

**THE  
NEW  
SCHOOL**



Date  
Friday, March 8, 2019

Time  
08:15 AM - 09:30 AM EST

Location  
Conference Room 8  
UNHQ, New York



**FRIEDRICH  
EBERT  
STIFTUNG**  
NEW YORK OFFICE

 Permanent Mission  
of the Federal Republic of Germany  
to the United Nations  
New York

 **STATS SA**  
STATISTICS SOUTH AFRICA

# Knowledge and Politics in Setting and Measuring the SDGs

Official Side Event of the  
50<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

The SDGs did not fall from the sky. They resulted from hard fought battles over different visions, ideas and interests about the purpose and theories of development. These battles continue in the choice of indicators, and in the interpretation of goals and targets. Governance by data and indicators can alter meanings of social objectives, shift power relations, reorganize national and local priorities, create perverse incentives and create new narratives. This raises questions about the power of measurement tools to shape knowledge, the democratic governance of SDG indicators and of knowledge for development overall.

This event – co-organized by The New School, UNDP, University of Oslo Centre for Development and Environment, and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York office, in coordination with the Permanent Mission of Germany and Statistics South Africa – will present the findings of an international research project on the knowledge and politics that led to the formulation of SDGs, particularly the selection of indicators. The project undertook empirical case studies of 8 goals, and 2 studies of data challenges.

The research findings raise questions about: “data for whom and for what?” in the way that SDG indicators are selected, and in how the process of selecting indicators can be safeguarded to remain neutral and technical.

## Moderator

- Serge Kapto, UNDP

## Welcome Remarks

- Luise Rürup, Executive Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung New York Office
- Bernd Stoertzbach, Head of Division – Planning and Coordination, International Cooperation, Legal Matters Concerning Statistics, Federal Statistical Office, Germany
- Risenga Maluleke, Statistician-General, Statistics South Africa

## Speakers

- Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, Director, Julien J. Studley Graduate Programs in International Affairs, The New School
- Manjari Mahajan, Assistant Professor, International Affairs, The New School
- Steve MacFeely, Head of Statistics and Information, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

## Commentators

- Enrique Ordaz, Director General of Integration, Analysis and Research, National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Mexico
- Francesca Perucci, Chief, Development Data and Outreach Branch, United Nations Statistics Division

a light breakfast will be served