

ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality

30 March 2016

Annotated programme

Inequality has been recognized by many as one of the most pressing social, economic and political challenge of our time. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, addressing inequality is a key challenge. The Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda aim to provide a vision of a shared future with equality and opportunities for all.

In particular, SDG10 pledges to reduce inequality within and among countries and calls for ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome. Reducing inequality also has a major role as a crosscutting issue in the Agenda. Inequality has strong links to other key SDGs, including those relating to poverty, health, education, peace and security and others. Addressing inequalities is thus instrumental for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In view of the variety of experiences, there is a need to analyse policy approaches to address inequality and find pathways towards inequality reduction and inclusiveness that could be universally applied.

10:00 am – 10:45 am Session 1: Opening

Opening remarks by:

- H.E. Mr. Oh Joon, President of ECOSOC
- Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General

Keynote Addresses:

- Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda
- H.E. Mr. Han Seung-soo, Former Prime Minister, Republic of Korea and Secretary General's Special Envoy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water

10:45 am – 12:00 pm Session 2. “Tackling Inequality – A moral imperative and goal of the 2030 Agenda”

Objective:

This session will conceptualise the notion of inequality as a moral and ethical challenge that requires global and national policy solutions. It will highlight theories of inequalities and trends, making reference to the close relationship between inequality and sustainable development.

The session will highlight SDG10, the stand-alone goal on inequality, as well as its crosscutting impact on the remaining Goals and the three dimensions of sustainable development. The session will also underline the role of civil society, academia and the private sector in addressing inequality in all its forms.

Focus Questions:

- 1. What are the moral and ethical imperatives to reduce inequalities? Are all forms of inequality equally challenging for society?*
- 2. How can civil society, the private sector and academia provide leadership in pushing for a comprehensive approach to reduce inequalities?*
- 3. Why are inequalities so persistent? What forms of inequalities are more persistent than others and how can they be addressed?*

Moderator:

- Mr. Ali Velshi, Al Jazeera America

Panelists:

- Mr. Bernard-Henri Lévy, Philosopher
- Mr. Thomas Pogge, Yale University, USA
- Ms. Mirna Cunningham Kain, Activist, Former Chairperson of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- Mr. Marc Fleurbaey, Princeton University, USA

Interactive Discussion

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm **Session 3. “Addressing Inequality: Policy priorities at the national and regional level”**

Objective:

This session will highlight current trends in inequality within countries. It will discuss inequality as a broad concept that includes horizontal inequality between different societal groups and vertical inequality between individuals. It will examine the multifaceted manifestations of inequality. The session will also discuss aspects of economic, social and political exclusion. The overarching objective will be to share concrete policy actions and experiences in addressing the drivers and effects of inequality at the national level.

Focus Questions:

- 1. What are the biggest challenges for policy makers at the national level with respect to inequality? What is the relationship between inequalities in the social, economic and political spheres?*
- 2. Some countries have reduced inequalities amidst a global trend of growing inequalities – what are the policy tools that countries have applied to reduce inequalities while fostering economic growth?*
- 3. What are the implications of inequality on sustainable development and on the 2030 Agenda?*

Moderator:

- Mr. David Nabarro, Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the 2030 Agenda

Panelists:

- Ms. Denise Dresser, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, Mexico
- Mr. Jonathan Ostry, Deputy Director of the Research Department, IMF
- Mr. Paolo dos Santos, New School for Social Research, USA

Interactive Discussion

**** 1:15 to 2:45 pm – Luncheon/ Guest presentation by Prof. Marc Fleurbaey
(By Invitation only)**

3:00 pm – 5:45 pm **Session 4. “Addressing Inequality: Policy priorities at the global level”**

Objective:

This session will analyze global trends in inequality, including rising inequality between the poorest 50 per cent of the global income distribution and the top 1 per cent of income earners. The session will identify characteristics of the international trade and financial system that contribute to inequality and will seek to provide policy solutions at the global level that can reduce inequalities. Speakers will also address specific approaches and partnerships that can reduce inequality between countries.

Focus Questions:

1. *How do we address inequality as a universal challenge? What are the most pressing priorities in reducing inequality at the global level?*
2. *How can the international community ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals effectively reduce inequality?*
3. *How can partnerships for sustainable development support policies that tackle inequality at the global level?*
4. *What systemic characteristics of the global economic and financial system reinforce inequality at the global level and how can they be addressed?*

Moderator:

- Mr. Michael Elliott, CEO ONE

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director-General, FAO
- Mr. Jeffrey Sachs, Columbia University
- Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary General, SEGIB
- Mr. Gilbert Hounbo, Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships, ILO
- Mr. Jan Walliser, Vice President, Equitable Growth, Finance and Institutions Practice Group, World Bank

Lead Discussant:

- Mr. Marcos Bonturi, Director of Global Relations, OECD

Interactive Discussion

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5:45 pm – 6:00 pm

Session 5. Closing

Closing remarks by:

- H.E. Mr. Oh Joon, President of ECOSOC

**** 6:30 pm - Reception (By Invitation only)**