



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Aide-Mémoire

UNITED NATIONS VIRTUAL INTER-AGENCY EXPERT GROUP MEETING: THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY (2018–2027)

“ACCELERATING GLOBAL ACTIONS FOR A WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY”

16-18 May 2022

I. BACKGROUND

In its resolution 72/233, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period 2018-2027 as the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and decided that the theme of the Third Decade would be “Accelerating global actions for a world without poverty” in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to develop an inter-agency, system-wide plan of action (SWAP) for poverty eradication to support global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda, accelerate global actions for a world without poverty and coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system.¹

Accelerating poverty eradication is particularly important during the decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as some sub-regions, such as South Asia, South-East Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific, were not on track to eradicate poverty by 2030 even before the pandemic, and vulnerable populations are at risk of being left behind.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is posing a serious challenge to ending poverty by 2030 as it derails progress on achieving the SDGs and provoked a major reversal in poverty reduction in every region. The world’s poorest are the most impacted. In 2021, the poorest 40 per cent had not started to recover their income losses, with their average income being around 2 per cent smaller than it was before the pandemic. By contrast, the top 40 per cent got more than 45 per cent of their initial income losses back with their average income almost returning to pre-COVID levels.²

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/united-nations-decade-for-the-eradication-of-poverty/swap3rd.html>.

² <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/covid-19-leaves-legacy-rising-poverty-and-widening-inequality>.

The decline in income has translated into a sharp increase in world poverty. The number of people living in extreme poverty has increased across all regions, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2020, the pandemic pushed an additional 97 million into extreme poverty, increasing the world's extreme poverty rate to 9.1 per cent from the projected 7.8 per cent had the pandemic not happened. The negative effects of the pandemic are estimated to have reversed progress toward ending extreme poverty by 8 to 9 years in low-income countries and by 3 to 4 years at the global level. Consequently, achieving the target level of 3 per cent by 2030 to end extreme poverty will require significant, swift, and sustained action to ignite inclusive growth in countries where extreme poverty persists.³

The pandemic has also reversed progress made in reducing inequality in the world. While the world's economy has started to bounce back from the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, this recovery is not being experienced equally as low-income countries are grappling with a deeper crisis and the negative socio-economic impacts of which on households are larger than in high-income countries. As a result, between-country income inequality is estimated to have increased for the first time in a generation.⁴ Inequality of opportunity is also expected to widen within countries due to increasing inequality in labour markets that negatively impacts low-income households.⁵

If not addressed, the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-income and vulnerable households will continue in the long run: 1) they will be less able to cope with economic and food insecurities because they had to sell productive assets or deplete savings to meet their basic needs after a large number of their workers, usually low-skilled, lost their employment and income; 2) their children will face negative long-term consequences for cognitive and physical development because their households were more likely to experience under-nutrition and hunger; and 3) they face an aggregate loss of learning and their children will have lower future prospects because they lost learning opportunities for extended periods due to school closures or remote learning.

Therefore, ensuring an inclusive, resilient and more equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is an imperative for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

II. OBJECTIVES

In its 2022 Action Plan, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) has decided to “address poverty and inequality and leave no one behind in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic” as a first area to act upon in 2022. Mainstreaming work on poverty eradication and addressing inequalities into UN DESA's work streams as appropriate are key areas to be considered. UN DESA plans to leverage the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027) to accelerate coordination action in these areas to support Member States in achieving the SDGs.

³ [Ibid.](#)

⁴ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/covid-19-increasing-global-inequality>.

⁵ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/impact-covid-19-poverty-and-inequality-evidence-phone-surveys>.

The Division for Inclusive Social Development of UN DESA is organizing an inter-agency expert group meeting on “The Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)”, to be held virtually, from 16 to 18 May 2022, as part of the preparations for the seventy-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly and to contribute to the above key action of UN DESA. The purpose of the meeting is to bring together experts from the United Nations system, government, academia, think tanks, as well as civil society organizations to discuss key questions related to the implementation of the United Nations system-wide plan of action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, including the role that United Nations system can play to accelerate global actions for a world without poverty. In particular, they will:

- i) review the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the achievement of the SDGs, in particular poverty eradication, decent work and inequality reduction;
- ii) reflect on progress made and the gaps and challenges toward ending poverty and reducing structural inequalities everywhere by 2030;
- iii) share country perspectives on better support from the United Nations system;
- iv) review lessons learnt from designing and implementing poverty eradication strategies at various levels that can be leveraged to spur further progress in those countries or regions lagging further behind and to contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- v) discuss financing poverty eradication efforts, especially those that should be applied to low- and middle-income countries;
- vi) review the progress made by the UN system to get countries back on track and accelerate the implementation of the SWAP; and
- vii) propose inclusive social policies for a sustainable, inclusive and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerating poverty eradication to effectively implement the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027).

The meeting will allow a robust exchange of ideas that contribute to achieving the objectives of the Third Decade. Invited experts will present global and regional recent trends in poverty and inequality, progress, gaps and challenges as well as good practices at the country level and among UN system entities. The interaction will foster the identification of actionable social and economic policies as well as encourage greater inter-agency convergence and collaboration within the United Nations system in sharing knowledge, promoting policy dialogue, facilitating synergies, mobilizing funds, providing technical assistance to Member States in the key policy and programmatic areas underlying the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda of poverty eradication.

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The meeting is expected to provide substantive input for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the “Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)” to be submitted to the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly. This includes assessing the gaps, challenges and progress made in the implementation of the Third Decade, including COVID-19-related aspects, effects and

response. The meeting will also review and assess progress made implementing the inter-agency system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication.

The meeting will produce the following outputs:

- i. Substantive short papers on the theme of the meeting, with concrete policy recommendations, prepared by experts;
- ii. Enhanced and better-informed dialogue between policy makers, the United Nations system and researchers on best practices for evidence-based policies related to eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions; and
- iii. A report of the inter-agency expert group meeting, summarizing the key policy messages and recommendations to be included in Secretary-General's Report.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

In addition to inviting UN system focal points for the Third Decade, the Division for Inclusive Social Development of UN DESA will also identify and invite about 10 outside experts, taking into consideration gender and geographical balances.

Invited speakers are requested to provide brief background papers (approximately 5-10 pages, in English) to the United Nations Secretariat by **Thursday 12 May 2022** for distribution to other participants. Each background paper should address a specific agenda item and include a summary of the expert's own research and evidence from other sources, as well as references to relevant parts of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All sessions of the meeting will be in plenary and invited experts will lead-off discussions of each session by presenting papers which will then be followed by in-depth plenary discussions. During the wrap-up session of the meeting, participants will outline the major conclusions and recommendations of the meeting. The Division for Inclusive Social Development will prepare a final report summarizing the key policy messages and recommendations.

Presenters are encouraged to prepare PowerPoint presentations and share them in advance with the organizers. All papers and presentations should be sent to **Ms. Meron Sherif** (sherif4@un.org) and **Ms. Hantamalala Rafalimanana** (rafalimanana@un.org) with a copy to **Ms. Maria Gonzalez-Terrazas** (gonzalez-terrazas@un.org).

V. DOCUMENTATION AND LANGUAGE

The documentation of the meeting will be comprised of relevant publications, documents and materials related to the theme of the meeting. With participants' permission, the background papers and presentations will be posted on the Division for Inclusive Social Development's website.

The working language of the meeting will be English. Documentation for the meeting will also be provided in English.