

SDG indicator 16.7.1b at a glance: Inclusive representation in the public service



Rationale

The public service is the bedrock of government – where the development and implementation of public policies and programmes takes place and where society interacts with the government. This indicator measures the extent to which a country's public institutions are representative of the general population. Proportional representation has been found to be associated with higher levels of trust in public institutions and to help curb the undue influence of vested interests over decision-making.

Data sources

Given the level of disaggregation required for this indicator, it is unlikely that existing survey data (e.g. from Labour Force Surveys) will be sufficient to report on this indicator. In most countries, several national institutions produce administrative records on public service employment. These typically include: (1) A Public Service Commission (or related institution such as a Ministry of Public Administration or a Ministry of Finance) maintaining a centralized registry on the public service workforce at the national/central level; (2) Another institution maintaining a similar registry on the public service workforce at the sub-national level (such as a Ministry of Local Government or of Municipal Affairs); (3) A Police Services Commission or the like, maintaining a centralized registry on police personnel. The most common and most comprehensive method for collecting public servant data is a Human Resource Management Information System. Such systems have been found to produce the most robust data and to have the greatest potential for expansion on various dimensions of disaggregation.

Recommended disaggregation

Three-way disaggregation of the number of public service positions, along the following cumulative levels:

1. Administrative level (*central level; "state" level or equivalent*)
2. Various demographic characteristics:
 - Sex (*male; female*)
 - Age group (*below 35 years; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65 and above*)
 - Disability status (*disability; no disability*)
 - Population subgroup (*country-specific*)
3. Occupational categories (*four ISCO-08-based categories, and selected "front-line service" categories*)

While countries are expected to produce data on as many of the above cumulative disaggregations as possible, global reporting will focus on 4 "priority ratios", namely the representation of women among public servants 'overall' (across all occupational categories) and representation of women in the 'Manager' category; overall representation of 'young' public servants aged 34 and below; overall representation of public servants with a disability; overall representation of public servants belonging to Population Group A (B,C,D, etc.).

Methodological issues to keep in mind:

- Includes employment at central and "state" (or equivalent sub-national) levels of government. Excludes employees of local government units (i.e. units below the "state" or equivalent sub-national level)
- Excludes employees of public corporations, social security funds, and the military
- Also excludes appointed/elected positions
- Part-time positions should be reported in full-time equivalents
- Guidance for transposing national classification of public service positions into ISCO-08-based occupational categories is available in the full metadata
- After compiling the numbers and proportions of public service personnel as outlined above, ratios comparing these to national population distributions need to be calculated. The appropriate age ranges should be applied when selecting the national population comparators.