

Iain Bell | Deputy National Statistician and Director
General for Population & Public Policy

Mary Creagh MP
Chair, Environmental Audit Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

9 November 2018

Dear Ms Creagh,

While providing evidence at the Environmental Audit Committee on 23 October on Sustainable Development Goals, I promised to provide further information on a number of areas. These are set out below.

UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) statistics

SDG indicator 2.1.2 requires data on both 'moderate' and 'severe' food insecurity.

In September 2018, the UN FAO released data on severe food insecurity as provisional estimates which require further validation. The dataset does not include moderate food insecurity at this stage. Therefore, we are unable to update the SDG indicator. UN FAO plan to release the full dataset in Autumn 2019, when we will update the National Reporting Platform and notify yourselves and the Committee of the latest data.

Based solely on severe food insecurity, the estimate for the UK was 3.4% and covers the average of 2015-17. The previous estimate was 4.2% and covered the years 2014-2016. As two of the three years are in common between the estimates, caution should be taken in reading too much into changes due to the small sample sizes in any one year.

We have only one data point for SDG indicator 2.1.2 for both moderate and severe food insecurity which is 9.7% for the years 2014-16. This figure is comparable to the EU average.

You were also interested in international comparisons. Annex A illustrates estimates of moderate or severe food insecurity for those countries where comparable data exists. Estimates are derived from a sample survey and are subject to a margin of error which has been visualised as error bars on the graph. The proportion of people reporting food insecurity was highest in South Sudan and lowest in Japan.

As I outlined at the Committee, ONS need to get a clear picture of user need for the ongoing measure of this indicator and then establish the right administrative and survey mechanisms for doing this. We are urgently working on this and I will write to you when we have a clear path forward.

Indicators that require development of data sources

Our current assessment is that there are 6 indicators for which data sources need the most

development, which are as follows.

- I. 1.1.1 *Proportion of the population below the international poverty line*. We have development work in progress on how to widen the coverage of our surveys beyond private households and on improvements to data related to homelessness.
- II. 1.5.2 *Direct economic loss attributed to disasters*. We require domestic agreement on the definition of disaster. The first meeting of an ONS chaired cross-government working group to determine this will be on 14 November 2018.
- III. 2.4.1 *Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture*. There are currently no agreed international methods.
- IV. 8.7.1 *Proportion and number of children aged 5 – 17 years engaged in child labour*. There needs to be further discussions with crime experts to produce relevant data for this indicator.
- V. 11.5.2 *Direct economic loss, damage to critical infrastructure and disruptions to basic services attributed to disasters*. Similarly, to 1.5.2, we require domestic agreement on the definition of disaster.
- VI. 15.3.1 *Proportion of land that has degraded*. There are currently no agreed international methods.

We are always adding data to the National Reporting Platform¹ and are currently reporting on 157 (64%) of all global indicators. In addition to the 6 indicators that need significant development of data sources, there are a further 81 indicators where we have assessed there are suitable data available for the UK but are still in discussions with topic experts to acquire that data and produce a suitable indicator to report to the UN. These can be found at Annex B.

The Committee may also wish to note that this week we published our second annual progress report for measuring the SDGs² which outlines our developments and sets out next steps.

I hope the Committee finds this note helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely,



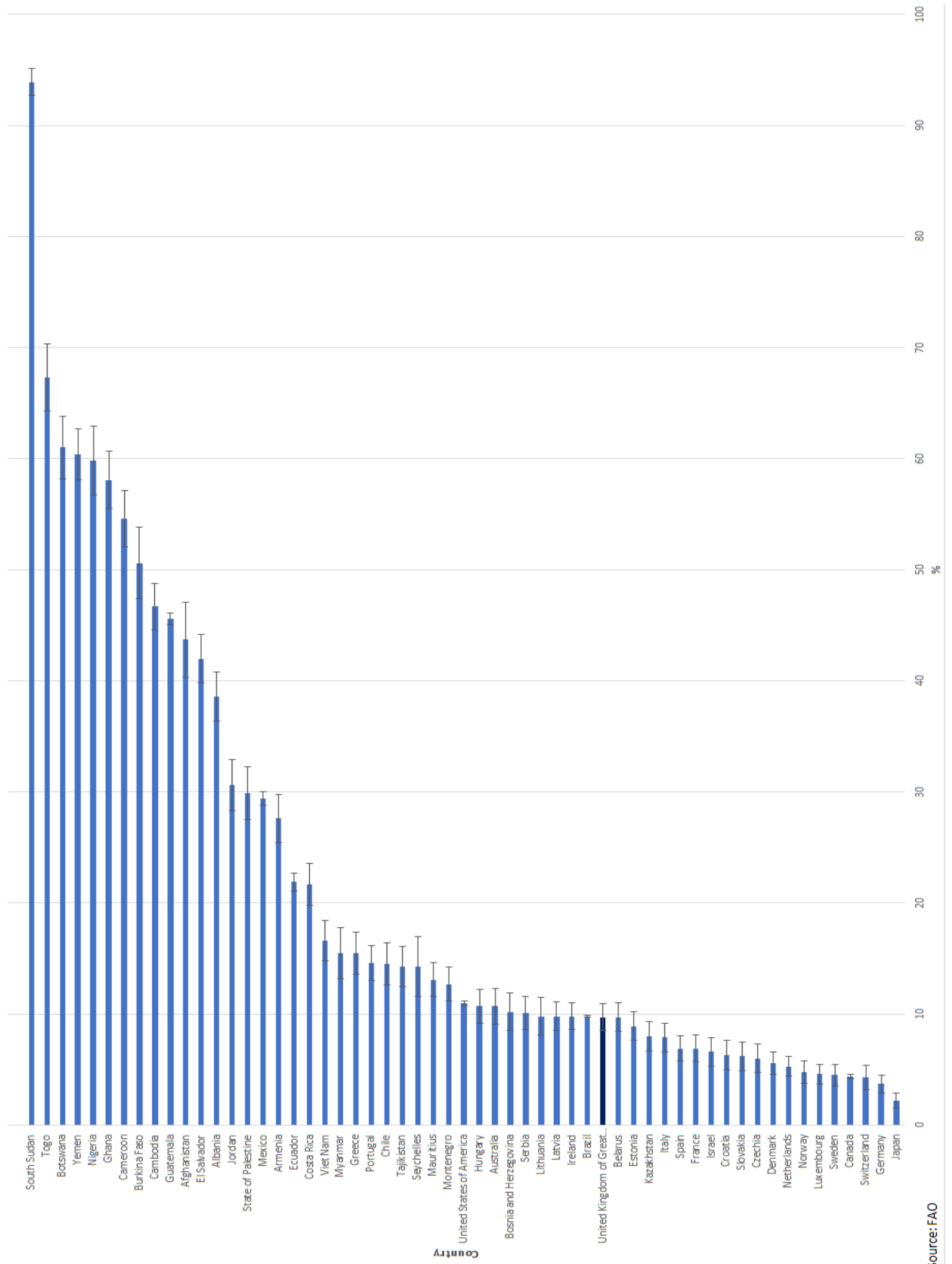
Iain Bell

Deputy National Statistician and Director General, Population and Public Policy
Office for National Statistics

¹ ONS, [UK Data for SDG indicators National Reporting Platform](#)

² ONS, November 2018: [SDGs in the UK, an update on progress](#)

Annex A: Prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the total population (percent) (3-year average 2014-16)



Source: FAO

Annex B: Indicators that require development of data sources

- 1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable
- 1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services
- 1.a.2 Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection)
- 1.a.3 Sum of total grants and non-debt-creating inflows directly allocated to poverty reduction programmes as a proportion of GDP
- 1.b.1 Proportion of government recurrent and capital spending to sectors that disproportionately benefit women, the poor and vulnerable groups

- 2.2.1 Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age
- 2.b.1 Agricultural export subsidies
- 2.c.1 Indicator of food price anomalies

- 3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio
- 3.3.5 Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases
- 3.5.1 Coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders
- 3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods
- 3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)
- 3.b.3 Proportion of health facilities that have a core set of relevant essential medicines available and affordable on a sustainable basis
- 3.d.1 International Health Regulations (IHR) capacity and health emergency preparedness

- 4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)

- 5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care

- 6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
- 6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water
- 6.3.1 Proportion of wastewater safely treated
- 6.4.1 Change in water-use efficiency over time
- 6.4.2 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources
- 6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time

- 6.b.1 Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management
- 8.8.2 Level of national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status
- 9.3.2 Proportion of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit
- 9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology
- 10.5.1 Financial Soundness Indicators
- 10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of yearly income earned in country of destination
- 10.7.2 Number of countries that have implemented well-managed migration policies
- 10.a.1 Proportion of tariff lines applied to imports from least developed countries and developing countries with zero-tariff
- 11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
- 11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically
- 11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities
- 11.a.1 Proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections and resource needs, by size of city
- 12.3.1 Global food loss index
- 12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement
- 12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment
- 12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports
- 12.a.1 Amount of support to developing countries on research and development for sustainable consumption and production and environmentally sound technologies
- 12.b.1 Number of sustainable tourism strategies or policies and implemented action plans with agreed monitoring and evaluation tools
- 12.c.1 Amount of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP (production and consumption) and as a proportion of total national expenditure on fossil fuels
- 13.b.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities
- 14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density
- 14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations
- 14.6.1 Progress by countries in the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

- 14.7.1 Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, least developed countries and all countries
- 14.a.1 Proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology
- 14.b.1 Progress by countries in the degree of application of a legal/regulatory/policy/institutional framework which recognizes and protects access rights for small-scale fisheries
- 14.c.1 Number of countries making progress in ratifying, accepting and implementing through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, ocean-related instruments that implement international law, as reflected in the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea, for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources

- 15.1.2 Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type
- 15.4.1 Coverage by protected areas of important sites for mountain biodiversity
- 15.9.1 Progress towards national targets established in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

- 16.2.1 Proportion of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by caregivers in the past month
- 16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation
- 16.4.1 Total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows (in current United States dollars)
- 16.4.2 Proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority in line with international instruments
- 16.5.1 Proportion of persons who had at least one contact with a public official and who paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials, during the previous 12 months
- 16.5.2 Proportion of businesses that had at least one contact with a public official and that paid a bribe to a public official, or were asked for a bribe by those public officials during the previous 12 months
- 16.6.1 Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar)
- 16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services
- 16.8.1 Proportion of members and voting rights of developing countries in international organizations
- 16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age
- 16.10.1 Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months

- 17.2.1 Net official development assistance, total and to least developed countries, as a proportion of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee donors' gross national income (GNI)
- 17.3.1 Foreign direct investments (FDI), official development assistance and South-South Cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget
- 17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP
- 17.4.1 Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services

- 17.5.1 Number of countries that adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries
- 17.6.1 Number of science and/or technology cooperation agreements and programmes between countries, by type of cooperation
- 17.7.1 Total amount of approved funding for developing countries to promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies
- 17.10.1 Worldwide weighted tariff-average
- 17.11.1 Developing countries' and least developed countries' share of global exports
- 17.12.1 Average tariffs faced by developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States
- 17.13.1 Macroeconomic Dashboard
- 17.15.1 Extent of use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation
- 17.17.1 Amount of United States dollars committed to public-private and civil society partnerships
- 17.18.1 Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
- 17.18.2 Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics
- 17.18.3 Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding
- 17.19.1 Dollar value of all resources made available to strengthen statistical capacity in developing countries

