



Social Development and Agenda 2030

Overview & Outcomes

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the United Nations Summit in New York on 25 to 27 September 2015. The 2030 Agenda is a broad and universal policy agenda, with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 169 associated targets which are integrated and indivisible. Building on the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda aims to guide Member States to transform their approach to achieve inclusive, people-centred and sustainable development that leaves no one behind.

Implementation of the new Agenda for sustainable development requires a more holistic, coherent and integrated approach at the national, regional and global levels. Policies to implement the new Agenda need to address inter-linkages within the social sector, as well as between the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Similarly, existing institutions or institutional mechanisms working in the field of social development should adjust or expand the scope of work to accommodate the new mandates arising from the post-2015 development agenda.

Recognizing the need for strengthening the social dimension of sustainable development, Member States, during the 53rd session of the Commission for Social Development (February 2015), urged to enhance policy coherence: 1) within social sectors (i.e. poverty eradication strategies, policies to promote employment and decent work and social inclusion, policies to enhance access to quality education, basic healthcare, safe drinking water, sanitation, group specific policies – youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, etc.); and 2) through integrating social policy/perspectives into broader and more complex policy-making processes, and vice versa, incorporating economic and environmental perspectives into social policy-making.

Introduction

The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of UNDESA organized an expert group meeting on “Social Development and Agenda 2030” from 21 to 27 October 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York to assist DSPD/DESA to better support Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The meeting produced concrete, action-oriented recommendations for strategically guiding the effective integration of the social dimension of sustainable development in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In specific, the meeting:

1. Analyzed the Sustainable Development Goals with a social lens, and identified options for reviewing the progress of their social dimensions in order to achieve inclusive social development objectives;
2. Identified areas that require greater policy coherence to effectively address inter-linkages and create synergies among the three dimensions;
3. Reviewed how to address specific needs of (or how to involve) vulnerable social groups, in particular, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, as cross-cutting issues in the implementation of the 17 SDGs, and
 - a) Examined how to harmonise the implementation of the SDGs with the implementation of and follow-up to existing policies and instruments related to social groups (i.e., conventions, treaties, you policy, etc.) into 17 Goals.

Recommendations

Recommendations to guide the Commission for Social Development in shaping its work in the context of implementing of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals:

1. **Increase awareness** among policymakers on the importance of addressing the linkages among Sustainable Development Goals and targets, and address key issues such as:
 - **Critical interlinkages** with strong socially driven components and/or solutions: Inequality – poverty – vulnerable employment – inclusive social protection; inclusive growth – decent work; vulnerability – health – poverty – social protection; informal employment – vulnerability – agriculture/rural development; access to universal & quality social services – social protection – reduction of poverty and inequalities; vulnerable employment – inclusive urbanization; inequality – inclusive society
 - Reducing **inequality**: As a reduction of inequality requires addressing various factors across the 17 Goals, the Commission could articulate these factors and the need for strong and comprehensive social policy frameworks for ensuring a coherent approach to tackling inequality.
 - Reducing informality: Initiate an analysis of **informal employment** issue, identifying indicators at the national level; synthesizing the evidence on what measures are effective in increasing formalization; and analysing the trade-offs of moving to non-contributory social protection;
 - Simultaneous **double inclusion**: promoting the labour and productive inclusion of working-age adults (decent jobs) with access to social security (health and pensions), while at the same time promoting social inclusion of the entire population by ensuring

access to quality social services (health, education, water and sanitation, etc.) to guarantee at least a minimum level of welfare to all (social protection floor);

- **Universal social protection systems** ensure that people can exit from specific poverty reduction programs but never lose their right to social protection. The Commission could strengthen its work on promoting social protection with a focus on the impact of the investments in social protection.

2. *Monitor progress* of the implementation of the social dimensions of sustainable development:

The Statistical Commission of the UN, in consultation with all stakeholders will set, in 2016, verifiable indicators towards the targets of the SDGs, while Member States are encouraged to develop national strategies, which will be part of a review process coordinated by the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Functional commissions are also expected to contribute to the thematic review of progress and provide feedback to the HLPF.

As such the Commission could consider complementing its current review of social progress with the following:

- Advocate for the importance of ensuring that issues of social justice are effectively accounted for in measuring progress in achieving the SDGs.
- Ensure effective and integrated monitoring of social progress breaking down the silos (among sectors, actors, processes) and create a space for dialogue among various stakeholders.
- Assist the national statistical systems to monitor progress on the social dimensions of SDGs by providing policy analysis and priorities, and further promote data disaggregation.
- Complement numerical data with analytical case studies at the local level, especially for those areas/groups where data is unavailable or limited, and develop effective narratives, linked to a set of meaningful indicators, with which people can relate to at the local level.
- Analyze the impacts of social, economic and environmental policies on the well-beings of people.
- Maintain critical perspectives, especially when the issues related to vulnerable social groups are being left behind/slipping away.

3. *Explore opportunities* for making discussions at the Commission for Social Development more related to other ongoing processes and more participatory, to ensure greater influence on decision-making processes by all.

- The Commission should **serve as a forum for promoting people-centred development**: ensuring “leaving no one behind” and addressing inequality in its all dimensions.
- The Commission should address reducing inequalities through comprehensive and transformative policy frameworks that meet agreed social objectives. The Commission should explore identifying elements of a global social contract that brings all stakeholders to mutually agreed social objectives that are coherent with

economic and environmental objectives. (Other organizations such as ILO and the World Bank also call for a global social contract.)

- Develop strategies to **enhance the visibility** of the Commission as well as the level of participation (provided that the constituencies for social development are broad, ministries of education, health, labour, social welfare, family, social inclusion, social groups, including youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, etc.) . In this context, the Commission should give thought to the following:
 - The format of Member State engagement
 - The depth and breadth of civil society engagement in the work of the Commission
 - Strengthening the format of resolutions and other outcomes to promote concrete actions
 - Absorbing other social groups that do not have home inter-governmental bodies

- In order to achieve “leaving no one behind”, CSocD could **provide an open space** where non-state actors, academic and science communities, NGOs, and the private sector could participate on an equal base.
- ***Better communicate the work of the Commission (reports, EGMs, discussions, outcomes) to wider audience both inside and outside the UN system.*** The Commission could consider using NGOs more effectively to amplifying the key messages/outcomes of the Commission. (Sharing information however is the first step, and opportunities for further collaboration should be explored.)
- **Explore new ways of doing business.** As the 54th session is the first session after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the Commission should take this opportunity to comprehensively review its methods of work. The SDG process has been very inclusive and collaborative, and the Commission could carry on and build on it. (Strengthen the linkage with the work at regional levels, ESCAP Social Conference (every 2 years in May), ECLAC will launch a new Social Development Conference: 2-3 November 2015, and also create working groups among Member States)

4. *Promote horizontal integration* (sectoral) as well as **vertical integration (national & local) to ensure policy coherence and an integrated approach to social development:**

- Ensure that all the stakeholders involved in national development planning and implementation have a shared understanding of the meanings of goals and targets, their interdependence and linkages, and strengthen participatory mechanisms through which socially agreed coherent strategies for SDGs are established.
- Promote vertical integration in the various approaches to achieving sustainable development (From local through to international)
- Convene local government players to understand effective models for sustainability that meet strong social objectives.

5. *Build effective partnerships* with the civil society and local governments, as their role will become increasingly important to make the SD process more accountable: including CSOs, Faith-based Organizations (FBOs), social groups (youth, women, older persons,

persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples), workers organization, farmer's organizations, the private sector, etc.)

- Develop a common set of criteria for partnerships (i.e. MOU, TOR, or accountability mechanisms) with FBOs, NGOs, the private sector, and donors. (Additional resources should not be the sole criteria.)
- Create incentives to act together.

6. *Secure resources* for social development:

- Discuss and ensure that resources necessary for the implementation of the social dimension of sustainable development are secured by more progressive taxation schemes, and capturing the illicit financial flows.
- Build a strong case and increased capacity for increased funding for social sectors and universal access to quality social services, including home-base care work, and a minimum level of income.
- Explore opportunities for increasing private capital for social sectors, while also enhancing the regulation/monitoring mechanisms.

7. *Strengthen national capacity* in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development:

- Ensure greater integration of the SDGs in the national planning and budgeting frameworks in different countries (this process started during MDG implementation and should continue)
- Increase integration of SDGs with regional frameworks such as Africa Agenda 2063 and the first 10-year working plan
- Strengthen the role of local governments in the implementation of SDGs.

8. *Facilitate exchange* of examples of policies and practices that have proven to be successful in various regions as well as good local initiatives. Develop a social policy dashboard, based on this information that can be used as a resource for policy development and implementation.

Participating Experts

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- ❖ **Sanjay Reddy**, Associate Professor of Economics, The New School for Social Research
- ❖ Vinicius Carvalho Pinheiro, Deputy Director, International Labour Organization (ILO) Office for the United Nations (New York)
- ❖ **Carla Muscavi**, Director, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

- ❖ Deborah Rogers, President, Initiative for Equality (IfE) and Affiliated Researcher, Stanford University Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (IRiSS)
- ❖ **Cecilia Rossel**, Professor at the Social and Political Science Department of the Catholic University, Uruguay
- ❖ **Rolph van der Hoeven**, Professor at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), of Erasmus University, The Hague, and former Manager of the technical secretariat of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization
- ❖ **Saurabh Sinha**, Chief, Employment and Social Protection Section, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- ❖ **Ilcheong Yi**, Research Coordinator, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)
- ❖ **Gordon Betcherman**, Professor, School of International Development and Global Studies, University of Ottawa
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- ❖ **Bahira Trask**, Professor and Chair, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, University of Delaware (family)
- ❖ **Werner Obermeyer**, Deputy Executive Director, World Health Organization (WHO) Office to the United Nations
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- ❖ **Roberto Foa**, Harvard University
- ❖ **John Mathiason**, Adjunct Professor, Cornell Institute for Public Affairs, Cornell University
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- ❖ **Elliott Harris**, Assistant Secretary-General, Head of the New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
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- ❖ **Monica Nogara**, Capacity Development Office, DESA
- ❖ **Ryo Nakamura**, Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests
- ❖ **Bette Levy**, Treasurer, NGO Committee on Social Development
- ❖ **Margo LaZaro**, Co-Chair of the NGO Committee on Sustainable Development
- ❖ **Daniel Perell**, Representative, the Baha'i International Community New York Office, and member of the NGO committee on Social Development