Equitable and sustainable wellbeing: the growing global movement to redefine progress

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Outline of presentation

1. Progress and its measurement
2. The problems of GDP
3. Democratic and development issues
4. Rethinking progress – a global movement
5. The OECD Global Project
6. Next steps
7. Implications for UNDP and ISQOLS
Ending the ‘mismeasure’ of progress

Human advance is conditioned by our conception of progress... It is time to end the mismeasure of human progress by economic growth alone.

The paradigm shift in favour of sustainable human development is still in the making. But more and more policy makers in many countries are reaching the unavoidable conclusion that, to be valuable and legitimate, development progress—both nationally and internationally—must be people centred, equitably distributed, and environmentally and socially sustainable.

OECD: Redefining societal progress 2009

Therefore, we could say that societal progress occurs when there is an improvement in the sustainable and equitable wellbeing of a society.

The idea of progress

No single idea has been more important than the Idea of Progress in Western civilization for three thousand years.

(Nisbet, R. History of the Idea of Progress, 1980)
The political power of definitions

‘Just’ or ‘right’ means nothing but what is in the interest of the stronger party.  (Plato)

The most powerful instrument of political authority is the power to give names and to enforce definitions.  (Hobbes)
Progress indicators as DNA codes

Statistical indicators are the structural DNA codes of nations. They reflect a society’s values and goals and become the key drivers of economic and technological choices.

(Hazel Henderson)
What counts and what is counted

Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.

(Albert Einstein)
Statistics are about people

Statistics are people with the tears washed away

Victor Sidel, US Physician
## GDP compared to overall wellbeing
Selected OECD countries, ranked by performance, c. 2000-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>National Wealth (GDP)</th>
<th>Gov’t spending</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Income equality</th>
<th>Peace</th>
<th>Human Rights</th>
<th>Overall wellbeing</th>
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**OWB correlation** | **5** | **6** | **10** | **12** | **13** | **14** | **NA** |
Time to change the way we measure progress

What we measure affects what we do; and if our measurements are flawed, decisions may be distorted. Choices between promoting GDP and protecting the environment may be false choices, once environmental degradation is appropriately included in our measurement of economic performance ...

The time is ripe for our measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people’s well-being. And measures of well-being should be put in a context of sustainability ...

We need a new paradigm to measure society’s wellbeing: Thinley

We have used GDP to determine wrongfully what is in fact the state of well-being of a country. It does not give any indication of the well-being of society, it does not measure the health of the environment, it does not measure the psychological well-being of our citizens, it does not measure the vitality of our community, and so on.

GDP is necessary but inadequate, and we need to develop additional indices that would tell a more comprehensive, a more holistic story about how human society is progressing.

We need to know what are the ways in which we are developing the non-materialist and economic side. The human being has two needs, the needs of the body and the needs of the mind, and what we have focused on so far is mostly the body, perhaps only the body. So, it’s a paradigm shift that we need to make.

(Lyonyo Jigmi y Thinley, Prime Minister of Bhutan, 2nd OECD World Forum on “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy” 2008)
To measure social progress, you need a theory of a good society

In order to measure quality of life, one must have a theory of what makes up a good life.
(Clifford Cobb)

To develop social indicators that can evaluate the health of society, we are faced with the necessity of spelling out some more or less explicit working model of society.
(Kenneth Land)
Social indicators are about values

Social indicators ... enable us to assess where we stand and are going with respect to our values and goals.

(Raymond Bauer, 1966)
Creating the Future

The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths to the future are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.

John Schaar, US Futurist, and Professor Emeritus of Political Philosophy, University of California at Santa Cruz
The growing global movement to redefine progress
A global movement to redefine progress is developing.

‘Over the past 10 years or so there has been an explosion of interest in producing measures of societal progress that go beyond GDP to represent a broader view of the ways in which societies are progressing and regressing ...

Initiatives to do just this are being run in many countries rich and poor, by governments, by civil society, by academics and the private sector ...

A world movement is emerging and the linkage between statistical indicators, policy design and democratic assessment of the performance of a country (a region, a city etc) is at its core.’

Rethinking Progress

Around the world a consensus is growing about the need to develop a more comprehensive view of progress – one that takes account of social, environmental and economic concerns – rather than focussing mainly on economic indicators like Gross Domestic Product.

Angel Gurria, Secretary General OECD
Rethinking progress and prosperity?

We have to think of human wellbeing in broader terms. Material wellbeing is only one component. That doesn't ensure that you’re at peace with your environment and in harmony with each other.

Jigmi Thinley, Prime Minister of Bhutan
‘There is no doubt in my mind that climate change is the greatest problem confronting mankind at this time and that it has reached the level of a state of emergency’.

David de Kretser, Governor of Victoria, Australia
A growing global movement

Local initiatives:
- US: Community Indicators Consortium
- UK: Young Foundation
- France: FAIR, PEKEA
- Italy: Sbilanciamoci
- Latin America: Como Vamos, Porto Alegre Community Budget
- Australia: Tasmania Together, Community Indicators Victoria, CI Queensland
- New Zealand, Major Cities Indicators Project

National initiatives:
- Canada (‘Canadian Index of Wellbeing’)
- Australia (‘Measures of Australia’s Progress’)
- Bhutan (‘Gross National Happiness’),
- France, Sarkozy (‘Stiglitz-Sen Commission on Measuring Progress’)
- US (‘Key National Indicators Act 2010’),
- Ireland, South Africa, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand etc.

International initiatives:
- OECD Global Project ‘Measuring the Progress of Societies’;
- EU: Council of Europe ‘Beyond GDP’;
- International Association of Supreme Auditors;
- WEF Global Council “Benchmarking the progress of societies”;
National progress measurement initiatives: 2010

- Australia (*Measures of Australia’s Progress*)
- Bhutan (*Gross National Happiness*)
- Canada (*Canadian Index of Wellbeing*)
- Finland
- France (*Stiglitz-Sen Fitoussi Commission*)
- Hungary
- Ireland (*Measuring Ireland’s Progress*)
- Italy
- Mexico
- Morocco
- New Zealand
- South Africa
- Thailand
- UK (*ONS National wellbeing measures*)
- USA (*Key National Indicators*)

Growing international use of community wellbeing indicators as tools for discussing progress and making policy choices
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Institution Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>- International Institute for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td>- Partnership Under Negotiation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| British Columbia | - Institute for Social Research and Evaluation  
University of Northern British Columbia (Prince George)                                               |
| Newfoundland  | - Memorial University of Newfoundland  
- Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts                                                                                                       |
| Alberta       | - Sustainable Calgary  
- Anielski Management Inc. (Edmonton)                                                                                                               |
| Nova Scotia   | - Genuine Progress Index Atlantic  
- Dalhousie University  
- Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre  
- Saint Mary's University Time Use Research Program                                                                                           |
| Ontario       | - University of Ottawa Institute of Population Health  
- Atkinson Charitable Foundation  
- York University School of Health Policy and Management                                                                                       |
| Saskatchewan | - University of Saskatchewan Community University Institute for Social Research (Saskatoon)                                                        |
| Canada national | - Statistics Canada  
- Health Council of Canada  
- Centre for the Study of Living Standards  
- Canadian Council on Social Development  
- Environment Canada State of the Environment  
- Canadian Policy Research Networks (Quality of Life Indicators)                                                                                   |
US Key National Indicators Act 2010

- Signed into Law by Pres Obama in March 2010
- Sets up independent national system to measure USA’s progress
- Statutory rationale:
  - stronger democracy and better informed citizens and students
  - improved planning and policy making
  - enhance existing community and local wellbeing indicator systems
  - credible, reliable, single source of information
  - takes advantage of advances in information technology
  - strengthens market and global competitiveness
  - well researched and proven
- Work carried out by new Key National Indicators Commission & Institute
- Overseen by National Academy of Sciences
- Provides annual report on US progress and related recommendations
- Reports directly to Congress and President
- Reports to be disseminated through community
- Initial 10 year budget of $78 million
Australian National Development Index (ANDI): Key features

- Civil society initiative
- Long term (5-10 year development phase)
- Reporting (quarterly ‘GNWB’ Index, annual indices of key dimensions)
- Community consultation, engagement and ownership
- Close relationship with ABS
- External partners: Canadian Index of Wellbeing, OECD
- Strong collaborative research base (5+ universities)
- Network and resource base, clearing house role
- Education and communications emphasis, state of art website
- Funding: majority non-government funding, ‘Funder alliance’
ANDI: the aim

• To change our national model of progress from ‘increasing economic production’ to ‘increasing equitable and sustainable wellbeing’

• by promoting a community debate on progress and our shared vision for Australia

• and developing a new system of community-based national measures of wellbeing and sustainability to show our progress towards those goals.
## Mapping Community Wellbeing – State level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and community wellbeing</th>
<th>Democracy and governance</th>
<th>Economic wellbeing</th>
<th>Environmental wellbeing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and wellbeing (physical and mental)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Children and families</td>
<td>Fairness, equal opportu-</td>
<td>Public and civic in-</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>nity, social mobility</td>
<td>stitutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and training (whole of life)</td>
<td>Social capital and trust</td>
<td>Planning and physi-</td>
<td>Human rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>People on low incomes</td>
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<td>cal infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income, wealth and poverty</td>
<td>Health and viability of</td>
<td>Community services</td>
<td>Justice and legal rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>communities</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate job creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety and security</td>
<td>Citizenship and com-</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Healthy regional, local economies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>munity participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>Creativity enterprise</td>
<td>Media and communi-</td>
<td>Local government</td>
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<td>Older persons</td>
<td>and innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Crime and social disfu-</td>
<td>Culture and the arts</td>
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<td>Ethnic and NESB groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment and work life</td>
<td>Indigenous people</td>
<td>Recreation and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>People in remote and rural communities</td>
<td></td>
<td>sport</td>
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</table>

Democratic issues in re-defining progress
Six key links between democracy and measuring progress

(1) Defining progress is the proper responsibility of democratic citizens.
(2) Citizens need good information to make good democratic decisions.
(3) Democratic development is part of the meaning of social progress.
(4) Healthy democracy improves progress and wellbeing in other areas.
(5) Social progress indicators are a tool for better, more accountable governance.
(6) Engaging citizens in progress measurement strengthens their democratic capacity.
Redefining progress a political, not statistical, problem.

‘This (new progress measures) is primarily not a statistical problem. It is a political question and it is important for the government of a modern society. We need to improve existing democratic institutions, engage people in round-table discussions on measures of societal progress and statistical measurement standards.’

(Enrico Giovannini. Time for Member States to start debates on well-being’, EuroStat Sigma, European Commission, Brussels, 2/2010)
Democratic debate needs shared realities

Without a shared understanding of reality, fruitful democratic debate is almost impossible.

Canada: the case for citizen based progress measures

There is a growing sense that traditional measures of economic performance such as GDP, employment and income data do not capture the full story of what is happening in society. This has provoked a desire to monitor the state of social and economic well-being of society.

To be legitimate, societal indicators require the explicit involvement of citizens to determine what matters to them. Then experts can try to devise the measures that citizens need.

While there is much activity on quality of life indicators in Canada, there is no project that is national in scope, nor is there one that seeks input from citizens’.

Human rights and democracy are part of the meaning of progress and wellbeing .... and an important contributor to progress and wellbeing in other fields.
### ‘Healthy democracy’ measures as part of progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. Citizenship, law and rights</th>
<th>II. Representative and accountable government</th>
<th>III. Civil society and popular participation</th>
<th>IV. Democracy beyond the State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The rule of law and access to justice</td>
<td>6. Democratic role of political parties</td>
<td>11. Citizen participation in public life</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Economic and social rights equal, guaranteed</td>
<td>8. Civilian control of the military and police</td>
<td>13. Decentralisation to most appropriate levels</td>
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<td>9. Minimising corruption</td>
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Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), Stockholm, *State Of Democracy: Trends From The Pilot Countries* [www.idea.int/ideas_work/14_political_state.htm](http://www.idea.int/ideas_work/14_political_state.htm) Accessed 29/1/02
Health and social justice links

‘Social justice is a matter of life and death ... Inequities are killing people on a grand scale’.

(World Health Organisation, 2008: ‘Closing the gap in a generation’)
## Links between democracy, human rights and wellbeing

Selected OECD countries, ranked by performance, c. 2000-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>National wealth</th>
<th>Environm’t</th>
<th>Gov’t spending</th>
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Community indicators and local democracy
The idea of people taking charge of their own measurements of progress is a powerful and far reaching innovation that can bring about a new sense of civic engagement.

(Sustainable Seattle. 2000)
What are community wellbeing indicators?

Community wellbeing indicators are statistical tools for translating broad community goals into clear, tangible and commonly understood outcomes and for assessing and communicating progress in achieving these goals.

• Tools for democracy
• Tools for evidence based policy making
• Tools for reporting and evaluation

Basis for new conversations about ‘community’, progress, wellbeing and sustainability?
Local community wellbeing indicators...

- Spotlight issues and trends important to local communities
- Include social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance trends and outcomes
- Measure community trends and outcomes – not local government performance
- Focus on a small number of headline wellbeing measures – not all local data
Community wellbeing indicators in Australia
Using community indicators to support citizen engagement and policy making
## Victorian Community Wellbeing Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wellbeing Domain</th>
<th>A. Social</th>
<th>B. Economic</th>
<th>C. Environmental</th>
<th>D. Cultural</th>
<th>E. Democratic</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
<td>Healthy, safe and inclusive communities</td>
<td>Dynamic, resilient and fair local economies</td>
<td>Sustainable built and natural environments</td>
<td>Culturally rich and vibrant communities</td>
<td>Healthy democracy and active citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policy areas</strong></td>
<td>A1: Personal health &amp; wellbeing</td>
<td>B1: Economic activity</td>
<td>C1: Access to open space</td>
<td>D1: Arts and cultural activities</td>
<td>E1: Healthy democracy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A4: Personal and community safety</td>
<td>B4: Work-life balance</td>
<td>C4: Housing affordability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A5: Lifelong learning</td>
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<td>C5: Air quality</td>
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<td>A6: Services availability</td>
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<td>C6: Water quality</td>
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<td>C7: Biodiversity</td>
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<td>C8: Waste management</td>
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</table>

Automated wellbeing reports

Community Wellbeing Reports contain a select number of community wellbeing indicators which are used to highlight important trends and issues in the community. These reports provide a snapshot of the wellbeing of individual municipalities with comparisons to regional and statewide results.

South Gippsland is an important beef production and dairying area. Other activities include horticulture, forestry, fishing, boutique food and wine, retail trade, manufacturing and tourism. The western coast of the shire is also a popular holiday and retirement area. A major physical feature in South Gippsland is Wilsons Promontory.

The main industries include agriculture, dairy product manufacturing.

The municipality includes the localities of Adare, Alonnah, Allambie Reserve, Allambie South, Arawata, Baromi, Barra Beach, Benk, Berwick, Berrys Creek, Bingilwirra, Bonnie Brae, Boolarong, Boolarra, Boolarra South, Boorool, Boys, Buffalo, Burndale, Cambrid, Darby, Darlington, Delburn, Dollar, Dumbalk, Dumbalk East, Fairbank, Fish Creek, Foster, Gunyah, Hallston, Hazel Park, Hoddley, Hoddle, Inverloch, Jaeroe, Jumbunna, Kardella, Kardella South, Kongwak, Koowlara, Koorooman, Koowarna, Krowera, Lang Lang, Leongatha, Limonite, Loch, Nardan, McKinnons, Meenyang, Middle Tarwin, Mirboo, Mirboo East, Mount East, Mount Eades, Mountain View, Meyarra, Nerriga, Nerrina East, Nyora, Ootrim, Pambalong, Park Franklin, Park Westpool, Pambula, Rawhiti, Ruby, Sandy Point, Stony Creek, Strzelecki, Tarwin, Tarwin East, Thordale, Thordale South, Tidal River, Toora, Tribes, Tintern Creek, Venus Bay, Walkerville, Walkerville North, Waratah Bay, Westpool, Whitelaw, Wilsons Promontory, Wenga, Wonco, Woowarr North, Wooroon, and Yanakie.

This descriptive information about the municipality has been selected from the Local Government Victoria website. You can also
Satisfaction with feeling part of the community

Source: CIV, McCaughey Centre, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne
Local community wellbeing in Victoria

Food stress

Source: CIV, McCaughey Centre, School of Population Health, University of Melbourne
The OECD Global Project ‘Measuring the Progress of Societies’
Our duty to rethink progress and build new visions for society

We are facing both an opportunity and a duty to rethink what progress really means and to build stronger and more inclusive visions for the future of our societies.

Citizens are looking for new ways to improve their lives. We need committed citizens, scientists and well-informed leaders ready to engage the whole of society in an assessment of the challenges ahead. Adequate measurements are essential in helping our societies to define their goals; ensure that we design the right policies to achieve them; and tell us whether those policies are working.

(Angelo Gurria, Secretary General, OECD, 3rd OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy ‘Charting Progress, Building Visions, Improving Life’, Busan, South Korea, 27-30 October 2009.)
Aims of the OECD Global Project

• **Change culture**, helping citizens and policy makers to pay attention to all dimensions of progress

• **Develop new statistics** in emerging domains

• **Improve citizens’ numeracy**, strengthening people’s capacity of understanding the reality in which they live

• **Improve citizens’ knowledge**, becoming more aware of risks and challenges of today world

• **Improve national policy making**, through a better measurement of policy and societal outcomes

• **Improve international policy making**, through a world progress monitoring system, covering all countries

• **Improve statistical capacity** in each and every country

• **Strengthen democracy** respecting historical and cultural differences

• **Foster a global and open conversation** about the state and the progress of the world

• **... and thus IMPROVE WELFARE**
OECD Global Project partners and sponsors:

**Partners**: World Bank, The United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), African Development Bank (AfDB), UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), UN Economic Commission for West Asia (ESCWA), UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), International Association of Auditor Generals (INTOSAI), European Commission (EC), Council of E

**Associates and Sponsors**: Korean National Statistical Office (KOR), Kessler Foundation (ITA), Unicredit Bank (ITA), Institute for Economic Studies and Analyses (ITA), International Institute for Sustainable Development (CAN), STATEC (LUX), Boston Foundation (USA), North-Eastern University (USA), Community Indicators Consortium (USA), Young Foundation (UK), Hewlett Foundation (USA), Fondation du Devenir (SWI), University of Sienna (ITA), Arab Institute of Training in Statistics (JOR), Oxfam International (UK), International Statistical Institute, Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), PARIS21, The Lisbon Council, International Society of Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS).
The transformation of the OECD Global Project

Titles of successive Global Forums:

- Palermo 2004: Key indicators to inform decision making
- Istanbul 2007: Measuring and fostering the progress of societies
- Busan 2009: Charting progress, building visions, improving life
Activities and outputs (1)

- **What to measure?**
  - Regional working groups (under discussion)
  - Regional and thematic conferences (Stockholm, Moscow, Paris, Boston, Florence, etc.)
  - Guidelines on how to build progress initiatives at local level (CoE)

- **How to measure?**
  - Taxonomy of societal progress dimensions (Global Office)
  - Handbook on “Measuring Progress” (Global Office)
  - Guidelines on how to measure particular dimensions of progress (partners and associates)
  - Knowledge Base (Global Office)
  - Training material and courses (STATEC)
Activities and outputs (2)

• **Ensuring that the measures are used**
  – Report on what makes a set of key indicators successful (Global Office and Eurostat)
  – Survey on what citizens know about the progress of their society (University of Michigan and ISAE)
  – Knowledge base on ICT tools (Kessler Foundation)
  – Guidelines on how to design websites (Kessler Foundation)
  – Release and promotion of ICT tools (forthcoming network)
  – “Wiki-Progress” (Global Office)

• **World Forums**
  – Korea 27-30 October 2009 (KNSO and OECD)
  – India 2011-2012 (CSO and OECD)
www.wikiprogress.org
A new measure of real national progress: UNICEF

The day will come when nations will be judged not by their military or economic strength, nor by the splendour of their capital cities and public buildings, but by the well-being of their people: by their levels of health, nutrition and education; by their opportunities to earn a fair reward for their labours; by their ability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives; by the respect that is shown for their civil and political liberties; by the provision that is made for those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged; and by the protection that is afforded to the growing minds and bodies of their children.