

Accelerating Global Actions for a World Without Poverty

United Nations System-wide Plan of Action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)¹

¹ This plan of action was developed by inter-agency focal points for the Third UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027) over the course of 6 months in 2018. It was introduced by the Secretary-General to the Chief Executives Board at its meeting on xxxx 2018. A shorter version of the plan of action was presented to the seventy-third session of the General Assembly and is contained in document A/73/298.

I. Introduction

1. Despite considerable progress in reducing extreme forms of deprivation in many countries since 1998 when the First UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty began, ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions for all people everywhere, remains a major and urgent global challenge. It is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and the realization of all the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. Current trends do not point to a degree or speed of advance that would end poverty by 2030. The continued exclusion of people living in poverty and vulnerable or marginalized groups from the benefits of growth, and from political processes in general, has contributed to their increased vulnerability and limited their ability to invest in strengthening the resilience of their livelihoods. Not only are people and countries being left behind, but in many different contexts they are being pushed further behind by the impact of a variety of forces, including globalization, technological developments, climate change and other forms of environmental degradation. Many countries, particularly the least developed, still lack the productive capacity for a growth path of sustainable development.²

3. In view of the need to accelerate global actions for a world without poverty to achieve the SDGs, the General Assembly proclaimed 2018-2027 as the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.³ This plan of action addresses the request of the General Assembly for details of the response of the United Nations system to the theme of the Third Decade, including an inter-agency, system-wide plan of action to coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system. It contains recommendations concerning how to make the Decade effective in support of the poverty eradication-related internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

II. Background

4. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the entities of the UN development system have individually and collectively focused their strategic planning and programmes on its implementation. General Assembly resolution 72/279 (paragraph 5) on repositioning of the United Nations development system “calls upon the entities of the United Nations development system to strengthen capacities, resources and skill sets to support national Governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and, where relevant, build capacities and expertise across United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to promote progress on those Goals lagging behind, in line with respective mandates and building on comparative advantages, and reducing gaps, overlaps and duplication across entities.” The recommendations in this plan of action therefore utilize expertise and poverty-related follow-up mechanisms and processes within existing structures and available resources. They also draw on an extensive process of consultation within the UN system and the discussions of an Inter-Agency Expert Group Meeting on the theme “Accelerating global actions for a world without poverty” held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 18 – 20 April 2018.⁴

5. This process showed that the UN development system has in place a wide range of actions supporting Member States drive for the eradication of poverty in all its forms. They include on-the-ground projects and programmes, research, policy analysis and development, capacity building, the improvement of national statistical systems, the preparation of sustainable development indicators, the mobilization of financing for development and, importantly, awareness-raising and advocacy regarding the potential of actions to meet the scale and urgency of the poverty eradication challenge. In most cases, these actions are embedded in UN organizations’ two-year programme and budget documents and supporting detailed workplans. Actions underway in 2018 and 2019 were therefore mostly prepared and approved in 2017 or before. Longer range strategic plans cover four to five years. As part of the UN reform process, the planning, programming and budgeting cycles of system entities are increasingly aligned.

6. The main value-added to ongoing UN system action that could be mobilized by a Third Decade is the promotion of integrated actions that exploit potential synergies in existing programmes and plan for further joint actions in successive cycles over the period to 2027. Such a focus would serve to reinforce the emphasis in the 2030 Agenda on the interconnections between the SDGs and thus the importance of integrated and coherent policy

² Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011 (A/CONF.219/7), chap. I.

³ A/RES/72/233

⁴ Information on the meeting can be found at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/2018/04/11/egm-poverty/>

approaches for the acceleration of progress towards the eradication of poverty. General Assembly resolution 72/279 also calls for alignment of both agency programmes and inter-agency pooled funding for development with national development needs and priorities, as well as with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

7. The Decade 2018 to 2027 is the core period for action to realize the 2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals. Many of the least developed countries where poverty is most widespread and deep will see a continuing growth in population in this decade. Of the slightly more than one billion increase in the world's population up to 2030, around 90 per cent is expected to be in the low-income countries of Africa and Asia where poverty in all its forms is most entrenched.⁵ The young women and men who have recently entered the workforce or will reach working age during the Decade, particularly those living in these countries, represent a key resource for action to end poverty. In the lowest income countries, reaping this demographic dividend of an increasing share of people of working age in the total population, requires concerted action to raise the productive potential of the workforce, especially young women and men, and ensure their fullest possible employment. Conversely, failure to meet the aspirations of poor young women and men for a life free from the trap of poverty could further exacerbate social and political tensions within and between countries making sustainable development harder to realize.

8. As the General Assembly has emphasized, poverty takes many forms. While income poverty is of critical importance, and is more susceptible to measurement, increasing our knowledge of the multidimensional nature of poverty and thus the actions needed to tackle all forms of deprivation is an important part of system-wide action. This includes efforts to measure multidimensional poverty in internationally comparable ways and the need to gain a more complete understanding of how individuals and families move out of poverty and the risks they face of falling back. United Nations regional economic commissions have made notable progress in capturing several dimensions of poverty in their research and analysis. Expanding the evidence on multidimensional poverty with analysis of regional measures such as for Latin America and the Caribbean and recently for the Arab Region, show that when the analysis of multidimensional poverty is tailored to capture regional dimensions, the narrative on poverty and vulnerability changes significantly.⁶

III. Objectives

9. Although national policies are the primary means by which Member States address the scale and complexity of the challenge of eradicating poverty in all its forms everywhere, the UN system can provide important support to national authorities and civil society. Furthermore, by encouraging collective action on a global scale, a multiplier effect can accelerate progress towards poverty eradication in all countries. Given the range of poverty-focussed actions already underway or planned by entities of the UN system, including as part of the integrated follow up to the 2030 Agenda, it is vital that the objectives of a system-wide plan of action for the Third Decade be carefully specified in terms of means of action as well as outcomes in order to maximize effectiveness and avoid duplication.

10. Following consultations within the UN system and benefitting from the insights of the Addis Ababa inter-agency expert group meeting, this plan of action for the Third Decade focuses on issues on which strengthened operational and policy integration by the UN system could yield improved support to Member States priorities and capacity to pursue institutional and policy coherence.⁷ In this regard, a particular focus is proposed on promoting collaboration across the UN system on policy issues where an integrated approach has most salience and addresses key issues in transforming development processes. Experience with existing system-wide action plans can inform the identification of key objectives and core principles for collaborative interagency action.

11. An overarching theme is the building of policy frameworks that contribute to accelerate investment in sustained poverty-reducing inclusive growth through the transformation of low to higher productivity work. An initial selection for focus is outlined in Part II of this plan of action. However, as recognized by the General Assembly, new issues will emerge over the course of the Decade and individual Member States may request integrated system-wide support on other topics reflecting their specific national development needs and priorities. This plan of action thus addresses mechanisms to ensure that it is dynamic over the Decade by enabling UN

⁵ United Nations. 2017. World Population Prospects, the 2017 Revision, Key Findings and Advance Tables, New York

⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2017. Arab Multidimensional Poverty Report. Beirut. E/ESCWA/EDID/2017/2

⁷ See paragraphs 99 and 100 of the HLPF 2018 report on Synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies: Note by the Secretariat

organizations to plan, programme and resource integrated system-wide actions that support Member States' drive to eradicate poverty in all its forms.

12. As stressed repeatedly in the 2030 Agenda, transforming current growth paths is a necessary condition for the poverty eradication and all the other Sustainable Development Goals. Such transformation requires coherent and integrated policy frameworks nationally and internationally. The main operational objective of the inter-agency, system-wide plan of action for "Accelerating Global Actions for a World without Poverty" is to promote integrated programmes by the UN system which support Member States in transforming development trajectories onto a sustained and sustainable path of poverty reducing growth. Such programmes enable the combining of different fields of expertise of UN organizations so that impact is multiplied. An example is the CEB Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth in which 23 UN organizations led by ILO have formed a platform to catalyse partnerships, collaboration and co-ordination action grounded in evidence-based research.⁸

13. The chain of causality from integrated UN programmes to accelerated progress towards poverty eradication is not, of course, direct and national policies, for example, are likely to have a bigger impact than UN system support programmes. Nevertheless, the outcome objective for the Decade must be that countries where poverty in all its forms is most entrenched move on to an inclusive and sustainable growth path that yields improved well-being for the poor and reduced inequality. Arguably this is the most serious challenge in realizing the goals of the 2030 Agenda. A focussed campaign by the UN system during the Third Decade could thus add momentum to the global drive for implementation of the poverty-related SDGs. Part of this campaign is support for the improvement of data collection, indicators and methods of evaluation of the impact of UN support.

14. The framework for the system-wide plan of action to accelerate progress towards the eradication of poverty is composed of guiding principles, means of action, areas of initial policy focus and modalities of delivery.

IV. Principles

15. The plan of action is founded on 10 basic principles which will guide the work of the UN system collectively and the individual contributions of system entities:

- (a) Poverty is multi-dimensional in the forms it takes and its underlying causes, and new forms are emerging;
- (b) Integrated economic, social and environmental policies are needed nationally and internationally;
- (c) Sustained and inclusive economic growth that narrows inequalities is necessary and entails structural transformation to generate full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- (d) Respect for internationally recognized human rights is an essential foundation for action;
- (e) Gender mainstreaming is vital for policy design and implementation;
- (f) Discrimination, marginalization and exclusion are major causes of poverty and the barriers to the full participation in society and the economy of poor people and people in vulnerable situations, and must be removed;
- (g) Inclusion and empowerment of those left behind is a priority, targeting those furthest behind;
- (h) The role of the United Nations is to support nationally owned strategies and strengthen capacities for the realization of internationally agreed development goals and targets, including the Sustainable Development Goals, based on high-quality research and the promotion of good governance, human rights and the rule of law;
- (i) The United Nations development system organizations will bring together their special expertise and policy portfolios to focus on integrated system-wide action that enhances efficiency, coherence, impact and adaptability to emerging trends;
- (j) Inclusive and strategic partnerships based on these principles will pull together resources and deliver action globally, regionally, nationally and locally.

⁸ For more information see: <https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/>

V. Means of Action

16. In designing the plan of action, important lessons were drawn from past experience of policy integration and emerging plans, including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda to strengthen the means of action of the United Nations system. These include:

- (a) **Joint research.** Evidence of the linkages between levels of educational attainment, health status and participation in productive employment can inform integrated strategies for health care, education and the transition from school to work. Similarly, studies of the poverty-reducing potential of “green jobs” can provide a solid basis for a shift towards environmentally sustainable development;
- (b) **Monitoring and reporting on the indicators for poverty eradication-related Goals.** The plan of action will help Member States to monitor progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (c) **Dissemination of information.** A system portal to gain access to information on research and integrated poverty eradication programmes and their impact will help Member States and United Nations organizations to realize more fully the potential of collaboration across policy fields. Organizations will also be encouraged to similarly establish a poverty eradication webpage on their own websites to group together information on their activities in support of the Third Decade;
- (d) **Promoting integrated programmes.** In addition to promoting existing integrated programmes, the plan will build on research and experience to facilitate the identification of the scope for further integrated programmes and their development;
- (e) **System focal points.** Nomination by each organization of a focal point to collaborate with counterparts on the implementation of the plan. This team of system focal points will be coordinated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs;
- (f) **Capacity-building.** Improved training on integrated policymaking and implementation for national officials and United Nations staff;
- (g) **Incentivizing planning for integrated programmes.** The plan of action will incentivize collaborative work by entities of the United Nations system to implement integrated programmes.

VI. Areas of policy focus

17. The plan of action has seven thematic policy areas that focus on actions that drive the structural transformations essential to sustained, inclusive and poverty-reducing growth.

a) Structural transformation, productive employment and decent work in the context of a changing global scenario

18. Productive employment and decent work remains the basic route out of poverty for individuals, communities and societies. Full and productive employment generates increasing consumption and saving which drives investment and thus sustained growth. Rising income enables the tax base to be enlarged so that public investments in the social and physical infrastructure, including in greening the economy, can be financed. However, underemployment, unemployment, informal work, poor-quality employment, vulnerable employment and working poverty remain major concerns in emerging and developing countries, dampening efforts to achieve poverty eradication.⁹

19. Profound changes in the world of work are being brought about by a wave of innovation in digital technologies, artificial intelligence and robotics which, coupled with the impact of demographic change and

⁹ See World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2018, ILO
http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2018/WCMS_615594/lang-en/index.htm

continuing globalization, are altering patterns of growth and development. The new wave of innovations has the potential to create new and better opportunities for employment. However, the gains from productivity growth are anticipated to be unequally distributed with groups on the margins of the labour market, such as women, least likely to benefit unless inclusive employment and labour market policies are strengthened.

20. Within an overall picture of profound changes in the world of work with mixed effects on the goal of poverty eradication, a number of UN organizations are ready to contribute to this field of action including ILO, UNDESA, UN Women, UN regional commissions, UNIDO, UNEP, UNFPA UNITAR, FAO, WHO, UNCTAD, UNESCO and UNOSSC. Several existing integrated programmes involving these agencies are also available to support Member States. Through the ILO, employers' organizations and trade unions will also be involved. The main means of action are research, advisory services, technical support and capacity building based on knowledge products, international labour standards and other human rights instruments.

21. Against this background, the UN system will support countries in facilitating the transition of workers from old to new jobs and the equitable sharing of productivity gains from technological change. The UN system will advocate greater functional and substantive policy coherence and an integrated approach to the promotion of decent work for all, through the implementation of the SDGs and supporting public policies that foster transformative structural changes.

22. First, the plan of action will promote and support the integration of decent work and poverty eradication into national and international policies, strategies and programmes. Ensuring that those at risk of being left behind are a particular focus through measures to formalize employment, introduce or strengthen minimum wages, guarantee respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, combat all forms of discrimination in employment and end child and forced labour, including in agriculture and rural areas. The Alliance 8.7 partnership formed to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour aims to play a major role in ensuring that these high-risk groups are not left behind.¹⁰

23. Second, it will assist countries to harness the potential and mitigate the challenges of emerging technologies and the transition to low carbon economies on employment, wage and income distribution, worker protections and social protection systems. The Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE)¹¹ and the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI)¹² are able to offer valuable integrated support in this field.

24. Third, the plan of action will aim to enhance national capacities to develop and implement strategies that give young women and men everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work. The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth is a system-wide partnership for the promotion of youth employment.¹³

25. Fourth, it will help build the productive capacity and decent work opportunities needed for economic transformation and achieving the SDGs through the design and implementation of sectoral policies. The recently established Working for Health Programme of the WHO, ILO and OECD to accelerate progress towards universal health coverage, global health security and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the expansion and transformation of the global health and social workforce is an important integrated programme in a key sector for poverty eradication.¹⁴

26. Fifth, given the concentration of extreme poverty in rural areas, entities of the United Nations development system will assist countries design and implement rural development and agricultural, fisheries and forestry policies that promote job creation in farm and off-farm sectors. Both FAO and ILO are active on these issues and have a long-standing cooperation agreement (see d) below).

27. Sixth, strengthen economic policies, including trade, that lead to inclusive and sustainable industrialization for decent employment creation and poverty reduction.

28. Seventh, assess the linkages between demographic and economic changes, including the effects on labour markets and social protection systems.

¹⁰ For further information on Alliance 8.7 go to <http://www.alliance87.org/>

¹¹ For further information on PAGE go to <http://www.un-page.org/home>

¹² For further information on PEI go to <http://www.unpei.org/>

¹³ For further information on Decent Jobs for Youth go to <https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/>

¹⁴ For further information on Working for Health go to <http://www.who.int/hrh/com-heeg/action-plan-annexes/en/>

Deliverables

29. UN agencies individually and through joint programmes will offer policy support to Member States on a range of deliverables. Country level poverty analysis, design and implementation of coherent multi-sectoral policies that address the root causes and drivers of poverty will be supported. Countries will be assisted in the identification of causes and consequences of changing age structures including the realization of the potential of demographic dividends.

30. Macroeconomic strategies for inclusive gender-responsive growth are key to the eradication of poverty. The plan of action will therefore promote the development of macroeconomic frameworks for structural transformation and comprehensive and evidence-based decent work strategies. UN agencies will promote access to pro-poor and green technologies, green fiscal reform and the creation of decent green jobs, as well as social protection to facilitate just transition. Such strategies will include employment intensive investment and public works programmes, multi-pronged youth and women employment programmes, specific policies to improve the quality and protection of non-standard forms of employment as well as unemployment protection including cash benefits and job placement services targeting young people, including young women, everywhere.

31. Technical advice will be made available on the formulation and implementation of legal and regulatory frameworks based on respect for the fundamental rights of all workers will be available on issues such as transitions to formal employment, safe working conditions, minimum wages, and other protective measures in the workplace. The impact of growth and macroeconomic policies on labour market outcomes, including a focus on women's formal and informal employment, will be monitored and analysed.

32. Eliminating gender discrimination in recruitment and pay, and in horizontal and vertical job segregation will be a focus of support for labour market reforms. These will include measures concerning the redistribution and reconciliation of unpaid and paid work (such as parental leave and other care leave legislation, care insurance schemes, flexible workplace practices for work-life balance, and decent work hours). Legal and policy frameworks to improve women's access to financial services (such as credit, savings and loans, insurance) will be promoted.

33. Workers associations and other national stakeholders will be supported to tackle adverse social norms that limit women's access to decent work and norms that devalue their work (through education and advertising, working with civil society groups, business and media). The capacity of trade unions to organize, articulate the needs of women workers and negotiate their interests with national policy-makers, through collective bargaining and social dialogue will be bolstered.

34. Assistance will be offered for the development and implementation of enhanced national health workforce plans and investment plans to stimulate decent job creation in the health and social sector. This will include support for the assessment of the needs of the care economy and estimation of the potential economic returns of public investments in social care and its infrastructure.

35. Policy tools will be offered, adaptable in particular to the situations of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs, to support the identification of industrial upgrading and diversification, leading to decent work opportunities, including assistance for the development of creative industries.

36. A special focus will be assistance for the development of sustainable and inclusive agro-industrial sectors that create decent jobs in rural areas, especially for youth, women, and other vulnerable or marginalized groups. This will include the generation of employment opportunities in off - farm activities, thereby contributing to increased food security and a sustainable reduction of poverty. Strengthening linkages between agriculture, industry and markets, including through the transfer of food processing technology; the upgrading of food processing skills; the promotion of food safety in the processing environment; and interventions to improve competitiveness and productivity at the processing level will add value to agricultural production and enable the integration of vulnerable rural communities into local and global value chains. This will entail the transformation of enterprises from the informal to the formal sector and simplifying and improving access to administrative services to facilitate rural entrepreneurial initiatives. Technical and entrepreneurial capacity building will contribute to the incubation and development of self-reliant economic activities in rural areas.

37. The plan of action will offer assistance to countries and corporations to adopt, through social dialogue, policies that foster inclusive supply chains. This will include gender assessments that analyse the opportunities and barriers for women entrepreneurs, identifying strategic sectors, and supporting the development of information

and financial services that meet the unique needs of women-owned enterprises in accessing markets. Multi-stakeholder partnerships between business, government and civil society will be promoted.

Action Steps

38. Most of the actions by the UN system to support Member States are within their respective mandates and resources, with many activities aligned with national development needs and priorities, including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Third Decade thus brings together the scale and range of this action and facilitates the identification of the scope for integrated actions involving two or more entities. As mentioned in Part V above, the main means of action are policy advisory and advocacy services, technical support and capacity building, research and analysis, sharing of good practices and the development of impact assessment tools. A number of SDG indicators will be used to assess progress, particularly those developed under SDG 1 and 8. During the process of preparing this system-wide plan of action, agencies have shared information on the action steps they will be taking. The following section describes examples of actions on the deliverables outlined above.

39. Regarding frameworks for structural transformation and decent work strategies, Member States will be offered support for the development of diagnostic tools with a strong focus on macro-fiscal policies and their impact on labour market outcomes, including employment budgeting. National employment strategies will be supported through diagnostic and policy advisory tools. Research on structural transformation and decent work will provide evidence to inform this work. Knowledge platforms for sharing good practice and research will help to disseminate information on what works and why. Policy dialogues with national authorities and civil society stakeholders, especially business and labour organizations, will be promoted. National and sectoral tripartite/bipartite social dialogue will be supported. Such actions will focus in a particular on expanding and scaling up context-specific interventions at the national and regional levels for systematic and coherent policies on youth employment. Important for ensuring the inclusiveness of growth is the promotion of employment formalization measures in general and through enrolment in social protection schemes and the improvement of the quality of non-standard forms of employment, in particular. Backing for the design, implementation and evaluation of employment intensive investment and public works programmes will be continued.

40. Building country capacity to meet both environmental sustainability and poverty eradication commitments is a vital element in transforming current growth paths to achieve the SDGs. This will require an integrated policy approach which joint UN programmes such as UNDP-UN Environment Poverty-Environment Initiative and the Partnership for Action on Green economy (PAGE) can help to catalyse. A central component of such policies is skill development to enable people living in poverty, especially in rural areas, to use new “greener” technologies that lift productivity and earnings as well as reduced damage to the environment. A similarly important focus is needed on creating conditions for small business to develop and create decent work opportunities.

41. Action to facilitate the generation of decent work opportunities for young women and men, with an emphasis on rural communities, is a key focus of the Decade. Member States will be supported in the development of comprehensive gender-responsive youth employment policies and strategies that increase employability and ease transitions to decent work especially for disadvantaged youth. This will include the encouragement of multi-stakeholder partnerships at the country level, including youth organizations, to assist the design and implementation of gender-responsive youth employment initiatives.

42. Programmes to strengthen country sectoral policies will be undertaken with a particular focus on gender-sensitive strategies that accelerate poverty eradication. A focus will be the agro-food industry (see paragraphs 68-84 below). Key examples include support for ambitious health workforce expansion and transformation policies that will enable universal health coverage and decent job creation. This will involve analysis of trends and opportunities, strengthened social dialogue, development of intersectoral workforce plans, securing finance to implement plans and strengthening implementation capacity. A closely related priority is assessment of the economic and social role of the care economy with a view to ensuring adequate public investment in human and physical capacities.

43. The exploitation of opportunities for industrial upgrading and diversification in the light of the revolutionary processes of technological change underway is vital and will require the updating and enhancement of existing policy tools. A creative ecosystem approach will be applied through value chain analysis and cluster development with a view to supporting the engagement in value-creating activities of small-scale enterprises, particularly those led by youth and women. This will include developing entrepreneurial culture and skills,

enriched through elements of ICT training and practical experience in the use of new technologies in an increasingly networked information society. The capacity of enterprises to ensure respect for workers' rights, including safety at work, will be a component of such enterprise support programmes.

44. Countries will be assisted in conducting gender assessments that analyse the opportunities and barriers for women entrepreneurs, identifying strategic sectors, and supporting the development of financial services that meet the unique needs of women-business owners. Countries and corporations will be encouraged to adopt, through social dialogue, gender-responsive policies that foster inclusive supply chains, enabling smaller businesses, especially those owned by women, to access trade opportunities, finance and benefit from procurement contracts. Multi-stakeholder partnerships between governments, business, unions and civil society will be promoted to support adoption and implementation of gender-responsive corporate policies and implementation of the Women's Empowerment Principles.¹⁵

45. The main action by the UN system to support efforts to assess the linkages between demographic and economic changes in countries facing the greatest poverty eradication challenges is assistance for the collection, analysis and use of population data. This includes the construction of open data, online platforms with key disaggregated indicators on the demographic dividend as well as National Transfer Accounts¹⁶ which show how population growth and changing age structures influence among other things economic growth, gender and generational equity. Countries will be encouraged to develop forward-looking, rights-based integrated responses to evolving population trends, including the realization of the potential of demographic dividends.

b) Expanding social protection systems to underpin inclusive poverty-reducing development

46. Social protection systems are essential not only to lifting people out of poverty, but also in preventing them falling back. They are a potent tool for the reduction of vulnerabilities across the life cycle, narrowing inequalities and fostering inclusive growth. Social protection is fundamental to full attainment of economic and social rights for all, as recognized in a series of international legal instruments including the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 and ILO Conventions and Recommendations.

47. Social protection policies and programmes are especially critical to meet the challenges posed by demographic changes. As the share of older persons continues to grow in many countries around the world, the need to guarantee their well-being and income security is increasingly urgent. At the same time, it is critical to strengthen social protection for families with children, as they are overrepresented among the population living in extreme poverty, poverty and vulnerability. Social protection systems also need to be expanded to ensure the protection of incomes and facilitate access to health, education and decent employment, including for those in precarious and informal employment. The contribution of social protection to gender equality is vital. Along with the provision of public care services and infrastructure, social protection systems can play a major role in redistributing care responsibilities and recognizing and valuing unpaid work. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly recognizes the importance of social protection in overcoming poverty in Target 1.3. Social protection is also critical for reaching other Goals, including Goals 2 through 5, and Goals 8 and 10.

48. Several UN organizations will work together to expand social protection systems and measures, including social protection floors and underpin sustainable poverty-eradicating development. These include ILO, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, WFP, UN Women, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNDESA and the UN regional commissions. An important vehicle for joint work is the UN-wide Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I) supported by the Joint Fund Window for Social Protection Floors (UN-JFWSPF) which is the first window of the UN Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda.¹⁷ Other cooperation platforms include: the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) which promotes inter-agency coordination and advocacy on social protection issues including in response to country demand-driven actions¹⁸; and the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection which brings together the World Bank and the ILO with the African Union, FAO, the European Commission, Helpage, IADB, OECD, Save the Children, UNDP-IPC, UNICEF and others, along with Belgian, Finnish, French and German

¹⁵ See <http://www.weprinciples.org/> for the seven principles and further information

¹⁶ For further information see <http://www.ntaccounts.org/web/nta/show/>

¹⁷ For further information see <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/ShowProject.action?id=2767>

¹⁸ For further information see <http://www.ilo.org/newyork/issues-at-work/social-protection/social-protection-inter-agency-cooperation-board/lang--en/index.htm>

cooperation.¹⁹ The main means of action are technical support, policy research, advice and advocacy, capacity development and training, and expert meetings.

49. Action will focus on knowledge-sharing to support countries in implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors with the aim of achieving by 2030 substantial coverage of the poor and vulnerable. Within this field, the main focus is to reach the furthest behind first and on those at risk of being left behind. These include the rural poor, persons with disabilities and women workers in informal rural employment, who are typically low-paid and face low-quality jobs, widespread casualization, poor working conditions, and the lack of collective voice and agency as organized workers. Joint analytical work on building the economic case for scaling up social protection is envisaged. In this regard, the promotion of increased coherence between social protection and broad poverty reduction and development strategies will receive particular attention, for example, with agriculture and nutrition policies. Strengthening integrated social protection systems along the life course to meet the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities and provide assistance to families that care for family members is becoming an urgent issue in many countries.

Deliverables

50. The plan of action will support countries in expanding social protection coverage to all and promote the joint initiatives mentioned in paragraph 49. Bearing in mind the priority of protecting those at risk of being left behind, the plan of action will focus on assisting countries to progressively expand universal social protection that is complemented by measures to reach people living in poverty, women workers in informal employment, rural workers, older persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable or marginalized groups. Nationally appropriate gender-responsive social protection policies and programmes to reduce poverty and vulnerability include social protection floors, employment-based social insurance, pensions, maternal health, and health insurance. Rural poverty eradication requires a major drive to identify barriers to access to social protection (assistance and insurance) to those living in rural and remote areas and dependent on natural resources and enhance the adequacy of social protection. Strengthening coherence between social protection, agriculture and nutrition policies can have an important impact, for example by promoting linkages between farmers and social registries. Similarly, reinforcing the capacity of cities and towns, communities and other human settlements to enable people to live long and healthy lives tackles poverty at its roots. A running theme of system-wide work will be to develop further the rationale for the scaling up of social protection systems by highlighting their impact on productive potential and the transformation of economies on to sustainable development trajectories.

Action Steps

51. UN entities will offer Member States technical support, policy dialogue, research, advisory and advocacy services, capacity development and training. Such action, including through system-wide initiatives on the expansion of social protection systems and floors, will provide support at national, regional and global levels.

52. The assessment of country needs, barriers to access and institutional capacity, especially regarding groups at high risk of being left behind, is a foundation for sound policy design. Action will include analytical work, such as evaluation of the economic and productive impacts of national social protection programmes, and the development of key communication and advocacy messages. Engagement with country research teams and policy makers will be pursued so as to enhance design, implementation and scaling-up of integrated programmes, for example in rural areas. Based on assessments of the vulnerability and specific and differentiated needs of households living in rural areas, for example fishers and forest dependent communities, roadmaps to enhance the access and adequacy of social assistance and insurance programmes will be developed. School food and nutrition programmes have a proven impact on poverty and their implementation will continue to be promoted. Ensuring equitable access to, and utilization of, health and long-term care services through integrated and coordinated programmes to meet the needs of older people and families that care for older members is an area of increasing focus by the UN system. Strengthened institutional governance is a needed support to the delivery of accessible, and affordable employment injury benefits.

53. At regional and global level, actions will include expert group meetings and high-level panel discussions to tackle the policy challenges of extending social protection systems, the publication of issue briefs and research

¹⁹ For further information see <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/gess/NewYork.action?id=34>

reports, capacity building programmes including training workshops and advisory services (for example, through the ILO/UNSSC course on social protection in the 2030 Agenda), and promotion of the UN Social Protection Floor Window as part of the UN Joint Fund for Agenda 2030.

c) Human capability development: addressing the non-income forms of poverty

54. Ending poverty is not just about people's income but also their access to basic needs such as quality education and healthcare, clean water and sanitation, decent housing and security. Improved education and health will accelerate the achievement of all the SDGs. Breaking the vicious cycle of poor or no schooling, ill health and poverty-level life time incomes is essential for sustainable development. Eradicating income poverty also plays a critical role in improving health as the poor face substantial financial barriers to accessing needed health services and often face other cultural and social barriers when they do receive needed services. In turn, good health plays a critical role in reducing poverty as it increases an individual's labour productivity, level of educational attainment and income. Similarly, improved education enables people to live healthier lives and learn new skills over their working life and thus earn higher incomes. SDGs 3 (health), 4 (education), 6 (water), 7 (energy) and 11 (settlements) address many of the dimensions of non-income poverty. There are also many interlinkages to other SDGs including 2 (hunger), 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work) as well as the social protection theme for the Third Decade outlined above.

55. The overarching objective regarding non-income dimensions of poverty is to promote integrated approaches and policy frameworks to address multidimensional poverty. Several UN development system organizations have specialized mandates that address non-income dimensions of eradicating poverty. Among the agencies contributing to this element of the plan of action are the UN regional commissions, WHO, UNESCO, UNIDO, ILO, FAO, WFP, UNEP, UNFPA, UN Women, OHCHR, UNICEF and UNAIDS. In addition, several partnership programmes are also available to support Member States. The International Health Partnership for UHC2030 provides a multi-stakeholder platform to promote collaborative working in countries and globally on strengthening health systems. It advocates increased political commitment to universal health coverage (UHC) and facilitates accountability and knowledge sharing.²⁰ Education2030, led by UNESCO, also involves seven other UN entities as well as many other civil society and intergovernmental organizations.²¹ Its aim is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all through implementation of SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO and the World Bank Group have formed the H6 partnership to support implementation of "Every woman, Every Child", the UN Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030, and the health-related Sustainable Development Goals.²² UN-Water's role is to coordinate the UN family delivering as one in response to water related challenges.²³

Deliverables

56. Accelerating action to end poverty requires investment by the UN development system in knowledge products for the analysis and monitoring of multidimensional poverty. This will underpin support to national and intergovernmental strategies to realize the poverty-related SDGs, in particular Goals 3 on health, 4 on education and 5 on gender equality

57. In this regard, the plan of action will assist countries ensure health and well-being for all people at all ages through investments in quality health and multisectoral services across the life course. These investments enable the realization of potential and rights, including social and economic participation. They also enhance capacities for measuring and monitoring the impact of health strategies on equity, gender equality, and human rights. Further, the plan of action will reinforce the drive for Universal Health Coverage, through improving access to quality essential health services, reducing the number of people suffering financial hardship in accessing basic health care, and improving availability of essential medicines and vaccines for primary health care. This will further require action to avert the projected 18 million health worker shortfall by 2030 and thus accelerate progress

²⁰ For more information see: www.uhc2030.org

²¹ For more information see: <https://en.unesco.org/education2030-sdg4>

²² For more information see <http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/about/ewec-ecosystem/#sect6>

²³ For more information see <http://www.unwater.org/>

towards Universal Health Coverage. Action will be undertaken globally, regionally and in countries to prepare for, prevent, detect and respond to health emergencies by improving preparedness, including core International Health Regulation capacities, detecting health events and assessing risks early, and ensuring access to life-saving services and public health interventions.

58. Multi-sectoral policies for promoting health such as addressing the social determinants of health and reducing risk factors will be strengthened. Investments in comprehensive early childhood care and education and in implementing the Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development will be supported. Countries will be assisted in improving the health and well-being of adolescents and young people so they can realize their full potential and rights, including socioeconomic participation, and contribute to countries' demographic dividend. Similarly, development of policies and programmes to provide universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services and information services, including Comprehensive Sexuality Education, will be assisted.

59. Ensuring inclusive quality education for all will be supported by integrated system-wide action focussed on measures that drive the transformation of development prospects. These include support preparing young women and men for the world of work in a rapidly changing environment and improved education on food security and nutrition as well as on agricultural techniques. Relevant entrepreneurial, digital and technical skills are essential to empower young workers to create or find jobs in industry and industry-related services and to become global citizens. Developing entrepreneurial culture and skills, enriched through elements of ICT training, will prepare young people for key job requirements in an increasingly networked information society.

60. Regarding gender dimensions of poverty, the plan of action will focus on assisting countries eliminate gender-based violence and integrate evidence-based interventions to prevent and manage the health consequences of violence against women and female genital mutilation.

Action Steps

61. The plan of action will aim to sensitize governments about the risks of people being left behind in poverty and the drivers of poverty eradication in all its forms. Technical and policy advisory support to Member States regarding monitoring and analysis of multidimensional poverty will focus on strengthening capacity for the design of measurement and policy tools. Within national poverty eradication strategies, emphasis will be given to tools that support the creation of decent work opportunities and development of an entrepreneurial culture for young women and men.

62. Regarding the educational dimensions of poverty eradication, the plan of action will promote broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by co-operation with regional and international agencies and institutions. It will also develop methodologies and produce data for monitoring of progress towards SDG 4. Rural education strategies will assist in the introduction of nutrition-sensitive components to the curricula of agricultural secondary and tertiary schools, the use of the farmer field schools approach to disseminate good agriculture practices and information on nutrition, the enlargement of extension services to improve poor farmers and producers' productivity and the establishment of school-feeding programmes to improve the nutritional status of the poor.

63. UN entities will work with governments to review national health programmes, assess barriers to services, and integrate a focus on equity, gender and human rights into health sector planning. Action will include facilitating policy dialogues, building country capacity and providing technical assistance. Setting health norms and standards will continue to have high priority. Along with work with private sector to leverage resources.

64. The establishment of One Health centres to better link agriculture, human health and environment outcomes by working with Regional Economic Communities and specialized organizations is vital for the reduction of disease burdens in poor communities and populations. Similarly work to increase education on the prevention of risks and the mitigation of effects of crises that originate at the interface between humans, animals and their various environments through the One Health approaches in educational curricula will be stepped up. Investment in disease and pest monitoring, analysis and provision of early warning advisories to institute prevention and adaptation measures to reduce negative impacts is key. At the global level, the observatory for circulation of information on disease pathogens and pests and their prevention will be improved.

65. In support of national health strategies, the plan of action will help countries analyse health labour markets, strengthen social dialogue and develop intersectoral national health workforce plans, secure financing to implement plans and strengthen implementation capacity for ambitious health workforce expansion and

transformation policies that will enable universal health coverage and job creation. It will provide a ‘menu’ of evidence-based cost-effective interventions across life stages to inform countries’ decision-making on universal health coverage and social benefit packages. This will include technical support for country implementation of multisectoral interventions as set out in the Nurturing Care Framework and the WHO Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!).

66. It is proposed to convene global expert groups, forums and partnerships on equity, gender equality and human rights in health to advise on the monitoring and reporting of the global regional situation and trends in relation to health inequality. Research projects on maternal and infant health, including how mothers working in the informal economy breastfeed and care for their young infants without compromising their ability to work or make their livelihoods more vulnerable will be undertaken.

d) The future of food and sustainable agriculture

67. Sustainable agriculture plays a crucial role in ending poverty and achievement of almost all SDG targets. The 2030 Agenda depends on the transformation of agriculture and rural areas, where most of the poor and hungry live. Since the 1990s, rural transformations have lifted more than 750 million rural people above the poverty line but progress has been uneven. While developments in agriculture have led to major improvements in productivity, many have been left behind.

68. About 783 million people live in extreme poverty and 815 million continue to suffer from hunger. Paradoxically, the majority of poor and undernourished live in rural areas and most rely directly, or indirectly, on agriculture for their livelihoods. Of those people in extreme poverty, 442 million (59 per cent) were living in countries affected by fragility (42 per cent), environmental vulnerability (4 per cent) or both (12 per cent).²⁴ Ending poverty, particularly extreme poverty, and hunger are inextricably linked. While meeting the basic income needs of the poor will ensure their food security, improving their nutrition helps increase their productivity and current and future ability to generate income and food security.

69. But agriculture is at a crossroad. In many countries, food production will still need to increase sharply to keep pace with an expanding population. Future improvements in agriculture and food systems will continue to rely on enhanced efficiency – producing more with fewer workers. Sustainable improvement of productivity in agriculture, forestry and fisheries and related services needs to happen in the context of a highly stressed natural resource base due to increased competition for natural resources, environmental degradation and climate change.

70. To make rural transformation inclusive and make sure no one is left behind, the world will need to leverage the enormous untapped potential of food systems to drive agro-industrial development, boost small-scale farmers’ productivity and incomes, and create off-farm employment in expanding segments of food supply and value chains. National development strategies need to invest in people, especially the rural poor, who will be at the centre of the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems. Three major factors will influence whether rural transformation will be inclusive. First, the growing and changing demand from urban food markets, which consume up to 70 percent of the food supply even in countries with large rural populations. To ensure that small-scale producers participate fully in meeting urban food demand, policy measures are needed that: reduce the barriers limiting their access to inputs; foster the adoption of environmentally sustainable approaches and technologies; increase access to credit and markets; facilitate farm mechanization; revitalize agricultural extension systems; strengthen land tenure rights especially for women; ensure equity in supply contracts; and strengthen small-scale producer organizations and, in particular, the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive agricultural and rural development policies.

71. Second in the coming years, many small-scale farmers are likely to leave agriculture, and most will be unable to find decent employment in largely low-productivity rural economies. A dynamic agro-industrial sector and growth of services in rural areas would create jobs in local economies, especially for women and youth, improving incomes and supporting overall gains in nutrition, health and food security. The growth of agro-industry is often held back by the lack of essential infrastructure – rural roads, electrical power grids, storage and refrigerated transportation. In many low-income countries, such constraints are exacerbated by a lack of public- and private sector investment, which will therefore need to be improved in quality and quantity in the coming years.

²⁴ Development Initiatives. 2018. Global humanitarian assistance report 2018. <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GHA-Report-2018.pdf>

72. Third, the physical, socio-economic and political connections between small urban centres and their surrounding rural areas must be strengthened. In the developing world, about half of the total urban population live in cities and towns of 500 000 inhabitants or fewer. Too often ignored by policy-makers and planners, territorial networks of small cities and towns are important reference points for rural people. Small cities and towns create greater opportunities for smallholder farmers to market their produce and also serve as hubs for the expansion of the services sector.

73. Food production needs to increase by 60 percent by 2050 to feed an additional 2 billion people. Investing in agriculture and rural areas makes sense today, to lift the remain 767 million extreme poor out of deprivation and will continue to make sense throughout the whole Decade of action, when agriculture in rural areas will be important source of jobs, food and income for many.

74. This theme therefore aims to enhance the capacity of countries to implement integrated programmes for inclusive rural development to overcome the challenges to eradicating extreme poverty, ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition. The plan of action will focus on those most at risk of being left behind by rural transformation, for example, women and other marginalized populations, including indigenous persons. FAO, WFP, ILO, WHO, UNEP, UN Women, UNESCO and the UN regional commissions are among the UN organizations working on integrated rural development. Individually and in partnerships, such as UN Water, they offer technical support and policy advice, capacity building, research and analysis, and advocacy. Partnerships with small farmer and rural workers' organizations and local authorities is a feature of action on integrated rural development by the UN system.

Deliverables

75. The plan of action will aim to boost national capacities for the design of policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks and investment plans supportive of inclusive and efficient agriculture and food systems. It will work with government, practitioner, social partners and civil society to bolster the assessment, formulation, implementation, evaluation and adaptation of poverty and hunger eradication policies through coherent multi-sectoral strategies in rural areas. This includes the formulation and implementation of legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms to realize the right to adequate food and to promote secure and equitable access to natural resources and assets. The plan of action will promote decision-makers' understanding of how the poverty-environment nexus affects agriculture and natural resources.

76. The sustainable development of the agri-food sector will play a key role in transforming development paths to achieve the poverty and hunger-related SDGs. Analytical studies and sector reviews will be carried out. A focus will be the comprehensive assessment of human resource needs for a sustainable, nutritious and competitive agri-food sector. The aim is to stimulate inclusive agribusiness and rural development through value chain upgrading, entrepreneurship development and vocational training.

77. Private sector investments that are inclusive and have positive effects on the incomes, nutritional status and wellbeing of the poor will be fostered. Increased public resources for sustainable agriculture and rural development will include investments to eradicate poverty, hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition. Support will be offered to public and private financial institutions to engender lending practices, through directed lending, direct lending, and credit enhancement mechanisms. Rural strategies that improve access to clean water and sanitation for all, particularly in rural areas, including through integrated water resources management in a gender responsive manner will be backed. Similarly, the plan of action will promote clean, sustainable and affordable energy access for all.

78. The dissemination of information and the promotion of dialogue on sustainable agriculture practices alongside the development of policies to improve the management of ecosystem services and biodiversity will underpin action through the Plan. Increased access to resources, markets, services and skills for small producers and family farmers is essential for poverty eradication. Increased access to healthy diets by poor and vulnerable populations, through nutrition-sensitive food systems will be promoted. Measures to support the formation by women farmers of cooperatives will aim to strengthen their capacity to participate meaningfully in the green value chain. Support to countries and national land stakeholders for the reform of statutory and customary laws, policies and practices to address gender specific barriers, including those related to improving women's access to land, will be offered. This will include the integration of gender and land rights SDG indicators into national development plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Action Steps

79. Action to transform rural economies will be founded on improving the capacity of governments and stakeholders to develop sectoral and cross-sectoral policy frameworks and investment plans and programmes to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. This will include support to countries in carrying out country level analysis of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition to better understand the drivers of these problems in their contexts. Such research will generate evidence of what works why and be the basis for increased knowledge exchange amongst countries. As part of capacity building, assistance will be provided on the development and implementation of legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms for the realization of the right to adequate food, the analysis of food insecurity and malnutrition trends, research regarding the role of different sectors and stakeholders and the monitoring and evaluation of policies, relevant programmes and legislation.

80. Regarding the poverty/environment nexus, research will aim to provide evidence of the interlinkages between the sustainable use of natural/environmental resources and poverty eradication and the disproportionate dependence of the poorer segments of society on well-functioning ecosystems. Action will be taken to raise awareness and share targeted, climate-smart approaches to agriculture with a view to closing poverty and gender gaps and promoting societal resilience to shocks. Countries' capacities to integrate the environmental perspective in agriculture interventions will be strengthened. Measures to stimulate agribusiness and rural development through agro-industries value chain upgrading, entrepreneurship development programmes and vocational training will be promoted. Advice on model contracts regulating economic, environmental and social factors related to foreign investment will be offered together with support for the development of monitoring systems to ensure that social and environmental safeguards are applied. Diagnostic studies and country-specific interventions in the plantations sector to improve working conditions and to promote fundamental principles and rights at work will be produced.

81. The plan of action will support countries in formulating public investment plans in agriculture and rural areas that benefit the poor, including investments in infrastructure, research and social services. This will be backed up by sector studies, policy advice, capacity development, awareness raising, and advocacy regarding investment in agriculture and food systems including support for the engendering of the lending practices of public and private financial institutions. An increase in public funding for sustainable agriculture will be encouraged through support for periodic reviews of how the effectiveness and efficiency of environment and climate change expenditure can be increased. A stronger environmental reflex in budgeting will be facilitated by advice on techniques such as the use of budget call circulars to publicly financed institutions regarding financial ceilings, priorities and instructions on budget submission. The development of budget classification sub-codes to track natural resources and sustainable agriculture expenditure will be supported along with the production of disaggregated data on social, environmental and economic inequities that contribute to poverty and hunger.

82. Technical assistance to improve access to clean water and sanitation will be provided for the design and implementation of on-farm irrigation systems, water-saving techniques, identification and adaptation of irrigation techniques, the adoption of water-harvesting techniques and the reuse of treated wastewater in agriculture. This will be reinforced by assistance for the development of the skills, knowledge and means to define, plan and implement programmes in integrated water resource development in agriculture and access in rural areas to clean, sustainable and affordable energy.

83. An important focus for action will be gender sensitive measures to ensure that the rural poor and small producers participate in and benefit fully from agriculture and rural development strategies. This will entail action to:

- (a) foster public procurement programmes that link small producers to demand for sustainable agricultural products;
- (b) provide more predictable incomes, improved access to credit, financial and business services, extension and ICTs working both at the demand and the supply sides; infrastructure investment in poor and remote areas;
- (c) support for market facilities and services for local and territorial markets, including short circuits, community-based agriculture, participatory guarantee systems and geographical indications;
- (d) equipping small family farmers, processors and other value chain actors with technical and managerial capacities to participate in inclusive and sustainable agrifood value chains;
- (e) ending dependence on child labour;

- (f) strengthened public and private capacities to design and implement financial instruments and services and risk management mechanisms for efficient and inclusive agri-food systems;
- (g) policy support and capacity development for improved access by the rural poor to services, knowledge, technologies, infrastructure, markets or productive natural resources;
- (h) improving job quality in global, regional and national value chains where sustainable market systems solutions can be delivered to improve working conditions;
- (i) introducing a system of interrelated training packages and supporting materials for small-scale entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses;
- (j) identifying and leveraging actors of agri-food systems to reach out to farmers with the right financial and risk mitigation services.

84. Sustainable poverty eradication in rural areas will require the provision of effective ecosystem services and biodiversity. The Plan will therefore promote incentives to maintain and enhance services, including management skills. Environmental degradation will be combatted through sustainable agricultural practices and the creation of conservation areas. Support for the establishment of coordination structures to harmonize central and local administrations in managing agriculture inclusive of civil society, communities, public and private actors will be offered. Capacity development actions will aim to strengthen the ability of farmer organizations and associations of small scale food processors to compete in sustainable and modern agri-food sectors. Policy research and advocacy will provide advice and support to agriculture and rural development stakeholders to enable them to assemble, disseminate or improve the uptake knowledge, technologies, or good practices for inclusive organizations and empowerment of rural poor. In the same way innovative approaches for sustainable food systems and value-adding technologies suited to empowerment of the rural poor will be facilitated.

85. Measures to support the empowering of women and other marginalized groups including indigenous peoples will include policy advice on securing land rights for women, men, children and other vulnerable groups through the implementation of land laws. This in turn will be reinforced by capacity development and training for land-related stakeholders on the implementation of gender equality principles and on the methodology for SDG indicators 5a1 and 5a2 on women's rights to land.

86. At the global level UN organizations will continue to work for the implementation of normative and standard setting instruments, generate evidence on best practices to reduce poverty, and foster knowledge exchange amongst countries.

e) Reducing inequalities

87. Inequality takes multiple forms and acts as a formidable barrier to poverty eradication and sustainable development. As stressed by the General Assembly, the negative impact of inequality, including gender inequality, on poverty, emphasizes the importance of structural transformation that leads to inclusive and sustainable growth for employment creation and poverty reduction. Poverty eradication - especially 'to reach the furthest behind first' - requires equality-oriented policies. Inequalities include, but transcend, income inequality and originate from the uneven exercise of rights, unequal access to opportunities and capacity development, and thus unequal results. Promoting greater equality not only helps to safeguard the economic, social and cultural rights of all women and men, girls and boys, but also fosters growth, development and greater social cohesion. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects a consensus on the need to move towards more egalitarian, cohesive and solidarity-based societies, and inclusive economic growth. Reducing the multiple manifestations of inequality is not only enshrined in SDG 10, it is at the core of the entire 2030 Agenda, and its call to "leave no one behind" on the path to sustainable development.

88. The plan of action will combat the multiple and intersecting manifestations of inequality (for example, socio-economic status, gender, territorial, ethnic/race, life cycle) as they relate to access to education, health, economic resources (including land), social protection, employment, cultural life, participation in decision making at all levels (household, community and national) and other dimensions considered relevant in the national context. It will further the analysis of the multiple dimensions of inequality and its linkages with the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development as well as the linkages between income inequality, poverty and economic growth. A particular focus is enhancing women's economic empowerment, in particular rural women. Reducing inequities in health service access and health status as well as access to education is key (see also issue c) above).

89. UNDESA, regional commissions, ILO, FAO, WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNIDO and UN Women all plan to be active on this theme. An important means of action on inequalities is integrating an inclusive approach to action on issues such as health, education and rural development, for example through using gender analysis or policy dialogue with civil society groups. Research on the causes of different forms of inequality and the impact of policies aimed at reducing inequalities is vital to the development of impactful programmes.

Deliverables

90. Equality-oriented policies are an essential part of poverty eradication strategies. The Action Plan will therefore strive to enhance the capacity of national or sub-national and local governments to formulate policies, plans and programmes to address structural and emerging equality gaps affecting different socioeconomic and population groups, from a rights and sustainable development based approach. Support will target specific vulnerable groups such as women, persons with disabilities, migrants and indigenous people. The capacity of national governments to reform the governance of the health, education and social development sectors will be reinforced with the aim of improving quality and access to all without discrimination based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, economic or other status. This will include support for programmes to identify, analyse and measure socio-economic inequalities in income, wealth, well-being and other dimensions that hinder poverty eradication and sustainable development. A particular focus will be on persons with disabilities aiming to strengthen measures for the improvement of their situation.

91. Regarding gender inequalities, the Plan will support national efforts to strengthen capacities for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship, the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive agricultural and rural development policies, the participation of rural women in decision making at all levels (household, community, national and the gender-awareness of rural organizations so that women can equally benefit from their activities.

92. Tackling health inequalities will focus on strengthening capacity and policies to promote universal health coverage, enhanced intersectoral action, and stronger social participation. Member States will be enabled to promote, design, and implement related health strategies, policies, plans, programmes and resolutions or laws for enhanced capacities for measuring and monitoring equity, gender equality, and human rights and social determinants of health.

Action Steps

93. UN entities will provide advisory services and technical assistance on the design and implementation of coherent and integrated policies, programmes and plans to combat inequality in all of its manifestations. Actions will include the organization of spaces and platforms for the exchange of experience and good practice among Member States as well as sub-national and local governments. Such exchanges will focus on empowerment and promotion of social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, national, ethnic or social origin, language, religion, political or other opinion, property ownership, birth or other status. Various knowledge products and policy tools, including UN regional guides, will be developed to support the provision of advisory services, technical assistance, training workshops and expert meetings on the analysis of inequality and the formulation of equality-oriented policies,²⁵ including greater equity in public expenditure for health, education and social protection

94. Gender equality will be promoted through a range of actions including the integration of gender components into existing development programmes and gender assessments based on sex-disaggregated data and gender policy analysis:

- (a) training and support services for women who wish to start and run their businesses, with a gender perspective that contributes to their empowerment. This will include strengthening women's

²⁵ See "Promoting equality: an interregional perspective" (<https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/43677-promoting-equality-interregional-perspective>) launched at the June 2018 Inter-regional Expert Group Meeting "Placing equality at the centre of the 2030 Agenda" (<https://www.cepal.org/en/events/inter-regional-expert-group-meeting-placing-equality-centre-2030-agenda>).

- entrepreneurial and technical skills, access to technologies, business support services, advocacy, and self-help networks;
- (b) development, validation and dissemination of knowledge tools to support mainstreaming of gender considerations within agriculture, forestry, fisheries, rural services, decent rural employment, migration, and social protection. This will include technical support in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of gender-sensitive agricultural policies;
- (c) promotion of equal opportunities for women and men to engage in competitive agriculture-based value chain development;
- (d) addressing gender-related constraints to the transformation from informal to formal growth-oriented businesses;
- (e) promotion of female investors and entrepreneurial role models, as well as knowledge and mentoring networks at the local, national, regional, and international levels;
- (f) increasing opportunities for both girls and boys to make life choices that go beyond gender-limiting cultural norms by empowering them with entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and knowledge;
- (g) programmes to improve gender equality and rural women's economic empowerment, including through learning and exchange programmes, South-South Cooperation and regional networks;
- (h) creation and facilitation of multi-stakeholder policy dialogues, ensuring the participation of rural women in policy processes;
- (i) gender sensitive approaches to community mobilization, people's empowerment and women's leadership in national policies, strategies and programmes, including institutions in cross-sectoral planning; and
- (j) capacity development of rural women's organizations in the agricultural sector and off-farm activities.

95. Regarding health inequalities, the plan of action will work with governments to review national health programmes, assess barriers to accessing services, and integrate a focus on equity, gender and human rights into health sector planning. In addition, UN organizations will convene global expert groups, forums and partnerships on equity, gender and human rights in health and monitor and report on the global situation and trends in relation to health inequality. Support for regional capacity for monitoring equity, gender equality and human rights in health will be bolstered.

f) Addressing climate change and the intensification of natural hazards

96. Climate change and natural hazards exert enormous costs – both economic and in terms of human lives – on sustainable development and risk exacerbating many dimensions of poverty and inequality. These challenges need to be addressed through measures of mitigation and prevention to tackle climate change and natural hazards directly. Ensuring that climate change already underway does not significantly set back poverty eradication, through its impact on households with natural resource-based livelihoods, and more specifically on women, children, youth and vulnerable and marginalized groups, is essential. Measures of mitigation and adaptation as well as disaster risk reduction also hold the potential of contributing significantly to poverty eradication. It is therefore important to integrate climate change mitigation and adaption and disaster risk reduction across UN system efforts in support of the poverty eradication related internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals, and climate justice.

97. Under this theme, UN organizations will aim to strengthen the capacity of countries to build resilience to protracted crises, disasters, and extreme climate events. They will enable the development and support the implementation of integrated policy approaches including social protection, to mitigate and adapt to climate change at national and international levels. A key issue for action is the reduction of the exposure and vulnerability to disasters of poor people, especially those who live in rural areas and depend on natural resources.

98. UNEP, WHO, ILO, FAO, WFP, UN Women and regional commissions are collaborating on this theme offering research and analysis, policy advice, technical support, capacity building and training. The promotion of coherence between poverty eradication and climate change policies is a major focus of this work, making full use of the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Action Initiative.

Deliverables

99. Resilience in the face of the effects of climate change is vital for successful poverty eradication. Promoting coherence between poverty reduction and climate change initiatives will therefore be a major plank of the Action Plan and include research on linkages between poverty and climate change and policy responses. Building climate resilient health systems through improved public health programming and well-planned adaptation measures is an important case in point. Similarly, climate mitigation, adaptation and risk reduction policies and programmes will target measures that address the challenges faced by the poor in a gender responsive manner. Gender equality and women's empowerment strategies will be systematically incorporated in climate change responses at the local, national and international levels. Risk-informed and shock responsive social protection systems will be set up. Inclusive sustainable production to mitigate climate change and foster green jobs will be promoted. Countries will receive support for the implementation of the Paris agreement and National Determined Contributions (NDCs). This will include building countries capacity for Climate Information and Services and providing support for climate governance (UNFCCC negotiations, national policies, legislation and strategies).

Action Steps

100. Action will be founded on the promotion of multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and inter-ministerial collaboration to mainstream climate adaptation and mitigation in poverty reduction strategies. The establishment and strengthening of vertical (international, national and local integration) and horizontal (cross-sectorial/inter-ministerial) coordination mechanisms for policy making and decision making will be promoted. Support will be given for the development of policy strategies that support the most vulnerable and poor in dealing with shock and impacts of climate change including through adaptive and gender responsive social protection. Taking account of the multidimensional nature of poverty and environmental sustainability, the Plan will foster a human rights-based approach to poverty-environment action (including through social dialogue). UN organizations will facilitate the sharing of good practices regarding resilience among vulnerable and climate crises affected communities and provide diversified livelihood strategies for communities that are highly dependent on environmental resources, including through fostering sustainable land and natural/environmental resources management.

101. Regarding health systems, assistance will be offered for tracking progress on climate action through a biennial WHO climate and health country survey. Data will be collected from ministries of health, in collaboration with other relevant ministries, to provide updated information on leadership and governance, building climate resilience in the health sector, promoting health while cutting greenhouse gas emissions, climate and health finance and health sector participation in the UNFCCC process. Using the WHO's operational framework policies to focus investments and country support for public health, health system strengthening, and climate change adaptation will be promoted.

102. Technical support, policy advice and advocacy, and capacity development and training will help countries to identify and address specific climate-related vulnerabilities that affect women, men, girls and boys. Climate informed research and analysis, including gender analysis, will be supported. This will include environmental and social assessments of the impact of climate change on the poor and vulnerable and the production and analysis of data on the economic cost of environmental degradation. The plan of action will promote an inclusive and consultative research process to create stakeholder ownership and ensure that findings are contextualized within local realities and policies.

103. Support for the adaptation of social protection systems will promote sustainable practices and minimize negative coping mechanisms. Coordination of social protection, resilience building, and climate change adaptation strategies will be emphasized, including through the integration of social protection systems with early warning systems regarding the impact of climate change. Adaptation of social protection will include the promotion of cash-based interventions combined with support for productive agricultural assets and technical training to cope with climate change.

104. Support will also be available for the formulation of policies, strategies and programmes to promote green job creation. Similarly, action will include the dissemination of good practices on sustainable agriculture and natural resources management, especially for the rural youth, training on the use of green agricultural technologies, agroecology and sustainable food production, and strengthening of cooperatives and farmer's organizations to boost their resilience and adaptation to climate change. Improved access to resources, services, markets, technologies, knowledge and decision-making for the rural poor will be a feature of integrated crop and livestock, agroforestry actions through the Plan.

105. Climate informed research and analysis as well as climate information and early warning systems will be strengthened through capacity building and support for climate observation. To support implementation of the

Paris Agreement, action will underpin development and implementation of voluntary guidelines on effective design and implementation of ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

g) Fighting poverty in fragile and humanitarian contexts

106. The 2030 Agenda commits countries to build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and countries affected by conflict and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events, conflict and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters. Such shocks not only provoke immediate humanitarian needs for food, shelter and medical care, but also can severely set back poverty eradication in the longer term not least by increasing all aspects of fragility and critically preventing access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food at all times of the year for all. Ending poverty and hunger in countries in special situations and in protracted crisis presents specific challenges that need to be addressed, related to insufficient or degraded natural resources, logistics hurdles to ensure access to food, and conflict. Integrated, nationally driven and country-specific policies and programmes supported by inclusive, multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms, partnerships and international cooperation are critically important.

107. An overarching objective of action in many humanitarian contexts is to address the root causes of fragility, conflict and social and economic instability by promoting policy and practical solutions, investing in the human potential of vulnerable and marginalized people by upgrading their skills and transfer of knowledge and technologies, thereby creating stable employment and income opportunities. A key issue for fighting poverty in crisis situations is support to internally displaced persons and refugees to secure better access to livelihood opportunities, finance, adequate housing with security of tenure, and basic services including social assistance. It is equally important to support host communities by strengthening income generating opportunities and risk management interventions, including through social protection and in a gender responsive manner. The Action Plan on this theme will aim to strengthen the capacity of countries to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the immediate needs of crisis-affected populations for food, healthcare, shelter and jobs which depends critically on timely and accurate demographic data to map the affected population.

108. UN organizations contributing to tackling poverty in fragile and humanitarian contexts include UNHCR, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, ILO, UNFPA, UN Habitat, and UNIDO. A key cooperation body is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) which serves as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination relating to humanitarian assistance in response to complex and major emergencies.²⁶ Actions during the Decade will focus on building capacity to prevent or mitigate crisis situations and the damage they do to poverty eradication through policy advice, training and research.

Deliverables

109. The starting point for UN action through the plan of action is addressing the root causes of conflict and social and economic instability by promoting practical policy solutions, investing in the human potential of vulnerable and marginalized people by upgrading their skills and transfer of knowledge and technologies, thereby creating stable employment and income prospects. Preparedness planning for crises will give high key priority to the development of assistance strategies for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees with increased emphasis on accommodation in urban settings. Support will also focus on reducing the vulnerability of host communities' livelihoods to falling into poverty through, for example, income diversification and social protection measures. Reinforcing economic resilience, restoring human security and upgrading local productive capacities will require the building and strengthening of institutions with a focus on bolstering the resilience of the most vulnerable, including youth and women. Helping countries make their social protection systems more shock-responsive is key. The plan of action also includes increased support for the analysis of the employment impact of measures to build peace and resilience with a view to improving policy design and implementation.

110. Regarding health needs in crisis situations, the Plan will support countries in assuring health emergency preparedness through, for example, effective infectious hazards management, emergency information and risk assessments, application of International Health Regulations, provisioning of emergency core services and operations.

²⁶ See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/>

Action Steps

111. The root causes of conflict and social and economic instability will be addressed through assistance to strengthen the provision of basic services, including shock-responsive social protection and food security, and support for vocational training and job creation not least women and youth. The situation of IDPs and refugees will be tackled through assistance regarding housing, land and property with a focus on urban settings where improved data collection is also needed. Accelerated and alternative learning programmes for refugees and IDPs will also be offered. Creating sustainable livelihoods for host communities is a high priority in the aftermath of crises in many countries with improving food security and creating jobs particularly urgent. The potential impact of employment-oriented policies for peace and resilience will be promoted using the recently adopted ILO Recommendation 205 on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience.

112. Regarding the health dimensions of crises, the Plan will support of the assessment of country health emergency preparedness and development of national plans to address critical capacity gaps. It will also develop strategies and capacities to prevent and control high-threat infectious hazards and monitor new and ongoing public health events to assess, communicate and recommend action for public health risks. UN organizations will work with countries and partners to ensure readiness to diminish public health risks in countries with high vulnerability and provide life-saving health services to affected populations in countries with ongoing emergencies.

VII. Modalities of delivery: building momentum, tracking progress, learning lessons, identifying emerging issues and adapting actions

113. Eradicating poverty in all its manifestations and achieving all the ambitious targets of the 2030 Agenda, will require a major global drive by multi-actor coalitions, alliances and partnerships to set in motion the needed economic, social and environmental transformations. The Decade should therefore be a ten- year rolling campaign by the UN system to demonstrate that, despite the daunting scale of the challenge of ending poverty, an inclusive, fair and sustainable future is possible through determined collective action by Member States with the support of the UN development system. Every 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty provides a focus for the campaign.

114. A central feature of system-wide action is therefore a communications strategy which enables the rich knowledge and expertise dispersed around the UN system to be brought together and focussed on practical integrated policies to support similarly coherent efforts by Member States. An impressive amount of information on poverty in all its forms and the policies to attack it is already available on the web-sites of UN organizations. A portal at the UN system level will help Member States, the UN system itself and the public at large to navigate access to this invaluable resource and promote integrated system-wide programmes. The portal will also facilitate the identification of further scope for integrated actions by the UN system in successive programming cycles to 2027.

115. Strengthening the capacity in countries for implementing the 2030 Agenda will require timely, systematic, appropriate and high quality statistical information. Many countries report significant limitations in producing relevant, accurate and comparable disaggregated data. Building on the UN wide effort to improve data sources as part of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the plan of action will therefore work to strengthen national statistical capacity and monitoring systems to ensure availability of multidimensional data on poverty. The goal is data of high quality, that is accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

116. The plan of action will make full use of SDG indicators to track progress on the eradication of poverty in all its forms everywhere. A progress report on the Action Plan based on analysis of trends revealed by the poverty-related SDG indicators will be prepared every two years.

117. The plan of action will also promote joint research and analysis by UN organizations on the linkages between different forms of poverty. Such joint research will enable the identification of emerging issues in poverty eradication, such as the impact of technological change on development patterns and appropriate policy responses.

118. Policy-oriented research will aim to support the capacity of Member States to develop and implement integrated strategies for poverty eradication not least in budget planning mechanisms and programme design.

119. Integrated policy-making and implementation will require the enhancement of collaboration and team-working skills of public officials of the UN system and Member States. The plan of action will therefore work

with UN training institutions to develop training modules for incorporation into staff development programmes that increase capabilities for integrated approaches.

120. To steer and manage activities under the Decade, UN organizations will nominate focal points for the Decade to serve on an online consultation forum facilitated by UNDESA. Every two-years the content of the plan of action will be reviewed to learn lessons and, if needed, adapt means of action and themes of policy focus to emerging trends and changing priorities.