

The UK Statistics Authority misleads that it received an unclear complaint. Having referred to non-existent UN pledges of 2000, it now refers to non-existent correspondence.

The truth is as follows:

1. The complaint was titled: "UKSA and GSS material appears to mislead on global pledges".

2. UKSA's strange response, unrelated to any possible lack of "clarity" in the complaint, was:

"We recommend that you to speak to the Department for International Development (DFID) in the first instance".

3. The email which UKSA calls a "clarification" of the "complaint" in fact simply repeated it, consisting only of the words:

"My complaint to the UK Statistics Authority is about its own statement, and about the Office for National Statistics statement on the Government Statistical Service website."

From: Authority Enquiries <authority.enquiries@statistics.gov.uk>
28 November 2016 at 11:42

RE: UKSA and GSS material appears to mislead on global pledges

Dear Mr Berkley,

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 October ~~clarifying your complaint regarding the Millennium Development Goals.~~

You cited two instances where the Millennium Development Goals were stated as being agreed in 2000; once in Assessment Report 315 Statistics on International Development[1] and once in a blog posting[2] on the GSS website. I concur with you that these statements are factually incorrect.

The factual situation as we understand it is that in 2000 world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration at the UN Millennium Summit. The Millennium Development Goals were developed subsequently as part of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

The Authority distracts from the actual complaint: that it understated world leaders' commitments.

We consider this error a factual inaccuracy and not statistical misreporting. To **rectify** it, we have **corrected** and republished Assessment Report 315. The original text stated:

"DFID is working towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target date of 2015, as agreed at the UN Millennium Summit in 2000."

"Rectify" and "corrected" mislead. To rectify, it would be necessary to tell the truth.

This sentence has been **replaced** with the following:

"DFID is working towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target date of 2015."

That is a removal of text, not a "correction".

And footnoted with:

"Paragraph 2.14 of this report was amended in November 2016 to **correct** a factual inaccuracy ~~regarding when and where the MDGs were agreed.~~"

Furthermore **we have posted a correction** note to the GSS blog posting.

It would seem the inaccurate reporting of what was agreed at the Millennium Summit in 2000, where world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration not the Millennium Development Goals, has been common place. In that regard we will raise this issue with DfID and also with the team working on international development in the Office for National Statistics.

We appreciate you contacting us in this regard.

[1] <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-international-development-2/>

2 <https://gss.civilservice.gov.uk/blog/2015/09/a-sustainable-approach-to-statistics-and-geography/>

Yours sincerely,

Victoria

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In response to the complaint, the "Authority" here published a new misleading statement.

The claim that the "inaccuracy" was

"regarding when and where the MDGs were agreed"

hides the original error, hides the focus of the complaint and hides the truth which the Government and UKSA have obscured from citizens: governments' promises at the UN.

Misleading. UKSA clearly did not "rectify" or "correct" the false impression of world leaders' pledges. The new "civil service" text still fails to mention what world leaders promised in 2000 and reaffirmed in 2005 and 2010, and misleadingly focuses on dates.

"Correction [!]: This blog originally stated that the Millennium Development Goals had been in place since 2000. In 2000 world leaders adopted the UN Millennium Declaration at the UN Millennium Summit. The Millennium Development Goals were however developed subsequently as part of the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. GSS Website Team, November 2016."