on the implementation of the new global goals across the country and to establish for this purpose a new organization or assign relevant functions to the State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan, endorsing these powers by a special governmental decision.

The participants of consultations have made specific proposals regarding areas of further cooperation of their institutions with the UN agencies. It can be summarized into getting advisory and methodological assistance from the UN agencies, including assistance on the issues related to methodology of integrating global goals into national programs, development of the system of indicators to measure progress, including the methodology to carry out monitoring. It should be mentioned that some of the proposals put forward by the participants with regard to their respective ministry or institution, in our opinion, can be quite relevant for other ministries as well. For instance, a proposal from the Ministry of Nature Protection regarding the launch of a special project on development of the concept of institutionalization can be worthy to be implemented nationally, within the framework of the current large-scale public administration reforms in Turkmenistan.

Annexes

Annex 1

Slides of the preliminary presentation used prior to the beginning of the consultations in focus groups

Post-2015 National consultations in Turkmenistan

Brief history to background of the national consultations

What is the purpose of the consultations and with whom will they be conducted?

What is required from the participants?

Brief history to the background of the issue

In September 2000, 189 countries of the world adopted the **Millennium Declaration** at the UN Millennium Summit.

The Declaration covered the issues of human rights, peace, security and ecology in the form of a set of **Millennium Development Goals** or **MDGs**.

The Millennium Declaration represented a general action plan to achieve global development, whereas the MDGs included a set of quantitative criteria to measure progress in key areas in all countries of the world.

A full set of the MDGs consisted of **8 goals, 18 targets and 48 indicators**. It was expected to achieve the majority of those targets by 2015.

Due to the fact that the main part of the goals were set with regard to the targets the underdeveloped countries faced, other countries including Turkmenistan, identified their own national targets. Many countries (including Turkmenistan) successfully achieved their own set targets identified in the MDGs.

What was the reason to conduct the second round on the post-2015 consultations?

After summarizing the results of the first round of the post-2015 consultations and discussing further targets with the world community the United Nations have identified 17 global goals.

In order to identify the most effective ways to achieve these goals the United Nations decided to conduct the second round of the consultations in 42 countries. Six goals were put into agenda of this round of the consultations.

Themes suggested to the countries by the UN for the second round of the post-2015 consultations:

1. Localizing the post-2015 development agenda
2. Helping to strengthen capacities and institutions
3. Participatory monitoring, existing and new forms of accountability
4. Partnerships with civil society and other actors
5. Partnerships with the private sector
6. Culture and development

The first round of the post-2015 national consultations

Due to the fact that the first stage of the MDGs implementation will come to end in 2015 and for the purpose of identifying the post-2015 development goals for the next 15 years the UN General Assembly at its Plenary Meeting in September 2010 called for conducting national consultations on development agenda for the post 2015 period.

Initially 50 countries were selected for such consultations. Later 38 countries were added into the list, including Turkmenistan.

In all these countries, from April until June 2013 the consultations were conducted with representatives of various groups of population. In general, more than 1 million people participated in the first round of the post-2015 consultations. The findings were summarized in the Report **“A million voices: the World we Want”**.

For information: In Turkmenistan, 1818 people, including civil servants, members of the Parliament, entrepreneurs and farmers, schoolchildren, business women, parents of U7 children youth and, representatives of vulnerable groups participated in the national consultations. The findings of the discussions were reflected in the National Report of Turkmenistan and submitted to the UN.

A topic for discussion suggested to Turkmenistan by the United Nations

Given Turkmenistan's successful contribution to the country consultations process, the United Nations requested Turkmenistan to engage in the second round and discuss the topic of **“how best to Strengthen Capacities and Build Effective Institutions”**

Four target groups were selected for the consultations in Turkmenistan

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Economy and Development + National Institute of Strategic Planning
- Ministries of Health and Medical Industry, Education, Labor and Social Protection of Population, Interior, and Nature Protection
- State Statistics Committee

The objectives of the consultations are:

- How to implement the new post-2015 goals more effectively, with a particular emphasis on the topic “to strengthen capacities and institutions”;
- How the United Nations agencies can assist the Government of Turkmenistan to integrate relevant post 2015 goals and targets into their national and ministerial plans and assist them to monitor progress in achieving the goals;

- How the United Nations can assist the Government of Turkmenistan in the area of strengthening capacities and institutions for the implementation and monitoring of the progress.

Formats of the discussions

- It was decided to choose a method of quality study known as a “discussion in focus groups”.

- The discussions will be moderated by a facilitator who will ensure consistent discussion of all issues of the agenda, involvement of all participants into discussion.


What is required from the participants?

- To clearly, without longwinded explanation formulate your position (opinion) on the issues under discussion giving sound arguments in its favour

- To intently listen to the opinions of the others without interrupting them

- Not to sit silently. Try actively participate in the discussion, as the opinion of each participant is important to us.

Questionnaire Used to Learn the Composition of the Participants

	Name of the respondent (can be symbolic or simply letters) 
	1. Your position
01.	Managerial level (Executive, Deputy Executive)
02.	Mid-level position (Head of the Department, Head of the Section/ Head/ or Deputy)
03.	Low-level position (Chief Specialist, Leading Specialist, Specialist)
	2. Sex
04	Male
05	Female
	3. Your age
06	06. under 25 years
07	07. 26-30
08	08. 31-40
09	41-50
10	51-60
11	Over 60 years
	4. Major of your higher education
12	Economics
13	Technical
14	Agriculture
15	Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Geography, and other relative Sciences
16	Pedagogics
17	Medicine
18	Political science, Law and other Humanities
19	Military, Sport and Tourism
20	Other areas not mentioned above
	5. Your total length of service
21	Up to 5 years
22	From 5 to 10 years
23	From 10 to 20 years
24	from 20 to 30 years
	From 30 years and more
	6. Including your length of service in the current sphere of employment
25	Up to 5 years
26	From 5 to 10 years
27	From 10 to 20 years
28	from 20 to 30 years
29	From 30 years and more
	7. To what extent you consider yourself informed on the Millennium Development Goals
30	Sufficiently informed
31	More or less informed

32	Merely informed
33	Get to know about them for the first time
	8. Have you ever been somehow involved in preparation of the progress reports on the MDGs implementation?
34	Yes, in preparation of the General National Report
35	Only in preparation of the sections related to the activities of our ministry/institution
36	No, I have not been involved in any way

Annex 3

Dates and Time of the national Consultations

№	Institution	Date of the Consultations	Time of the Consultations
1.	National Institute of Strategic Planning and Economic Development of Turkmenistan	07.07.2014	10.00-12.00
2.	Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	08.07.2014	10.00-12.00
3.	State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan	08.07.2014	16.00-18.00
4.	Ministry of Education	09.07.2014	10.00-12.00
5.	Ministry of Interior	09.07.2014	17.00.-19.00
6.	Ministry of Nature Protection	10.07.2014	10.00-12.00
7.	Ministry of Economy and Development	11.07.2014	10.00-12.00
8.	Ministry of Health and Medical Industry	12.07.2014	16.00-18.00
9.	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	04.08.2014	10:00-12:00

Annex 4

Acronyms Used in the Report to Represent Ministries and Institutions Participated in the Consultations

MoE – Ministry of Education of Turkmenistan
MoLSP – Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
MoHMI – Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan
MoI – Ministry of Interior of Turkmenistan
MoFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan
SSC – State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan
MoED – Ministry of Economy and Development
MoNP – Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan