

INTRODUCTION



In 2000, Member States of the United Nations (UN) adopted the Millennium Declaration in which they pledged to achieve eight goals known as the Millennium Development Goals (UN, 2000). The deadline to achieve these goals is 2015;

however, in order to continue this effort, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented the report “A Life of Dignity for All” in which Member States renewed their commitment to achieving these goals, and agreed to adopt a new set of objectives to promote the success of the MDGs (UN, 2013a).

Hence, a High Level Expert Group was formed with the purpose of building a Post-2015 Development Agenda. The report of the Expert Meeting recognized the importance that governments play in the quality of life of the population and urged to “recognize peace and good governance as an essential element of wellbeing.” So, it was proposed to include “Good governance and effective institutions” as the 10th goal of the new Post-2015 agenda (UN, 2013b).

Governance is not only key for fostering development (Foresti, Wild, Rodriguez, & Norton, 2014) it is also considered as a value in its own right. As the results of “MY World Survey” show, governance is found as the third most important worldwide priority, just below health and education. In short, political leaders, international organizations, researchers and citizens recognize the importance of having a government accountable and responsive to their needs. However, there is no consensus so far on what constitutes governance and how it should be measured.

Therefore, the general objective of this paper is to present some of the main definitions, measurement initiatives and sources related to governance. The purpose is to generate a discussion that reconciles the main advantages and strengths of the different measurements and develop the foundation for a conceptual framework for measuring governance.

CONTEXT

OBJECTIVE

This document is divided in four sections. The first discusses the reasons why it is important to discuss and try to reconcile a common governance framework. Subsequently, the second section presents the different definitions used in both, the academic literature and the projects led by international and national organizations. The third section contains some of the main conceptualization and measurement initiatives, as well as the dimensions and sources of information used to build them. Finally, the fourth section provides some general questions to guide the discussion on governance.