



requires political inclusion, particularly for those trapped in poverty or otherwise marginalized through processes of economic and social exclusion.

Part II of the e-discussion sought to identify concrete strategies, policies and practices that have been particularly constructive in fostering inclusive development. Participants were invited to reflect on structural or institutional constraints to inclusion, illustrate the obstacles faced in implementing inclusive development strategies or policies, and identify the catalysts for more inclusive development processes. Participants were also invited to pay attention to the processes for priority-setting or decision-making and for implementation, at local and national levels, and the extent to which these involve broad engagement and participation – particularly of otherwise excluded groups.

The following questions guided this portion of the e-discussion:

- What are specific examples of institutional arrangements, policies or practices that have enhanced inclusive development? What were the key drivers of success in these cases?
- What factors have exacerbated inequalities or act as obstacles or impediments to inclusion? What lessons can be learnt from continuing disparities in MDG achievement for understanding the obstacles to inclusive development?
- What specific mechanisms have been useful in broadening and deepening the political, social and economic participation by all, especially those living in poverty or experiencing other forms of exclusion?
- Can a set of necessary and widely applicable conditions or strategies for fostering social inclusion and citizen engagement be identified? How can such conditions be enabled and enhanced?

## II. Discussion Points

The following discussion summarises views expressed by participants. They do not represent the views of the moderators or their institutions.

### *Human rights and focusing on the poor and marginalized*

Several participants emphasized that *respect for human rights* is a key to inclusive development. This provides a normative framework to guide policy choices. Tools noted include international conventions (disability was highlighted here but many other binding agreements exist), national constitutions, and legislation. The implementation of legislation and standards requires in turn capable and accountable states and national institutions. Government should ensure the maintenance of rights, including the rights of young people.

Civil society, academia, the private sector, the media and other relevant stakeholders can play an important role at the national, regional and international levels in the development and facilitation of ways and means to promote and implement learning about human rights as a way of life at the community level. Civil society organizations, in particular those working at the community level, can integrate human rights learning into dialogue and consciousness-raising programmes with groups working on education, development, poverty

eradication, participation, children, indigenous peoples, gender equality, persons with disabilities, older persons and migrants, as well as on other relevant political, civil, economic, social and cultural issues.

Many participants underscored the importance of *focusing on the poorest and most marginalized*. It is crucial to ensure the active participation of people living in extreme poverty, so that they can fully contribute their knowledge and experience in the development of their communities and the betterment of their societies. Political processes should be adjusted in order to enhance the meaningful participation of the most excluded through dialogues where mutual learning, respect and collaboration are key principles. Government and international institutions should take measures to ensure the equal protection under the law of people experiencing poverty. Laws and regulations must be modified accordingly. Socio-cultural patterns must be challenged, with a view to eliminating negative prejudices and stereotypes. Positive measures must be taken in sensitive areas such as employment, education, housing, health etc. to ensure equality of persons living in poverty or extreme poverty.

The poorest and most marginalized have not been reached by many current approaches, and change in the development process is needed. More democratic and accountable institutions will respond to their demands, and therefore it is important to have participatory approaches to decision-making. Political will and human investment are required to reach out to those deepest in poverty, and institutions must strive to make their services accessible to them. Governments should work with businesses and civil society organizations to provide skills training and employment opportunities.

A participant raised that the poorest and most marginalized are not reached because of the intersecting inequalities that characterize people's daily lives, and the complex and entrenched ways that these impact people living in poverty: simple and one-dimensional solutions are inadequate (such as on only one aspect of service-delivery). Moreover, the experience of poverty is being mediated by relationships of power and by social norms and this is what limits people getting access to services and their rights. Another contributor raised a lesson learnt from Iraq, where older persons play an important role in development process.

The same participant highlighted the following four mechanisms for realizing inclusive and sustainable development:

- i. Rights and recognition for all. Rights are foundational for recognition and dignity. Being treated with respect and acknowledged by family, public officials and representatives of the state, and wider society helps people see themselves as citizens. As citizens, they are able to act to demand greater fairness and access to the resources they need.
- ii. Inclusion, solidarity, collective action. The most marginalized experience discrimination within their families, in their communities and more widely. Collective action is needed to address these problems, and that requires addressing the barriers to people coming together to mobilize effectively.
- iii. Participation, accountability, and democratic institutions. More democratic and accountable institutions will respond to the demands of the poorest and most marginalized, and participatory approaches to decision-making can help ensure this happens.

- iv. Services and policies which respond to the needs of the poorest. Service and policies that effectively respond to the needs of the poorest are holistic, long-term, and have a focus on quality. Dignified livelihoods are a necessary element to their success.

A few contributors pointed to the importance of *social protection*. Social protection – both specific programmes but more importantly the wider institutional arrangements – is an essential instrument both for reducing poverty and exclusion, and for ensuring that the broader benefits from economic development are shared by all. Recent reforms and social schemes in Mauritius provide an example of national efforts to promote a more inclusive development trajectory through targeted social protection

### *Inclusion and Inequality*

Some contributors focused on *promoting equality to enhance inclusive development*, with strategies including political representation, economic inclusion, higher education and the development of leadership and other skills. The global gender gap, gender bias, gender disability and gender domination need to be resolved to achieve the MDGs. The promotion of opportunities, especially those of the marginalized, is central for enhancing inclusive development. A good example was the ‘cash for work’ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme in India. The programme is not problem free; nevertheless, overall it is an inclusive programme of the Indian government.

Several contributors focused on addressing income *inequality*. The sharpest increases in income inequality have occurred in developing countries that were particularly successful in pursuing vigorous growth and managed, as a result, to graduate into higher income brackets. Economic progress in these countries has not alleviated disparities, but rather exacerbated them. This is a development challenge that could erode the gains of the past decade. Identifying the drivers of income inequality is one of the pathways to addressing the problem. Drivers could range from socio-economic policies to sheer lack of opportunities for the vulnerable and marginalized.

For instance, preliminary findings from Ethiopia's national Human Development Report on Inclusive growth demonstrated that at the centre of the country's strong economic and social performance has been the Government's proactive and forceful role in shaping socio-economic policy. The Government has been investing heavily in economic and social infrastructure, streamlining the public service, revamping the tax collection system, and supporting small and medium enterprises through the prism of promoting equity and broadening prosperity. It has also prioritized key sectors such as industry and agriculture as drivers of sustained economic growth and job creation with a deliberate focus on people.

A contributor also expressed concerns about using the Gini index for measuring inequality. The Gini index is a useful indicator of income or wealth distribution for a country, region or the world. However, there is concern about its use in contexts of rapid change. It is a static indicator of income distribution and may mask significant changes within the distribution, such as between different income deciles. Alternative indicators can be considered, such as the Palma ratio, which looks at the ratio of incomes of the poorest 40% to the richest 10% of the population.

Many participants emphasised the importance of *women's empowerment*. Women constitute a majority of the people living in poverty. Empowering women, ending discrimination against women and promoting gender equality are crucial for poverty eradication. Greater education of women can lead to greater

economic participation, especially among urban women. A more focused approach to the protection and advancement of women and to gender equity issues, including integrating various best practices and the adoption of tools for sustaining development involving all stakeholders, can open barriers to advance sustainable development.

Experience has also showed that investing in women across a broad spectrum of areas (social, political and economic) results in better human development outcomes at the household and national levels. Inclusive and independent monitoring mechanisms at the national level should be established to assess the progress of the institutions and policy framework in addressing the root causes of inequality.

An e-discussion participant underscored the *under representation of women and/or other marginalized groups in politics from local levels to national Parliaments*. While quotas enhance formal participation, they do not ensure substantive representation, i.e., that the interests of marginalized groups are represented; for example, women or lower caste representatives may act as proxies for men and for the upper castes. Gender, caste, ethnicity, minority status, etc., affect the power dynamics within decision-making structures. Yet elected women are not necessarily powerless. Social participation of elected women has been enhanced in parts of Bangladesh at the sub-district level with some being invited to join 'Shalish' or local mediation mechanisms, which are usually male-led.

Specific attention was also given to the *inclusion of people with disabilities*. States should guarantee all human rights and a life free of discrimination, recognizing the rights of persons with disabilities, access to health, education, work and employment, an adequate standard of living and social protection, and participation in political and public life. These rights will allow full participation in society by people of all ages with disabilities. The social responsibility of private companies and social partners should be enhanced to include people with disabilities in the workforce by giving them greater access to economic opportunities.

An inclusive policy framework should have active involvement and consultation of persons with disabilities and their representative organization. A participant highlighted the importance of improving accessibility of persons with disability through:

- i. Collaboration among those with and without disabilities to conduct assessments, implementing changes, and determining the effectiveness of improvements regarding the accessibility of programs, services and places.
- ii. Ongoing community-level assessments to determine the extent of barriers limiting access to, and use of structures, and restricting program participation. Prioritization of when and how public and private buildings, programs and services will be made accessible.
- iii. Public and private funding to retrofit public and private buildings and expand reach of community programs and services.
- iv. Providing equal opportunities for primary and secondary health education for all children, including those with disabilities.

### ***Institutions, governance and inclusive policy-making***

A participant focused on *good governance and effective administration*. Public policy should aim at preserving social cohesion and promoting social stability, especially through democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Another participant focused on *structural or institutional constraints to inclusion*. Inclusion cannot be achieved without addressing the social constraints to inclusion. These constraints may not be formal or written in legislation; they are more usually *informal* social norms or the dominant moral code that structure the behaviour of individuals within a society. Education can be an important tool for ensuring that unequal societal structures are addressed so that it becomes unacceptable on a personal level to continue to accept forms of exclusion.

One contributor pointed to the importance of *policy implementation*. For example, while the Indian Government constructs housing for slum dwellers, it is often far away from the city and does not meet the needs of the poor. It is very difficult for women and girls to commute for work and education, and for women workers in the informal sector to juggle their unpaid work at home with paid work in the informal market. Institutional rules of not only the state, but also the community, markets and household are a constraint.

Some contributors also highlighted that the *legal framework for accountability*, such as a Right to Information Act and Public Interest Litigation, is essential in broadening and deepening political, social and economic participation of all. Many contributors referred to changes in societal structures toward a more equal or inclusive society. This can take time, but education and communications are important tools, while strong guiding principles are needed.

A participant suggested that government should provide more *opportunities to the private sector, NGOs, and community organisations* to share their experiences in the field and have a real influence in policy making. Inclusive development is difficult to implement, particularly in developing countries where community needs, science and research, and policy making are not integrated. To have all three integrated, it is necessary that Governments open an effective space to hear the community needs and the scientific community that does research on certain areas and take them into account to avoid working on strategies that were proven by science to not work out or to apply those strategies that are more effective.

At level of international institutions, one participant emphasized the importance of a *new global partnership* that is inclusive, involves governments and the private sector and includes representation from the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. This partnership has to build on a shared humanity, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. Moreover, it suggests that the concept of goal-or sector-specific global partnerships should be a central part of the new development agenda. There is an imbalance of power between economic and social actors, coupled with weak state regulations that result in an uneven distribution of income and inequality. This imbalance may be further exploited by corporate power, which creates substandard wages and poor working conditions that harm workers and society. There is therefore a need to explore innovative ways of cooperation and enhanced social dialogue mechanisms that are anchored in the principles of human rights, equity, sustainability and decent work, which should be in line with the crafting of the framework of the new development agenda.

Governments sometimes develop national strategies based on the international development agenda without adapting them to local realities (including their own resources: financial, technological or human, etc.). As a result, the strategies can turn out to be ineffective or without impact after implementation for many years and large amounts of money spent. To avoid such issue, it would be important to open a space to NGOs and other private or community organizations that work at the local level and have interesting pilot projects and strategies that have shown to be efficient and are ready to scale up to the national level.

Many participants focused on the key role of *citizenship engagement*. A participant suggested the following measures as means to fostering citizen engagement and social inclusion:

- i. Do less harm policy: For example, legislation that curbs agricultural land acquisition in contexts where there is land and food shortage.
- ii. Focus on the poor and marginalized: i) Lower bank interest rates for the poor, without collateral, for starting business to earn livelihoods and for education and housing, ii) Strengthen asset base of the marginalized and of women.
- iii. Quota-plus strategies: While economic, social and political quotas are necessary for women and other marginalized groups, disadvantages also need to be addressed by putting the following on the development agenda: unpaid care, addressing identity-based harassment at schools, hospitals, the work place and political spaces, and infrastructure that takes into account diversity.
- iv. Legislation/Policy on Participation/Accountability: Legislation on the Right to Participation (legislation, policy, budgeting, monitoring), Right to Information, and Public Interest Litigation is necessary for citizen engagement.
- v. Walking the participation talk: All human rights committees (including CEDAW) could convert their concluding comments into visual form (with limited text), and governments and civil society could translate both the written and visual versions into local languages, and broadcast them on the radio and television.

Specific attention was also given to *ownership*. Sustaining development gains in an inclusive way requires that people take ownership and control of their lives from an economic, social and environmental perspective. From a medium-term and long-term perspective, development cannot be dependent on aid but rather it must be achieved through the empowerment of people.

A contributor highlighted the importance of *responsible citizenship* for development; everyone should exercise their duty and rights in this regard. Young people have a special responsibility to claim their citizenship rights and duties. Sustaining development gains in an inclusive way also requires that people exercise individual responsibility from an economic, social and environmental perspective. From a medium-term and long-term perspective, development cannot be dependent on aid but must be achieved through the empowerment of people.

### ***Inclusive economic development***

*A range of economic institutions* (including cooperatives and collectives, trade unions and community organisations) and economic policies (particularly labour and fiscal, but also trade and financial) were highlighted by a few participants as important facilitators of or preconditions for inclusive development.

Some participants stressed the importance of *enhancing youth employment*. This requires improving the efficiency of the education system by stepping up efforts to have higher quality human resources, educational infrastructure and teaching materials. The establishment of public-private partnerships should be strengthened for the training and employment of young people, especially young women, and resources need to be mobilized for providing financial support to entrepreneurship projects. The private sector has a key role in providing employment opportunities to young people.

*Sustaining technological growth* was detailed by a few participants. Developing or obtaining new and more efficient technologies is an important factor for sustainable economic development. These include technologies for food and food security, energy and information and communications. Exchange in human ideas is necessary for advancing the state of the art, creating (inclusive) mechanisms for people to benefit from the utilization of specialized knowledge possessed by others.

A contributor focused on *green and inclusive economic growth*. Government should take initiatives for a cleaner environment and greener and more inclusive economic growth. It is also important to change the mindset of waste-generating communities, making them more responsible regarding waste resource recycling and the green urbanization process.

Many participants highlighted that *cooperative enterprises*, as membership-based, autonomous, independent, democratic, collective institutional arrangements, are an effective means to enhance inclusive development, especially for those living in remote areas and in vulnerable communities. There is ample evidence from Africa to the Americas as to their effectiveness in improving access of small producers to markets and delivering a range of much needed services (financial, housing, social services). The key drivers of their success have been their needs-based nature - joint solutions to common problems for a group of people that create economies of scale and allow for negotiation through collective voice.

Unleashing the full potential of cooperatives requires, among other measures: recognition that cooperative enterprises are a well-suited model of business to deliver Sustainable Development Goals; inclusion of specific targets and indicators related to the promotion and development of cooperatives in member countries; access to specific implementation measures and programs including funding; and participation of co-operative structures in discussions and decision-making processes. Specific measures needed include an enabling legal and policy environment, integration of cooperatives in public and private procurement of services and the recognition of the cooperative business model in achieving development goals.

A participant highlighted that inequalities are the result of *missing or incomplete agricultural policies*. In some countries, the focus has been on industry and services while the food production has been given a low priority and is only looked at in terms of exporting primary commodity goods. Because of this, in some countries critical food grains have had to be imported even though they could have been easily produced domestically. Often these imports are not distributed well and do not help to resolve scarcity or high prices. As a result, the local food prices went up, hitting especially the poor. Agricultural policies in such countries lack incentives for certain crops, lack overall coherence, and lack a model where universities, companies and government do research together.

The promotion of *tourism to promote social and economic development* was detailed by another contributor. An interesting best practice is represented by Ruta del Tequila in Guadalajara, Mexico, which is a mixed public and private entity whose purpose is to boost the social and economic development of a destination through tourism. Local actors have conceptualized and implemented a participatory model to foster the development of an integrated process where tourism development, preservation of local cultural heritage and social cohesion are its most important pillars. The model is promoted by the private sector, which is allied with the public sector to promote the region's development. The model's main strength has been its ability to involve and integrate the work private and public stakeholders.

### *The role of culture, capacity development and resilience*



A contributor highlighted the *role of culture in inclusive development*. Respect for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue can forge more inclusive, stable, peaceful and resilient societies. Development is shaped by culture and local context, which ultimately also determines its outcomes. Through culture, the participation of individuals and communities can be stimulated and ensured, thereby encouraging the ownership of public policies. For this reason, the cultural dimension should be systematically integrated into sustainable development and the definitions of well-being, as well as into the conception, measurement and actual practice of development policies and programmes. Fostering cultural participation contributes to promoting active citizenship. Culture-related projects contribute to the empowerment of women and youth. While directly or indirectly contributing to the achievement of gender equality, such projects can foster innovative attitudes while responding to local contexts at the same time.

The importance of *good education* was highlighted. A good general education, coupled with access to financial instruments, as well as strong institutions and a functioning democracy, were cited as important for promoting equality. Factors that exacerbate inequality include differences in academic achievement resulting from differences in the student environments. To promote inclusion, societies should promote good education and training for all, as they promote social inclusion and engagement in society.

Many contributors focused on *human resource development/training*. This is a key element for empowering people in developing and emerging country contexts to manage local resources and raise awareness of their own development process, thus setting a foundation for concrete and long lasting advancements. Training is also a tool not only for specific goals, but also for the broader national system where it encourages a gradual enrichment of the relations between donors, partners and beneficiary subjects.

A participant focused on *score cards and social audits*. Score cards on services and service providers, social audits of programmes and public hearings on the functioning of existing government policies or legislation are other mechanisms for inclusive participation.

Several participants highlighted the importance of *strengthening resilience*. Building resilience to hazards includes installing early flood warning systems, strengthening infrastructure, such as hospitals and school buildings, safe homes, and vaccinating children. Resilience can be enhanced through the creation and strengthening of community structures. Countries need to ensure that their communities are equipped to prepare for and respond to emergencies, and that disaster plans include all community and family members.

A participant highlighted the importance of *disaster risk reduction strategies*. The poor, women, children and persons with disabilities, are disproportionately affected by natural disasters and chronic stresses that can wipe out years of development gains and entrench households in seemingly endless cycles of poverty. To be sustainable and address poverty and inequalities, development policies and plans must account for risks. Inclusive development requires an approach incorporating disaster risk reduction strategies from the outset because risks cannot be separated from our daily lives.

A few participants highlighted the importance of addressing *climate change*. The effects of climate change have impacted negatively on poor communities through drought, high temperatures, low agricultural production, the drying up of river basins and streams used for drinking or agricultural use. Addressing climate change is a long-term risk-reducing strategy.

### III. Issues for policy consideration

- i. Respect for human rights is crucial for pursuing national development goals, as well as accelerating progress in the MDGs and consolidating the gains. States should guarantee all human rights and a life free of discrimination, recognizing the rights of persons with disabilities, access to health, education, work and employment, an adequate standard of living and social protection, and participation in political and public life.
- ii. Government and international institutions should take measures to ensure the active participation of the poorest and most marginalized so that they can fully contribute to and benefit from the development of their communities and the betterment of their societies.
- iii. Inclusion cannot be achieved without a restructuring of social constraints that maintain the exclusions. The change of societal structures will enable a more equal and inclusive society.
- iv. States should promote equality to enhance inclusive development. The global gender gap, gender bias, gender disability and gender domination need to be resolved in order to achieve the MDGs. Empowering women, ending discrimination against women and promoting gender equality are crucial for poverty eradication.
- v. Good governance and effective public administration should aim at preserving social cohesion and promoting social stability, especially through democracy, the rule of law and the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- vi. Legal frameworks for accountability are essential in broadening and deepening political, social and economic participation of all.
- vii. A new inclusive global partnership that involves governments and the private sector and includes representation from the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sectors should be established. Government should also provide more opportunities to the private sector, NGOs, and community organizations to share their experiences from the field and have a real influence in policy making.
- viii. Responsible citizenship is essential for development. Sustaining development gains in an inclusive way requires that people exercise individual responsibility from an economic, social and environmental perspective.
- ix. A range of economic institutions and economic policies are important facilitators of or preconditions for inclusive development. Cooperative enterprise is an effective means to enhance inclusive development, especially for those living in remote areas and in vulnerable communities.
- x. Countries should enhance youth employment through improving the efficiency of the education system and the establishment of public-private partnerships.
- xi. Human resource development/training is key for empowering people in developing and emerging countries. Good education coupled with access to financing instruments equipment, as well as strong institutions and a functioning democracy can reduce social inequality and promote social inclusion and engagement.
- xii. Strengthening resilience to hazards is crucial for sustainable development. Countries need to ensure that their communities are equipped to prepare for and respond to emergencies, and that disaster plans include all community and family members through adaption of disaster risk reduction strategies.

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