

Side event proposal
For the UN General Assembly and MDG Special Event
September 2016

Title: Measuring and Tackling Poverty in all its Dimensions

Conveners:

South Africa—Ambassador Jerry Matjila
Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network¹ (“the Network”)

Purpose / format:

Presentation of the national and global Multidimensional Poverty Measurement Index (MPI) in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by a panel of Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers from countries members of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN, or “the Network”). South Africa will showcase measurement innovation in tackling poverty

Keynote Speakers: (TBC)

Panellists: (TBC)

Moderator:

South Africa

Social Media:

Over the past year the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network has expanded significantly in Africa and South Asia. This expansion has seen the growth of social media coverage of multidimensional poverty. The MPPN secretariat and the MPPN members (of 40 countries) will publicize the event through their channels of communication. We will actively use twitter and Facebook as well as live stream the event. Other actions to increase awareness of the Side Event will include outreach in multiple web platforms, including the social media of OPHI, the Network and those of partner government webpages, plus Twitter, Facebook and Bloggers. We will also host an online discussion with the participants in the Network, representing 40 countries prior to the Side Event.

¹ Ministers and senior officials from over 35 countries currently participate in the Network, including: Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Germany, Grenada, Honduras, India, Iraq, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, St. Lucia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay, and Vietnam. Participating institutions include the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

Description:

The concept of multidimensional poverty is now widely accepted. Multidimensional poverty is named in the proposed SDGs under Goal One (Goal 1.2.2) as “end extreme poverty in all its forms, including hunger, child stunting, malnutrition, and food insecurity.” In addition, many governments have adopted a national multidimensional poverty index as an official measure of poverty, mostly used to complement income measures. It has also become increasingly apparent to governments that poverty includes more than just income.

Sustainable Development Goals have broadened the concept of poverty to include poverty in all its dimensions. Now there is broad interest on the part of governments in adopting national MPIs and in adopting a global MPI for the measurement of poverty across countries. Ministers and senior officials of 40 countries participating in the Network have endorsed the proposed Global MPI 2015+ as a way forward for this task.

The Global MPI has been discussed widely as part of the Inter Agency Expert Group process. The Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), the MPPN and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), as well as a number of countries from Africa, Latin America and Asia have proposed the incorporation of a global multidimensional poverty index into the SDGs. The following issues will be presented and discussed in this Side Event:

- How does multidimensional measurement work at the National level? The governments of Mexico, Bhutan, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador and Pakistan have adopted official multidimensional poverty measures. There are a significant number of other countries, such as the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay, Senegal, Seychelles and Tunisia, in the process of doing the same.
- What is the relationship between a Global MPI 2015+ and national measures of poverty?
- How is global multidimensional poverty to be measured in the SDGs? Should it be a Tier One Indicator? The Network/OPHI have presented a draft survey instrument to catalyse debate on how this would be done.
- What new data and mechanisms would be required and collected by which agencies?

“We are almost blind when the metrics on which action is based are ill-designed... For many purposes, we need better metrics.” Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen & Jean-Paul Fitoussi

Background:

The governments of Bhutan, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Pakistan, as well as the state of Minas Gerais in Brazil and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, have adopted official multidimensional poverty measures. South Africa has developed the South African MPI (SAMPI). And a rapidly increasing number of countries, including China, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay, Philippines, Malaysia, Seychelles, Senegal, Tunisia and Vietnam, are developing their own MPIs. At the United Nations, the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) with OPHI has pioneered an initial version of the global

MPI since 2010. In 2015, Goal 1.2.2 of the SDGs directly talks about poverty in all its dimensions. Clearly, the idea that poverty is about more than just income is now widely accepted.

The presentation and discussion on “Measuring and Tackling Multidimensional Poverty within the SDGs” will highlight the existing work and thinking being undertaken on multidimensional poverty by national governments, especially South Africa, Ecuador, Senegal, Colombia, the Pakistan, China and Mexico.

The session will build on the work of the country participants in the MPPN and of international agencies such as the UNDP, the World Bank and UNICEF. The session will present practical tools for building national MPIs as well as a new, global multidimensional poverty index. National Governments are showing the practicality and usefulness of national MPIs for policy purposes. The MPPN country members will show the usefulness of a Global MPI to complement national measures. Discussion will be held on how international agencies and governments can work together to implement such a new measure. UNDP, World Bank and UNICEF engagement will be highlighted.

Expected outcomes:

Outcome 1

Presentation and discussion of the use of National MPIs, both to meet Goal 1.2.2 and to design better policies to tackle poverty.

Outcome 2

Presentation and discussion of the relationship between a global MPI and national MPIs, building on the work of the governments that are implementing multidimensional measures of poverty.

Outcome 3

Exchange about how the various actors of the international community (governments, international organisations, academia, civil society organisations, and the private sector) can contribute to the institutionalization of multidimensional poverty measurement into the SDG framework