

# **EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON PROMOTING SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

**Helsinki, Finland 8-10 July, 2008**

## **Draft summary**

### **Introduction**

At the outset of the expert group meeting, it was noted that social integration stood at the core of the 1995 World Social Summit with the Copenhagen declaration identifying it as the third pillar of social development conducive to poverty eradication and employment creation.

Recognizing its importance, the Commission for Social Development established 'social integration' as the priority theme for its 2009-2010 review and policy cycle. The Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the government of Finland, convened an expert group meeting on 'promoting social integration' to explore how societies could become more inclusive and what policies were most effective at promoting social integration and inclusion. The experts were to provide an independent opinion on the priority theme and inputs to the draft recommendations for the forthcoming Report of the Secretary-General.

For the Finnish hosts, the expert group meeting was a continuation of the Arusha process started by the 2005 conference in Arusha, Tanzania which focused on generating dialogue on social policies to promote sustainable livelihoods, inclusive and accountable institutions and cohesive societies in developing and transition countries. The conference emphasized the Scandinavian welfare state dimensions including equity, participation and inclusion.

The Finnish government representatives emphasized the importance of sustainable development in the context of social inclusion, taking into account its environmental dimensions and noted that people should be agents of action for sustainable development. All individuals had to be equal partners in development to realize their local and national potential and create a society for all.

Experts noted that the Millennium Development Goals turned out to be much narrower than the Copenhagen agenda and that in the process of establishing new targets and goals, the importance of the social agenda has diminished. Nevertheless, in many countries, measurable social goals were established, including social inclusion targets focusing on doing away with social exclusion.

Several questions were posed as to what extent can exclusion be considered an inversed projection of social inclusion. Are policies eliminating exclusion sufficient to achieve social inclusion? How can we operationalize the concepts of social integration and social inclusion? What specific recommendations can we offer Governments to advance social integration?

## **SOCIAL INTEGRATION/INCLUSION/COHESION EXISTING FRAMEWORKS and RELATED CONCEPTS**

### **Definitions**

There are many regional, intergovernmental and country-specific definitions of 'social integration', 'social inclusion' and 'social cohesion'. Although the definitions vary, it is useful to have a clear distinction between the concepts in order to make them operational.

Some experts pointed to the lack of clarity on what the UN meant by **social integration** and what frameworks could promote it, quoting the general nature of the concept provided by the Copenhagen Declaration defining it as "fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security, and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people."

A somewhat shortened version of that definition was generally accepted by the participants -"social integration is the process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic and political life on the basis of equality of rights, equity and dignity." In a socially integrated society all belong and all feel that they belong and have a stake in society. In a socially cohesive society there is also a clear consensus on what creates a social compact with acknowledged rights and responsibilities for all citizens.

**Social inclusion**, which should be regarded as both an objective and a process, was seen by the experts as an action Governments can take to create more integrated societies. **Social cohesion** could be equated with the existence of a harmonious society or a societal capacity to ensure the welfare of all its citizens. It could also be understood as the willingness of individuals to cooperate and work together at all levels of society to achieve collective goals.

Experts noted that social integration was a multidimensional, systemic and transformative concept with economic, physical, natural, economic, human, social, democratic and cultural components.

Several limitations to the concept of social integration were observed. Integration may sometimes be understood as forced assimilation to the dominant culture of a given society. Indeed, there were two basic ways of achieving integration: by force or by accepting diversity of individuals and groups. In the past, assimilation was often a method of choice to bring marginalized groups into the mainstream of society, often with disastrous consequences. Many groups, including the indigenous people, would like to retain their identity and react negatively to the attempts of 'integrating' them into the mainstream of society. That is why their preferred term of use is social inclusion not integration. In fact, in the international parlance, the term of social inclusion seems to be more preferable as well.

Sometimes, social inclusion is defined as a process leading to removing differences, but we have to realize the inevitability of the existence of differences. We should then aim at minimizing rather than removing unacceptable level of differences in a society. In fact, a socially cohesive society should accommodate differences, rather than aim at removing them. The bottom line is that social integration should not be associated with assimilation and differences have to be acknowledged, not ignored.

Following Copenhagen, group-specific mandates advocating group interests have emerged. Some experts felt that some groups may be exclusive of others, lobbying Governments to promote their own interests only. They noted that overemphasizing the specific needs of groups may reinforce the fault lines in a society; instead we need to find ways of bringing to the society people who do not exercise their right of citizenship. Others asserted that in the context of exclusion and fragmentation we should be careful not to ignore specificities of exclusion for certain groups. We must address the needs of specific groups without stigmatizing them or over-emphasizing their problems.

It was also observed that we should think back to the origins of the concepts prior to 1995, when the notions of exclusion and inclusion were related to people's relations to the state and were closely linked to the notion of citizenship, social justice and solidarity with emphasis that social integration related to all citizens, not specific groups or identities.

Experts cautioned against assuming that we already have societies geared towards inclusion. There may be systems in any given society where Governments can be faulted for responding to certain constituencies and neglecting others. 'Inclusion' into such systems may then be problematic and perpetuate the existing power relations.

Concerning **social exclusion**, participants observed that it was often produced by institutional discrimination and other forms of rejection that leave out persons or groups from the mainstream system of economic, social and political relationships. Social exclusion may mean exclusion from decent work, assets, land, opportunities, access to social services or political representation. It may mean the lack of voice or capacity to actively participate in the life of a society. Some patterns of exclusion may also be reinforced in family settings

## **Current trends**

Experts noted that there were new worrying signs of growing social exclusion, including recent violence towards immigrants in several African countries, pointing to people's growing lack of tolerance towards 'others'.

We can witness multiple reasons for exclusion like shifts in the global production patterns resulting in increased labour migration, separating families and pushing people into marginal groupings. In today's environment, there also is a push from the margins at social mobilization. The case in point may be the acceptance of terrorist organizations as legitimate providers of social services for the marginalized. In this context, it was pointed out that as long as people perceived themselves as excluded they would challenge authority and seek support from organizations that voice their concerns.

Several experts emphasized the relation between **inequality and exclusion** stating that factors that deepen inequality may lead to segregation and neglect resulting in exclusion. Some forms of exclusion can be politically charged and should be addressed without creating resistance and hostilities.

There are many forms of exclusion, including political, economic, cultural and spatial. Exclusion can be based on gender, age, disability, unemployment, poverty or cast. Socially excluded groups may comprise urban slums dwellers, workers in the informal economy, persons with disabilities or other marginalized groups and individuals.

In many parts of the world people living in rural areas are on the margins of society. Governments do not provide services to those areas; neither do they establish tax collection systems there. As a consequence, people are neither beneficiaries nor contributors to the society at large and cannot be regarded as true citizens with rights and responsibilities.

Social integration is a highly desirable outcome reflecting a strong institutional foundation and a culture of acceptance. Several experts suggested linking social inclusion to the concept of development, defined by Amartya Sen as the process of expanding human freedoms, i.e. freedoms associated with avoiding deprivations, being illiterate or enjoying political participation. In the process of social integration we should eradicate privilege and stereotype; all

should have access to rights and freedoms as part of a community, irrespective of their personal attributes or geographic origin.

The hierarchy of needs in any given society should be addressed. The fulfillment of basic needs, including physical safety, access to clean water and basic income were essential to human well-being. Some experts felt that without fulfilling such basic needs, social integration cannot move forward.

Some experts noted the difficulty of creating unity within diversity in many societies. People have different personal attributes, including socio-economic class, age, gender, political views, religious beliefs, ethnicity and cultural traits and geographic origin. Sometimes discrimination and rejection may be rooted in their beliefs.

A rise in crime and illegal activities such as trade in children, women and cultural resources were noted as consequences of social disintegration. Many communities were run by illegal crime networks, shutting people out of many forms of participation in their communities.

Experts pointed out that Governmental policies often address mostly economic dimensions of integration. In fact, in many countries marginalization and vulnerability have increased due to low priority attached to social aspects of policies and over-reliance on economic goals as key determinants of policies.

Policies promoting employment creation and poverty reduction alone do not force out of place factors that inhibit the social inclusion of particular groups in the mainstream of society. That is why we need to put in place policies taking into account social, political and cultural aspects of inclusion. Social integration can only be addressed in a holistic manner and investment in physical, social and cultural capital must be made to achieve it.

Among other approaches with a potential for social integration **democratization of culture** was mentioned, which meant inviting marginalized people into mainstream culture. Another approach that had more potential for social integration was cultural democracy which not only invites marginalized people to participate but also creates a new and equal space for marginalized cultures or newcomers to society, to introduce their own cultural practices to society not just joining the existing system but bringing their own contribution to the system.

Major issues on the global agenda should be included when discussing social integration. Among them, preparations for environmental risks and preventing social disintegration in case such risks materialize. The role of information technology and its potential for both inclusion and exclusion was noted as well.

## **Migrants**

Studies point to the fact that homogenous societies with no ethnic minorities seem to be better at achieving social integration. Further, a large presence of immigrants in any given country may be considered a threat to social cohesion. Thus, multicultural societies face a particular challenge of integrating different individuals and groups into the mainstream of society.

It is important to take into account that people have multiple cultural identities that often need to be respected. Not only how society welcomes immigrants but what is expected of them as citizens or prospective citizens is important.

The trends of increased regional migration were noted, such as those within South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Regional migration was greater than inter-regional migration, including that to Europe. Regional integration was seen as a way of promoting economic activity and establishment of a physical infrastructure.

Such trends in regional integration evoked the question of cohesion, namely what will hold the societies together and what stake can the migrants count on in a society in terms of rights and responsibilities.

Several experts warned that there were no serious attempts to facilitate the movement of labour while the free movement of goods was facilitated. Experts also noted the importance of differentiating between labour migration and temporal migration. The role of regional integration should be emphasized, as well as the need for regional agreements to facilitate regional migration and harmonize labour laws to have them reflect on migration policies.

Migration was too often seen solely from the perspective of receiving countries. We should consider it from a perspective of countries of origin. The challenge was how to encourage Governments to support migration in the countries of origin. The impact of migration on the countries of origin changes over time. Remittances are often followed by investment in new businesses, transfer of technological know-how and reintegration into the country of origin. Well-integrated immigrants can contribute better to both hosting country and the country of origin. Such integration, though, should not mean losing the link to their countries of origin.

Experts took note of the fact that exclusion was not limited to the unskilled migrants. Since skills are mostly non-transferable across borders, people well trained in their professions are often prevented from working in their respective fields. Thus a large number of immigrants are highly skilled but have to perform

menial jobs. That may be considered a form of exclusion as well. To remedy this situation, portability of skills was noted as a factor contributing to social inclusion. It is essential to introduce policies for re-qualification of skilled migrants in the host countries.

### **Collective action**

Experts noted that it was often difficult to use the traditional forms of mobilization for workers' rights in the current conditions of race to the bottom. Work and employment, however, can mobilize people for collective action, not just through trade unions. People could mobilize around resources, land, social protection or better conditions at work. When workers in the informal economy organize, they employ different tactics than those of trade unions, using the language of social justice and social security. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that without some degree of security it is hard to exercise voice.

We need new kinds of collective action encompassing many stakeholders, including Governments, civil society and the donor community. New ways of engaging civil society and the building of responsible citizenship where everyone has rights and responsibilities should be elaborated. All are responsible for creating an enabling environment in which civil society actors can become active agents and build capacities empowering groups to mobilize.

## **POLICY CHALLENGES**

### **Existing approaches to promote social integration/social inclusion**

It was widely acknowledged that patterns of exclusion could be addressed through education. Compulsory education for all was quoted as a common socially integrative policy and the importance of investing in education for all, including migrants was essential to bring about greater inclusion. Experts noted that hostility towards others is often perpetuated through educational curricula, thus it is vital that the entire educational system is geared towards addressing the patterns of exclusion. Inter-generational transmission of values and knowledge at family level was important as well.

School curricula promoting diversity should be established. An example of schools in Canada was noted where a curriculum on world citizenship has been introduced, offering students theoretical understanding of how we fit in larger global community.

The educational impact of religious leaders was mentioned as well. Sometimes religious communities are seen as enforcing exclusion. The role of

religious leaders, leading their constituencies and contributing to social integration should be explored further.

## **Rights based approaches**

Many human rights instruments advocate rights that promote social integration. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights establishes citizens' rights to social protection, food, education and health. Similarly, the ILO conventions set out core labour standards conducive to social inclusion. Consequently, some social integration objectives could be established on the basis of human rights conventions.

Experts warned, however, that a human-rights based approach to social integration may not be very practical since it is difficult to establish practical goals on the basis of the conventions alone. Instead, goal setting should be based on expected and measurable outcomes.

## **Social protection**

Social protection is one of the central measures to prevent disintegration and promote inclusion and integration. It has both defensive and developmental functions, providing much-needed basic income or access to services and breaking away from the inter-generational cycle of poverty in the long run. Specific channels of transmission of social protection may lead to social inclusion.

In terms of developmental or generative social protection, it can generate outcomes which contribute to economic objectives (livelihoods), human development objectives (capabilities) and citizenship objectives. In order to be effective though, it has to be designed to do so. Thus understood social protection with the aim of empowering people is a strategy for inclusiveness.

Social protection is often linked to the individual's place in a given society, like the employment status. The consensus emerged, though that to be socially inclusive, social protection should be based on citizenship rather than other attributes.

Some experts took note of the ILO initiative on a global social floor which would include health insurance, pensions and universal child transfers, helping to break the inter-generational patterns of exclusion. However, some experts felt that it may be more applicable at the regional rather than the global level.

Social protection mainly addresses those who are vulnerable, but the vulnerable are not only the poor. We may all be vulnerable at certain times in life. Vulnerability may provide for cross-cutting action in a way that poverty reduction may not and social protection may offer a common platform for



addressing vulnerability. Experts agreed that the most vulnerable groups in dire need of social protection included children and women in rural areas.

The design of social protection schemes is very important. We should avoid stigmatizing people. Targeting may stigmatize people and unwillingly contribute to social disintegration. On the other hand, special needs of specific groups should not be neglected but still included in the overall design of national social protection frameworks. Continuation of targeting and conditional cash transfers should be based on evidence that they produce desired outcomes.

It is important to be aware of the urban bias of social protection provision and ensure that social protection reaches people living in rural areas, in some countries representing more than 80% of the population.

It was equally important to address the negative bias against social protection in many societies, equating it with waste and creating inefficiencies. Social protection provisions in some European countries were not high on the agenda; instead support through services was preferred, including such mechanisms as active employment schemes or child care provisions instead of unemployment benefits and child allowances.

Social protection should be seen as an investment, not an expense. Research indicates that social protection is affordable and there is evidence from the OECD countries that cash transfers reduce poverty. Moreover, the cost of not providing social protection may be greater than the cost of its provision. We need evidence based analysis, however, to convince Governments that this is the case.

Concerning financing of social protection systems, it was suggested that the 20/20 formula should be revisited. As the OECD countries move towards the provision of 0.7% of their GDP to aid, it could be used to finance social protection. Also, Governments could direct their incremental tax revenue for social protection to enable people to adjust to transition.

Effective social protection requires that design and implementation capacity come together. We need to redefine what was construed in the past, when social protection was equated with social welfare. We should aim at developmental forms of social protection that can bring about economic and social benefits and identify and promote positive externalities rather than reinforce dependencies.

We should also identify the roles of different stakeholders in the design and implementation of social protection policies. While the role of the state is diminishing, it should still be regarded as central in mobilizing other stakeholders including international donors.

Among such stakeholders, the private sector is especially important in supporting social protection provision through viable social security reforms,

including the reform of the pension system. However, it has been difficult to bring the private sector on board and make it realize that it is in its interest to invest in social programmes.

### **Political and economic inclusion policies**

Experts noted that political inclusion policies aiming at greater democratization and decentralization were seen as promoting social integration as were **affirmative action** policies often needed to even out historical inequalities and thus promote social integration.

Economic inclusion policies including ensuring the right to decent work, employment guaranteeing labour schemes and public work programmes were noted as well. Some experts pointed out that **micro-finance** schemes have the potential of generating non-economic impacts and some already provide services that are part of social protection, including health services. More social impacts should be built into the financial considerations when designing microfinance schemes and their delivery. Better targeting to reach the poorest in the most remote places is important as well.

### **WAYS AND MEANS TO DEVELOP NATIONAL CAPACITIES IN POLICY FORMULATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION**

During the discussion on the ways and means to develop national capacities in policy formulation, implementation and coordination the experts noted that **universal policies** often do not work. They may be good as an overreaching principle but efforts have to be made to reach all. According to the Commission on the Legal Empowerment of the Poor, three billion people are currently deprived of their legal rights. Universal policies clearly do not reach them.

It was noted that, socially inclusive policies enacted by Governments through legislation may fail to evoke a response from society. The case of India was quoted, where 60 years of affirmative action did not result in greater inclusion or doing away with the entrenched cast system. The issue is how the society responds to such policies and how both Governments and civil society can mobilize support for action and enact socially inclusive policies.

It was noted that the European Union countries were required to establish and carry out **national action plans** for social inclusion. Such plans should relate to the country's level of economic development and address particular challenges it is facing. In some it may be the high level of unemployment and poverty, in others the issue of integrating immigrants.

Designing social policy for inclusion should take into account the role of the democratic, economic, social and cultural factors in contributing to integration and inclusion. Policies promoting social inclusion should be transformative, resulting in specific outcomes promoting integration. Both investment and outcomes should be measurable through quantitative and qualitative indicators, obtained from both objective and subjective data.

Several participants noted that often, within Government, civil servants had their own agendas and it was hard to convince them that there was a link between social protection and economic development.

Civil society organizations, on the other hand, seem to be more flexible and do not need to follow a set of rules the way governmental entities have to. Thus they can contribute to the design, implementation and measuring of the specific social inclusion goals in a more practical way.

On the issue of resources, an example of South Africa was given, where financial aspects research examined corporate taxation and tax-subsidies. When tax subsidies for health insurances were examined, it was found that the individuals enrolled in private health insurance schemes were given twice the amount of subsidies as those in the public health care system. The amount of people benefiting from such arrangements was only 15% of the population. Such financial inequity was brought to the parliament and was taken up by civil society.

The question of private sector investments, like those originating in BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India and China) has been raised. Such investments are far larger than those by the donor community. The question was how to bring private investment to promote socially inclusive policies.

The experts agreed that more efforts should be made to expose **corruption**. It can be achieved by educating civil society organizations, such as women's associations, youth, social pensioners and others about their rights. Once educated, they can create a powerful lobby to expose corruption. It was noted that in some societies corruption was accepted and a demand for good governance had to be generated first.

## **POVERTY ERADICATION & EMPLOYMENT CREATION**

Experts noted that poverty reduction and decent work are often seen as pathways to social integration and greater inclusion. It was the lack of opportunities for decent work that made it difficult for people to be fully integrated into a society and unemployment and abject poverty caused social

disintegration where people became alienated from society. Those discriminated against on the basis of geography or gender faced particular difficulties.

Some factors leading to social exclusion include:

- feminization of poverty
- informalization and casualization of employment
- increased rural to urban and international migration
- rise in inequality

Unemployment can be both the cause and a consequence of social exclusion. The causes of such exclusion need to be carefully examined. Often, Governments wrongly assume that unemployment is transient in nature and people can make personal provisions for times of unemployment.

New worrisome trends in the labour markets have been noted. The number of working poor has increased, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The poor are mostly employed, yet cannot lift themselves out of poverty. Employed mostly in the informal sector, they often face more hazardous working conditions. It may be said that informal sector workers cannot be considered fully integrated in a society.

Experts observed that poverty was rooted in structural and historical contexts and inequality deepened both poverty and exclusion. Both causes and symptoms of poverty and exclusion need to be addressed. Until this is done, we will be incorporating people into faulty systems.

More women are said to leave their countries to engage in care-work. Mostly female migrants from Africa and South Asia find work as care professionals, such as those caring for the elderly in Japan. They dislocate themselves socially from their own communities and live in insecure conditions without formal contracts or a guaranteed minimal wage. Reintegration into their communities is becoming increasingly difficult

Since 1995 there is a trend of casualization and feminization of labour. In some parts of Africa, in the absence of adequate work, there are different production systems coexisting. Social exclusion results in crime and a variety of illegal activities further compromising certain categories of people and shutting them out.

Experts noted that questions of rights of ownership, land, property, and access to productive resources, capital, and technologies all relate to inclusion. Those issues were of special importance in the **rural areas**. The problems of rural aging and agricultural policies for sustainable development needed urgent attention as well.

## CONFLICT/FRAGILE/STATES

Concerning social integration in post conflict and fragile states, the expert on the topic suggested that the term 'crisis state' could be preferable since the notion of crisis is broader than the concept of conflict itself.

There are three basic categories of conflict:

- Civic conflict
- Civil conflict resulting in different forms of exclusion including displacement
- Inter-state conflict when boundaries are transgressed

The majority of conflicts today are civil conflicts. In crisis and fragile states Governments may lack the legitimacy to exercise control over large parts of the state. Thus rehabilitation of the state itself is indispensable for inclusion. In the aftermath of conflict, or in states of unstable societies people may assume certain identities ensuring their belonging to certain groups and ascertaining their effective exclusion within certain societies.

In post-conflict situations social integration is often understood as efforts towards rebuilding of state institutions and reintegration of soldiers and youth into the society. Socially inclusive programmes, however, should also address ways to overcome trauma, rebuild trust and sometimes change societal values.

There is a lot of potential in relating the social inclusion agenda to the human security agenda. In the context of state fragility, it is worth revisiting the notion of citizenship when not only a state abdicates its responsibilities, but citizens as well (eg. by engaging in illegal activities).

Peace-building missions often are quite eager to introduce liberalization reforms. It is important, however, to create institutions conducive to such reforms prior to such attempts. We need to take into account the state the society is at to accept reforms and inclusion. We may have to think of incremental stages to introduce economic, political or social interventions.

Participants observed that exclusion may lead to conflict and proper mechanisms facilitating mediation, resolving tensions and fostering systemic inclusion were necessary. Addressing the needs of women, children and youth, who were especially vulnerable in conflict and post-conflict situations, should be a priority. At the same time it was important to rebuild social capital and recognize

the role of women in rebuilding post-conflict societies. Good interventions had to take into account the causes of conflict to begin with.

In the effort of rebuilding post-conflict societies there is an issue of reengaging of communities through the rebuilding of infrastructure. Cash for work may be a good strategy in such situations.

Involvement of social networks is especially important, as is building on local capacities. Interestingly, the experts noted that programmes designed as cash transfers often did not achieve the expected objectives, but programmes that were designed at asset rebuilding worked.

Experts also noted that a fragile society may exist in stable states, like Brazil, where violence in slum areas exists and where crime networks provide social services.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

In the discussion on monitoring and evaluation, the experts attempted to suggest potential approaches to measuring social inclusion. They noted that it was important to develop specific indicators for social inclusion. Such indicators were essential to measure progress of socially inclusive policies and ensure accountability. In case of implementing a specific policy, we should not only make sure that we are doing it right. We have to make sure that we are doing the right thing and that our policies have the expected outcome.

The development of robust indicators of social integration, social inclusion and social cohesion is significant for policy change. While quantitative and statistical indicators for some forms of economic integration like employment and income data exist, other types of indicators that are more qualitative in nature and that measure social integration including levels of life satisfaction, civic engagement, trust and cultural participation are less readily available.

More problematic is the lack of clear conceptual grounding that would provide a theoretical modeling of the linkages among various economic, political, social and cultural variables contributing to social integration. Until there is a consensus about the systemic aspects of social integration, it may be difficult to develop adequate indicators justifying the commitment of resources.

General types of indicators include:

- Input indicators (accounting for the funds spent)
- Output indicators (results achieved)

- Impact indicators (practical impact on people)

Other indicators identified by experts as indicative of the level of social integration include:

- Labour readiness
- Unemployment rate
- Home ownership and public housing availability
- Level of property rights
- Access to justice
- Existence of dispute resolution mechanisms
- Level of engagement in community organizations
- Public trust in political, economic, educational and justice systems
- Level of reciprocity (sharing, volunteerism, mentoring, charity contributions)
- Access to information
- Level of homelessness
- Level of physical and mental well-being (including the suicide rate)
- Credibility of non-for-profit and subsidized services and organizations (how do they account for their tax-free status by the quantity and quality of services provided)
- Perception of political legitimacy of the Government (democratic inclusion)
- Human security indicators (security of jobs, incomes, food)
- Level of personal development

It was noted that there were numerous indicators related to various aspects of inclusion, such as the freedom of participation index by Freedom House. Concerning the measurement of social inclusion indicators, it would be useful to run experiments with beneficiaries. The World Bank offered impact analysis focusing on how people respond to particular interventions. Results-based management (RBM) systems based on outcome evaluations and the Millennium Development Goals targets and indicators were noted as useful to measure certain aspects of inclusion as well.

Some experts noted that data collection was often not well developed in many countries and that the statistical departments did not have the capacity to collect information. Strengthening of the capacity for data collection was thus essential.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

During the discussion on recommendations, the initial arrangement of categories and headings used in the draft recommendations into political inclusion, economic inclusion, social protection, governance, capacity development, enabling environment, fragile societies and indicators was found not to reflect the complexity of the issues under discussion. For example 'economic inclusion' was thought to be both confusing and limiting in terms of the issues needing to be addressed.

Several elements omitted from earlier discussions were identified as warranting further emphasis. For instance, cultural dimensions of social integration could be included in 'enabling environment' but also had relevance under social integration.

The category of 'indicators' was expanded to incorporate 'monitoring and evaluation' so as to better inform member states and other stakeholders who would be involved in refining and gathering data and to satisfy information on policy process requirements. It was also noted that indications of process or outcomes of social policy merit greater prominence and could be achieved through the clustering of existing and new indicators around policy elements as well as stakeholder interests.

Experts agreed that the recommendations should be grouped around the following areas:

- Political dimension
- Capacity development
- Enabling environment
- Socio-economic dimensions
- Social protection
- Cultural dimension
- Fragile societies (including early warning systems and spill-over effects to neighbouring countries)
- Monitoring and evaluation, including indicators

### **Overarching concepts and cross-cutting issues**

While it was agreed that globally relevant recommendations on social integration could not afford to copy approaches more suited to western societies and well-developed economies, it was acknowledged that certain policy areas could be managed by actors other than states alone. It was therefore important to promote a participatory approach that included all state contexts and did not favor any particular category of state issues or approaches.



Experts noted that the preamble to the recommendations could adopt an integrated approach to presenting the area of policy as intersecting with different issues and in this way, set up the structure that aligned policy types with various suggested strategies. For instance, cross-cutting issues such as sustainability, human rights, cultural diversity, stakeholder interests, climate change, global food crisis and others all have links to various indicator clusters and this complexity needs to be prominent. Combined categories or clusters of indicators could be considered in terms of principles to guide integration or inclusion policy.

## **Terminology**

As an outcome of the debate in Copenhagen, the terminology agreed upon refers to 'social integration'. The majority of experts supported the usage of this term rather than a further refined concept of 'social inclusion'. Arguments for and against the use of this term were re-examined and a conclusion reached that an operational lexicon could be provided to offer consistent terminology for all member states to consider adopting. The eventual meaning of any terms will stabilize if their usage is consistent within the final report and if/when adopted by member states and other stakeholders.

## **Sustainability**

It is important to acknowledge that what Governments can deliver is driven by their local national focus and capabilities. The enabling role in promoting inclusiveness through social policy is shared by states and other actors who need to respond effectively to several over-arching issues arising from social integration efforts. Sustainability within this context is crucial to the adoption of social integration and associated policy directions by member states.

Laudable policies developed from ideologies that ignore local capacities and the forces that drive market economies have proven to be less viable and received little acknowledgement within global economic reform. Within these reforms some mention is made of social integration and the need to develop a society for all, however many declarations and policies since the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948) have achieved little by way of substantial policy outcomes. Member states already committed to generating good policy for their citizens also need to ensure that social integration is included as far as possible as part of their market economy and that it remains central to their planning for national development.

## **Building upon existing policy**

Experts noted that recommendations needed to be careful not to replicate existing policies or imply that member states should replace their existing policies. We need to start with what has been agreed and build from there. Recommendations to stakeholders therefore need to encourage good governance

and answer the following questions: (i) What is the policy? (ii) How is it to be implemented? (iii) When is it to be implemented? and (iv) By whom is it to be executed?

### **Political dimensions, capacity development, enabling environment**

In the discussion on the political dimensions of inclusion, the right to participation and the right to representation by all groups through specific actions, such as affirmative action or the use of quotas was noted as important for politically inclusive policies promoting social integration. Experts also noted the importance of basic rights and portability of rights across national borders.

The issues of transparency and the public's right to information were raised as well. Experts agreed that citizens were entitled to be informed about their rights and a Government's actions affecting those rights. Specific 'rights to information acts' could be implemented to help fulfill this requirement.

The use of media and ICTs could be considered a sub-aspect of the right to information. The experts cautioned, however, that the usefulness of ICTs as a tool for conveying information and promoting inclusion depended on the societal level of literacy and infrastructure in place. Moreover, attention was called to safeguarding against unwelcome influences of ICTs

Participants noted that social exclusion could lead to poverty while bad governance and political exclusion led to both poverty and social exclusion. Thus efforts should be made to reach out to marginalized groups, stamp out corruption and engage in genuine partnerships with all stakeholders, including civil society organizations.

In the interest of encouraging civic engagement and to promote mechanisms for the advancement of marginalized groups, public, parliamentary and civil society forums for dialogue with Government should be promoted. Resources for the participation of excluded groups in such forums should be provided.

### **Socio-economic dimensions**

Consensus was reached that it was important to build on current international mechanisms such as the basic human rights instruments and other covenants dealing with health, education, food, security and decent work. Nevertheless, the focus of attention was on people and groups at risk of exclusion rather than extrapolating details of established strategies. Some strong views were expressed as to what constitute 'basic human rights' as included in the international agreements and instruments.

Under the over-arching goal of preventing life-long marginalisation, lengthy discussion occurred on the topic of promoting productive employment and in particular options for encouraging Governments to address the casualisation of labour and unpaid work of family members including women and children. Reference was made to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention on Home Work. It was suggested that the following strategies were worth consideration in the context of employment and social integration:

- Supporting employability such as assisting people to be job ready
- Providing opportunities for life-long learning
- Promote employment creation including self-employment
- Ensuring safe working conditions
- Creating incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises (through credit provision, technical assistance, tax breaks and other measures)

The importance of existing legal frameworks including core labour standards was noted. In order to address casualisation of labour and unpaid work of family members, especially women, experts recommended that member states ratify and implement the ILO Convention on Home Work. Implementation of other core labour standards, including those on minimum wage and child labour were noted as critical as well.

The experts noted the potential of micro-finance schemes for employment creation that would take into account the existence of vocation and installed capacity for entrepreneurship at a local level.

Participants emphasized that Governments should identify key employment strategies for vulnerable groups, especially women, youth and migrant workers. They also agreed that Governments should be reminded of their duty to support the provision of basic social services, such as health services, sanitation, and drinkable water in the context of the socio-economic aspects for social integration.

## **Social protection**

Social protection was extensively discussed as a broad measure promoting social integration. Experts agreed that the goal of social protection was to promote sustainable societies and therefore it was a principle cutting across all dimensions of social integration (e.g. workers' protection also related to economic dimensions).

There was some debate as to who should be included in social protection coverage. Some participants claimed that only those who did not have the capacity for economic involvement required social protection. An alternative view was presented in terms of the effect of global financial markets on employed people who were forced to extend their use of credit in order to provide housing

and education for themselves and their families and who, as a result of rising interest rates and a volatile employment market, were very close to being thrown into poverty and homelessness if they became unemployed.

The primary responsibility for social protection lies with the state, which acts in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as community, family, private sector and non-profit sectors, micro-finance institutions and civil society organizations.

It was agreed that social protection policies needed to meet certain criteria, inter alia, sustainability; feasibility; a rights-based aspect; judicious management; community support and a communication strategy that informs the community and enhances its ability to participate and benefit from policies. For instance:

- Health services should be non-discriminatory and provide protection for at-risk people and families such as those affected by HIV/AIDS
- Governments should support reproductive rights, including fertility control and acknowledge that women should have control over their fertility within the family

It was emphasized that Governments should design social protection programs that pay particular attention to the vulnerability of children so as to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Among the issues discussed, experts recommended that the Governments may consider to:

- Promote universal social protection to address vulnerability and offer transformative support to enable a transition from exclusion to inclusion, both for groups and individuals.
- Provide social protection transfers to households in the form of social assistance, pensions, child benefits and health insurance
- Review the actual coverage of social protection schemes, including a role for the private sector and civil society organizations, so that the public sector can fill in gaps of coverage and plan its funding accordingly.
- Support a global, regional and/or sub-regional social floor for vulnerable groups including financing for basic health care, income support and care for children and income security for older persons and persons with disabilities.

## **Cultural Dimensions**

The major themes within the discussions on the cultural dimension of social integration revolved around a rights-based approach to social policy which

recognised the importance of citizenship and encouraged social participation in policy consultation and implementation.

Reference had to be made to existing human rights covenants and declarations as a means of ensuring that specific policies on cultural heritage were not used as a tool for identifying and reinforcing the vulnerabilities of certain groups and therefore facilitate social exclusion. Cultural identity can itself reinforce voluntary exclusion if it is regarded as having a higher standing than citizenship.

By promoting the ideals of citizenship, which could be superimposed on cultural dimensions, it is possible to reinforce the principle of unity in diversity within an environment of social justice.

Consensus was reached that Governments should adopt an inclusive approach to citizenship. Discussion included problems with groups in some societies not being recognized by the state and also an acknowledgement of the complexities within state systems regarding criteria of eligibility for citizenship.

Experts agreed that culture and cultural heritage in particular had the potential to reinforce exclusion or be a tool for social integration. A case in point were migrants, who may become excluded or exclude themselves from society at large if proper socially integrative policies are not implemented.

Experts noted that it was vital to engage with different stakeholders including faith communities to promote social integration and cohesion. They also noted the importance of media to promote social integration and mentioned that it was vital to encourage cultural, sporting and other leisure activities that celebrated diversity and promoted inclusion.

## **Fragile societies**

Experts agreed to use the term 'fragile societies' rather than 'fragile states' as it includes people and stakeholders beyond Governments. The central policy notion for fragile societies relates to particular attention being paid to resources to reinforce state infrastructure during crisis and to ensure the safety of vulnerable groups. Such attention would include capacity development for effective governance, stakeholder participation, monitoring and evaluation of emergency strategies, strengthening social protection and providing consultation on all aspects of crisis response

There are vulnerable communities in every society, whose needs must be addressed by their Governments. Fragility at the national level can be caused in several ways, the most common arising from natural disasters and wars.

Natural disasters can cause upheaval in social infrastructure and undermine the ability of Governments to assist people in an effective way. Citizens with existing disabilities are especially vulnerable in a disaster environment.

Wars and conflicts, especially civil wars which are currently the most prevalent type of conflict, affect those directly involved in the fighting but also those who are preyed upon as a consequence of war, such as women, who become victims of sexual violence and children at risk of becoming child soldiers and whose suffering and trauma remain long after the conflict is resolved.

The spill-over effects of war to neighbouring states also accentuate fragilities within individuals, groups and societies which result in inflows of refugees, famine and disability.

The world is also experiencing emerging vulnerabilities that can affect states not usually considered fragile or at risk. These include climate change and increasing likelihood of natural disasters, the food crisis and current global financial instability including rising prices of fuel and food. Such new risk factors make socially integrative policies even more vital.

Capacity-building could be achieved by promoting a level of self-efficacy within the population as well as building social policy and infrastructure that enables people to be aware of and to participate in all aspects of community activities. Indicators of social functioning would need to be more process than outcome oriented and would also need to be applicable to states experiencing fragility and those at risk of becoming fragile.

The experts recommended:

- Regional consultation with neighbouring states to establish joint operational response strategies for disaster response and population safety
- Strengthening the role of civil society organizations and communities to better participate in operational response to natural disasters

At the national level capacity building could include:

- Promoting awareness raising policies aimed at increasing and reinforcing the awareness of individuals towards their personal conditions with special reference to the opportunities and accessible resources that may benefit them as well as to the social risks they may be exposed to
- Actively combating stereotyping and discrimination
- Encouraging access to social services by guiding attitudes through education, media campaigns and other relevant strategies
- Formal and informal inclusion of social integration into educational programs
- Ensuring that social services availability is inclusive and incorporates anti-discrimination and civil fairness principles

Prevention or at least preparation for readiness for disaster or conflict response includes being alert to the early warning signs and taking effective steps to prevent or reduce the negative impact of natural and man-made disasters on the population and on state infrastructure. It is recommended that

states consider the following as part of their disaster prevention or early warning systems:

- Examine socio-economic, emergency and humanitarian policies to estimate the impact of global and national causes of fragility as well as the longer term impact of social policies on health and social infrastructure
- Set up monitoring and early warning systems to anticipate and intervene in potential conflict situations and to design appropriate strategies to provide sustainable governance in risk situations
- Plan for contingency measures to prevent the dislocation of citizens in environments disrupted by disasters or conflict
- Encourage donors to support asset building, social protection and other sustainable infrastructures in fragile societies
- Build social protection provisions for the eventuality of conflicts and civil strife
- Build the link between social integration and emergency relief and humanitarian measures and the long-term rehabilitation and strengthening of social protection and health infrastructure
- Plan for the support of persons with disabilities who are often marginalized during emergency relief

Experts noted that the basic rights of citizenship should take precedence over authority of warlords, patriarchal leaders, traditional authoritarian rule and other vested interests and recommended to the Governments:

- Networking with women as an entry point for policy action on reconstruction and rehabilitation of post-conflict situations
- Tapping on traditional systems of local consultation and representation for reconstruction and rehabilitation work
- Prioritize, as appropriate, both slum areas and rural areas as targets for social inclusion/integration policies due to their potential for social fragility

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to track progress made in the area of social integration. As such, member states should assess their progress through the identification of qualitative and quantitative methodologies and indicators which can measure the processes such as intensity of participation, as well as the end results or policy impact. Appropriate methodologies ensuring rigorous approaches should be applied to the analysis of particular data, generating useful information to inform policy development.

Participants agreed that the several indicators are already in existence and could be used. An appropriate theoretical framework is available through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and with the addition of a further MDG on social integration, many of the issues hampering monitoring and evaluation could be resolved. Using this framework it will be possible to provide detailed breakdowns of goals, targets and indicators to reinforce current frameworks and extend contemporary conceptualisations of social inclusion and social integration.

Experts recommended:

- Formulating an additional Millennium Development Goal exclusively related to social inclusion, providing a detailed break down of goals, targets and indicators and/or
- Strengthening the social inclusion dimension of current MDGs monitoring and introducing new types of indicators to capture the vulnerability of certain groups

Monitoring and the subsequent evaluation of data collected is key to the development of strategies to access social inclusion or exclusion data on people and groups and also, to estimate the extent to which social integration may be occurring. Data access can be limited if indicators are either inconsistent or produce aggregated results that have limited applicability to certain regions or groups.

Governments should strive to develop and adopt standardized data frameworks to enable international comparisons of social phenomena which could facilitate more effective donor and national responses to emerging social issues.

Approaches to policy formulation and review need to include clear goals, objectives, timeframes, targets and indicators with relevant stakeholders. It is also necessary to elaborate measurable outcomes and provide some indication of the resources needed to build national capacity to analyse and respond to findings.

## **Process monitoring**

Experts agreed that social phenomena can be difficult to measure in ways that produce useful information. Thus improved methods are needed to measure social integration. The benefits of developing such a process of measurement allows for comparisons over time and between different social groups involved in similar policy approaches. If definitions are operationalised they can be used to measure actions and progress or impact of policy in defined areas.

Existing indicators are often used by Governments and others to determine the status of social integration and inclusion, despite the fact that many of these indicators may not have been designed to provide such insights. It is possible to draw upon existing indicators, linking them to historical and contemporary data collections, and combining them in a way that describes certain social phenomena such as the functioning of families as a unit of social integration. Results from such analyses can be made available to the general public as well as



to researchers and bureaucrats. Existing indicators collected at the national level in many western countries have developed over time from the original concepts of 'social cohesion' where the results of policies in terms of demographic manifestations were the focus rather than the processes which led to their formulation.

By clustering selected existing indicators which have considerable historical accumulations of data, it is possible to gain some insight as to the effects or outcomes of social integration policies. By preserving connections with established data collections, a strong basis for the next iteration to social integration analyses is retained. For example, to monitor the family as a social unit and to determine the extent to which families are functioning well, data on family structure, family formation and stages, family care and health decisions could be combined and expanded upon.

Equally, the process of social environments that support personal development and lifelong learning could be monitored through existing indicators of education experiences; employability, and civil and legal awareness of rights and responsibilities. Participation in society, community or local regional areas could be monitored using existing indicators on home ownership, living arrangements, involvement in interest groups, public meetings, access to entertainment and the exercise of voting rights. Whether people feel connected with their community or society could be gauged using current indicators such as volunteering, sharing of knowledge and skills, charitable donations or interaction with neighbours, friends and family.

Monitoring and evaluating emerging threats to social integration within a community or region could use current data on homelessness and availability of shelter and supportive accommodation. It could also include the habitation of slum areas or poorly maintained premises, and patterns of infections, mental illness and suicides. Data on crime or disorderly conduct for a particular area could also be used in a process cluster as an early warning system for social disintegration. Further indicators of processes associated with social inclusion could focus on the services and organisations with some responsibility for working with disadvantaged groups and individuals in danger of social exclusion.

Concerning monitoring and evaluation, the experts recommended that the Governments consider:

- Establishing a policy environment that supports evidence based policy development and program accountability
- Identifying research priority areas on particular elements of social inclusion that will further inform their national policy development
- Undertaking capacity building and development of personnel in national statistical systems and research institutions so that they are able to fully analyse and utilize existing primary data and collect new data
- Supporting civilian scholarship and research literacy development to enable effective participation in policy processes

- Strengthening commitment to resource allocation for statistical analysis and independent social research related to accountability, performance, impact, behavioural and process indicators of social integration
- Providing of adequate resources to independent researchers who are not involved with service planning or implementation
- Formalizing coordination between ministries and research institutions to enable independent research findings to be used to improve policy monitoring and evaluation processes
- Building upon existing data collections such as national censuses, to gather data that can be used for monitoring social inclusion, gender equality and health equity
- Providing multi-lateral support for knowledge and skill-sharing around data collection, and the provision of financial and skills resources to data-poor countries
- Promote wide dissemination of results of social integration evaluation to the general public as well as across networks of professional and civil society organisations
- Using disaggregated data on gender, age, ethnicity, location and other specific categories of social exclusion for monitoring policy inclusiveness

There was widespread agreement among the experts that a UN focal point for social integration should be established to emphasize research and scientific support for indicator development and usage at national and international levels. Obviously this would also address some of the issues around the need for clear concept definitions that would facilitate policy implementation processes.

In concluding remarks on policy implementation the experts noted that it was especially important to reduce the lead time between the establishment of policies, their implementation and concrete outcomes and that the engagement of and communication between different branches of Government, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, was imperative for any inclusive policies to succeed.