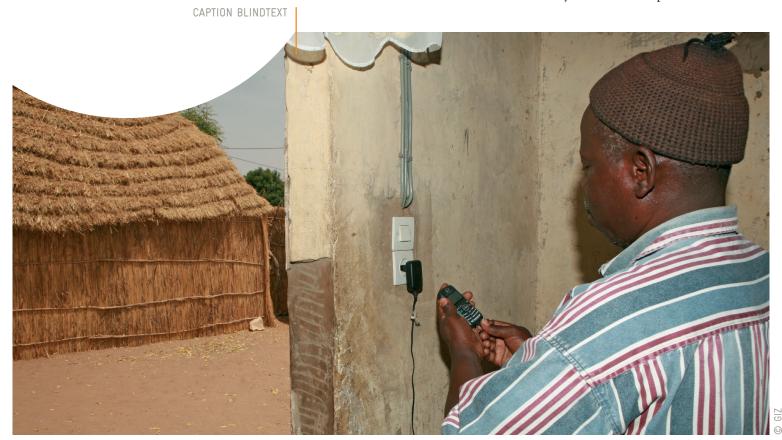# SENEGAL:

Developing a localised SDG information system

SENEGAL'S FIRST VNR SUBMITTED TO THE HLPF IN 2018 PROVIDES DETAILS OF PROGRESS IN NATIONAL SDG IMPLEMENTATION. AT THE SAME TIME, THE REPORT REPEATEDLY STATES THAT THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM DOES NOT YET ALLOW DIFFERENTIATED ASSESSMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT FOR SPECIFIC POPULATION SEGMENTS, VULNERABLE GROUPS, DECENTRALISED ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, ETC., DUE TO A LACK OF DISAGGREGATED DATA. A PILOT INITIATIVE IN THE DIOURBEL REGION AIMS TO HELP SOLVE THIS PROBLEM BY USING A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH.

The Dakar-based regional NGO Millennium Promise (MP) and the Alioune Diop de Bambey University (UADB) have joined efforts to help improve subnational statistics in Senegal. Both are members of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a global network under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General, which mobilizes scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development. The pilot project initially focuses on eight districts in the Diourbel region, with a total of 43 communes.

The Senegalese statistical system currently covers the national and regional levels. Lower administrative levels – districts, departments and communes – are not yet represented. According to Dr Amadou Ibra Niang, CEO of MP, the system would also benefit from more involvement by universities to provide

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scientific innovation. The MP-UADB joint pilot initiative thus aims to create an interinstitutional, multi-sectoral baseline and database in the Diourbel region to enable better alignment of the SDGs to national and local priorities. The database is to support decision-making in development planning, programming and budgeting at the national and local levels.

Networking to grow partnerships

One of MP's areas of expertise is SDG-based information systems. The organisation has extensive experience, for example, with GIS and with facilitating multi-stakeholder processes. UADB, on the other hand, is well known in the region and has good outreach and an experienced statistics and information and communication technologies (ICT) department. Both organisations share common objectives, and their capacities complement each other. Together, they involved further partners to define locally adapted SDG indicators in line with national priorities and to ensure links to political decision-makers from the outset. Current partners

include local government, a development committee of regional technical services that the Governor of Diourbel established for this project, representatives of the communes, the Ministry of Planning and the national statistical agency.

In a series of work sessions, the partners identified the SDG targets most relevant for the region, determined relevant data gaps, agreed on the methodology for the survey and organised implementation. The two main methods to be used are the Rapid Infrastructure Facility Assessment, developed by the University of Columbia and MP in the context of the Millennium Villages project, and household surveys inspired by approaches used in that same project. To avoid duplication of existing work and thus save costs and time, both approaches are to focus on previously identified data gaps.

The road ahead

Next steps include planning and implementing a work plan for the survey, presenting the results of the pilot phase to the SDSN General Assembly in New York and sharing results and experiences with the

Senegalese institutions in charge of implementing and monitoring the SDGs at national level. Ultimately, the lessons learned from the project are to be used to upscale the approach to all the country's communes and other countries where MP is operating.

Regarding lessons learned so far, Niang mentions that getting everybody on board requires clearly defined roles and benefits for all participants. MP's role is to make tools available, bring different partners together and facilitate the process. The University contributes its expertise, and its students assist with the implementation of the survey, while communities mobilise staff to support the survey, provide accommodation and help with logistics. The regional technical services provide data and information and promote the effective involvement of all partners. Everybody gives something and gains something in return. Yet ultimately, it is the results that count. According to Niang: *'What motivates everyone is that at the end we'll have data from the district level which are not available at present. These can be used at the national level to improve policies that affect everyone.'*