



# ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

## TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

### E-Discussion on the 2017 ECOSOC Theme

*“Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges”*

#### *Summary*

#### **I. Introduction**

The main theme for the 2017 ECOSOC session is *“Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions through promoting sustainable development, expanding opportunities and addressing related challenges”*. Through this theme, the Council and the whole ECOSOC system have facilitated global engagement in support of poverty eradication, bringing together Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors. The 2017 ECOSOC substantive session is providing policy guidance, elaborating institutional and other requirements, and promoting operational support for eradicating poverty.

ECOSOC ensures the alignment of its annual main theme and the corresponding annual theme of the high-level political forum (HLPF) under the auspices of the Council to foster coherence. The 2017 theme of the HLPF is *“Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”*. The 2017 ECOSOC substantive session culminates with the ECOSOC High-level Segment (HLS) on 17-20 July and the adoption of the Joint HLPF - ECOSOC HLS Ministerial Declaration.

In support of the 2017 session of ECOSOC, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) convened an e-Discussion on the 2017 main ECOSOC theme from 20 March to 17 April 2017. The discussions focused on:

- i) Eradicating poverty and leaving no one behind, moderated by Mr. Pedro Conceição, Director, Strategic Policy, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP;
- ii) New evidence and innovations in poverty eradication efforts, moderated by Ms. Wenyan Yang, Chief, Social Perspective on Development Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development, DESA; and
- iii) Systemic challenges and opportunities in eradicating poverty, moderated by Mr. Vinicius Pinheiro, Special Representative to the United Nations and Director, ILO Office for the United Nations.

The e-Discussion generated approximately 330 contributions from 137 countries. The Discussion engaged 5,510 participants from civil society, the private sector, academia and the UN system. Many shared best practices and provided concrete suggestions for eradicating poverty, especially at the national and local levels.

This summary provides an overview of the contributions by the e-Discussion participants. The views expressed do not represent the views of the moderators or their institutions.

## **II. Common messages and themes**

The interlinkages among the SDGs, the cross-cutting nature of poverty and the need to address poverty in a holistic manner were cited in all three of the thematic windows. The need for high-quality disaggregated data and the role of big data were also stressed. Third-party monitoring and evaluation of the distribution of social benefits was recognized as an effective mechanism to ensure fairness and that no one is left behind.

Further common messages and themes include:

- As poverty is closely interlinked with education, health and environmental sustainability, governments need to provide comprehensive and coordinated approaches across sectors and ministries.
- Education, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and ensuring environmental sustainability were identified as the primary means for poverty eradication.
- The UN has a lead role in developing a stronger, more visible, and independent, monitoring system addressing systemic coherence and synergies in the fight against poverty.
- The private sector should be incentivized to become part of the solution, including through corporate social responsibility, impact investment and blended financing.
- Local civil society organizations play an important role in delivering a broad spectrum of poverty reduction and social services. These organizations also have an important role in programme implementation, including in monitoring progress.
- Co-operatives offer a value-based/people-centred model that can be a self-help solution for people to pull themselves out of poverty.
- The importance of promoting a participatory approach by empowering the poor was emphasized. The media is an important mechanism for encouraging civic engagement in government decision making. New digital applications should also be created to leverage the power of social networks to generate positive social impact.
- Addressing issues of structural deficiencies, including corruption at all levels and inequalities of resources and opportunity, are key to ensuring government services are delivered more equitably and resources are channelled more efficiently.

## **III. Key messages and policy recommendations by thematic window**

Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is crucial to ensuring that the 2030 Agenda leaves no one behind. The E-Discussion addressed the 2017 ECOSOC theme through three thematic windows.

### **A. *Eradicating poverty and leaving no one behind***

Thematic Window I on “*Eradicating poverty and leaving no one behind*” focused on policy adjustments to more effectively contribute to “leaving no one behind”, evaluating the effectiveness of current methods for measuring poverty and identifying innovative examples of employing data to identify and assess policy needs of those left behind.

The window was moderated by Mr. Pedro Conceição, Director, Strategic Policy, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, UNDP. There were 197 contributions from civil society, the private sector, academia and the UN system from all regions of the world.

Leaving no one behind in the effort to eradicate poverty is to return to the essence of our humanity. Although growth has lifted millions out of poverty, inequalities have grown in many countries and millions have also been left behind. Multidimensional poverty affects many groups, including: women, minority groups, rural populations, disabled, displaced and other marginalized people, reducing their educational and income opportunities. To ensure no one is left behind poverty reduction efforts must tackle the underlying drivers of exclusion and vulnerability.

**1. How will policies need to be adjusted in different contexts to ensure that they more effectively contribute to leaving no one behind in the achievement of SDG1 and related SDGs?**

The following were key themes related to the necessary adjustment of policies to more effectively contribute to SDG 1 and leaving no one behind.

***Strengthen support for inclusive social and economic empowerment***

- Poverty is closely interlinked with education, health and environmental sustainability. In line with the 2030 Agenda, governments need to provide comprehensive approaches across sectors, bringing together relevant ministries to address cross-cutting issues in a more coordinated manner.
- Education was widely cited as the primary means for poverty eradication. Government support should address multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination, and provide quality education and skills training to ensure the full, equitable and effective participation of all
- Promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment was also highlighted as a central strategy for eradicating poverty, with recommendations for improving women’s access to education, financing, birth control, decision-making, formalized employment, child care, and protection from violence
- Environmental sustainability must be part of the poverty reduction solution, addressing sustainable development from its three axes. With a rapidly growing global population stressing planetary boundaries, environmental degradation and climate change are becoming more important contributors to poverty and vulnerability
- Public social protection systems, backed by solid legal frameworks, are an effective means to reduce poverty and should be expanded in many countries, building on the concept of the social protection floor endorsed at Rio+20
- For rural areas, agriculture remains one of the largest sources of income in many countries and support to small farmers and other relevant informal sectors (such as small scale mining) should be part of the solution. Investments in basic (roads, housing, electricity) will also help bridge inequality gaps, particularly for rural areas.
- Special attention should be paid to people with disabilities, including mental health issues. Disability should be mainstreamed in all relevant development policies and practices to equalise opportunities and facilitate meaningful participation
- Private sector should be incentivized to become part of the solution. Job creation programmes are key, including efforts to improve skills-matching between education and job market and

government incentives to promote entrepreneurship or apprenticeships. Companies can be rewarded for positive social contributions along their life cycle, tracks direct and indirect effects on increasing and reducing poverty (e.g. desertification, minimum wage)

- Co-operatives also offer a value-based/people-centred model that can be a self-help solution for people to pull themselves out of poverty when external economic opportunities are scarce. The UN and member states could offer additional policy, institutional and financial support to the development of cooperatives as a tool for local communities to address their own needs and to help ensure that the wealth generated by economic activity remains in the communities.

#### *Strengthen democracy through inclusive education and access to information*

- Government transparency and democracy are important factors to ensure the provision of health, education other government services for equitable human development. Without access to reliable information it is difficult to hold governments accountable to deliver services equitably. Leaving no one behind is also therefore about ensuring that no one is left without access to information and knowledge of their rights and the possibility to act upon this knowledge.
- Adult education and literacy not only have to be focused on acquiring the skills that will be in demand for labour markets of the future, but must be oriented towards the construction of full citizenship, especially for women and excluded groups, with special attention to at-risk youth (89 million youth 12-24 years old are out of school in Sub-Saharan Africa).

#### *Strengthen governance and public management including at local level, address corruption*

- Many drivers for gaps in social provision have their origins in the lack of implementation and political will, monitoring, accountability, ineffective institutional administrations and lack of transparency.
- Take a more people-centred approach by empowering the poor. Excluded and vulnerable groups can offer a wealth of innovative solutions to sustainable development and should be part of decision-making at the local level. Their active engagement in the identification of needs can help promote their innovations which can help build feasible solutions to local poverty. Ex. Participatory neighbourhood communities of poor women in Kerala, India
- Local civil society organizations play an important role in delivering a broad spectrum of poverty reduction and social services. Governments should offer technical and financial resources to support local CSO service providers more effectively, including a greater recognition and support for the role of volunteerism as a source of community strength, resilience, solidarity and social cohesion.
- Tackling corruption at all levels is key to ensuring government services are delivered more equitably and resources are channelled more efficiently.

## **2. How effective are current methods for measuring poverty, in leaving no one behind? What lessons have been learned with respect to understanding the social and geographical distribution of poverty in order to identify the poor and vulnerable within countries?**

With respect to measuring poverty and tracking social needs the following lessons were offered in the discussion:

- In most demographic studies where representative household surveys are the standard for data collection, marginalized population segments are lost or grossly underrepresented.

Individuals from marginalized groups may be unwilling or inaccessible due to sensitive matters that define their marginality (ex. undocumented migrants).

- Disaggregated poverty mapping is a precondition for eradicating poverty and implementing the SDGs. However, in many countries the data are incomplete or several years old. Extensive and deliberate poverty mapping efforts are a necessary first step towards identifying and providing support to those furthest behind, particularly in post-conflict countries or countries with large geographical regions with sparse populations
- Following the identification of target groups at community level, a needs analysis survey and problem ranking of these groups should be conducted to assess vulnerability factors and service provision. This should ensure use of baseline studies, mid-term reviews and final assessments.
- In measuring progress on poverty reduction, it is important to avoid reporting in averages which often mask the realities and those most left behind
- Independent reporting - Poverty data should be compiled and reported by an agency which is independent of the state which captures data from the ground, from institutions including CSOs and local government agencies
- Civil society groups who deliver social programs and who have first-hand knowledge of issues and needs at a local level can be an important partner, including in poverty tracking, setting locally relevant targets, and programme implementation
- Third-party monitoring and evaluation of the distribution of social benefits is an effective mechanism to ensure fairness and that no one is left behind, while putting checks and balances in place to prevent some groups from capturing resources and leaving others behind.

**3. What are some innovative examples of employing data and the data revolution to identify and assess policy needs of those left behind?**

- The global Multidimensional Poverty Index ([MPI](#)), developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), supports a coordinated, effective and multi-sectoral attack on poverty in all its dimensions. Several countries are using their National MPI as a tool of policy coordination across sectors, programmes, and levels of government. The MPI is used to align government instruments (budget allocation, targeting, programme and policy design) with the aim to reduce poverty in all its dimensions.
- Extensive government social registries mapping millions of social programme recipients, such as Brazil's, can offer intelligent use of data for policy research, such as microsimulations to quantify potential comparative policy impacts and other relational analysis that can point to bottlenecks in poor access to distributive measures (Health, Education, Income, etc.)
- Quotas can be an effective mechanism to ensure racial, gender inclusion
- Traditional and social media could play a more important role in informing citizens about their rights related to social programs and to help ensure everyone is aware.
- Insurance mechanisms (both public and private) could be strengthened and developed to specifically support at-risk people during economic, social or family health shocks.
- E-learning classrooms provide great potential to reach vulnerable communities in developing countries, however, they do not always meet this potential due to lack of infrastructure, access to electricity and limited awareness of the opportunity
- The disaggregation of data is essential to achieve the no one left behind principle of the SDGs. EvalGender+ network, UN Women and partners have produced: [Guidance to Evaluate SDGs with an equity-focused and gender-responsive lens](#)
- One study presented a methodology for [Detecting and Analyzing Social Resilience in the Labour Market](#)

## **B. *New evidence and innovations in poverty eradication efforts***

Thematic Window II on “*New evidence and innovations in poverty eradication efforts*” focused on sharing of experiences and identifying good practices in pursuing inclusive, broad-based growth that eradicates poverty and delivers opportunities for all.

The window was moderated by Ms. Wenyan Yang, Chief, Social Perspective on Development Branch, Division for Social Policy and Development, DESA. There were 73 contributions from civil society, the private sector, academia and the UN system.

The broad range of inputs included contributions on issues related to leadership, education, access to information, employment, support systems, inequality, innovative sources of financing and the roles of NGOs, co-operatives and the private sector.

The key messages and policy recommendations from the window include:

### **1. What are good practices in pursuing inclusive, broad-based growth that eradicates poverty, delivers opportunities for all, including through creating employment and decent work opportunities and ensuring access to financial services and technology?**

- Broad partnership is critical. In addition to government, NGOs play an important role in poverty eradication through providing assistance based on their local knowledge and networks. Business leaders also have an important role to play in job creation as well as through promoting corporate social responsibility.
- Transformational leadership was identified as a catalyst for poverty reduction. It identifies solutions that benefit others and enhances motivation and engagement of followers by directing their behaviour towards a shared vision that focuses on bettering the people.
- India is looking at ways to create employment opportunities under an employment guarantee scheme that helps workers with jobs, wages and food in times when the harvest for the year is over and work is scarce. The need for the initiative to be monitored properly by the local administrators was stressed.
- Kiva is an NGO, which crowdfunds micro-credit loans for farmers, artisans, students, shopkeepers, builders or restaurant owners in more than 80 countries who are often financially excluded and cannot access affordable sources of credit.
- The Social Work and Research Centre ("Barefoot College") in India provides education and training for villagers from marginalized communities, in skill development, health, drinking water, women empowerment and solar power. Ensuring reliable Internet access in all communities is essential to fight poverty.
- The co-operative sector has been recognized as an important partner in achieving inclusive economic growth and job creation in implementing the SDGs, especially in areas such as poverty, hunger, quality education, decent work, responsible consumption and production, gender equality and in building strong institutions' The success of addressing local needs relies on healthy member-based cooperatives, as well as good governance, but expansion and advancement must be grounded in communities and further supported by strong and strategic partnerships with respective governments and national and international organizations.
- Co-operative enterprises exemplify many good practices for inclusive growth that can be used to eradicate poverty and deliver opportunities to all. Co-operatives offer local solutions to local problems, as they are enterprises rooted in their communities and are people-centred. Their open and voluntary membership principle helps to ensure that no one is left behind.

Building on membership and collective action, co-operatives' activities can achieve the scale necessary to meet the needs of its members and benefit communities.

- Since co-operatives are driven by people rather than only by profit, they can provide basic services in communities that private companies may not consider good investments. Energy cooperatives are helping to achieve rural electrification and water co-operatives are providing safe drinking water and water treatment services to remote populations. Co-operatives can also provide sources of decent work, by direct employment or by providing a space through which people can organise their work. Co-operatives are becoming an important means for those in the informal economy to transition to the formal economy and thus secure their livelihoods.

## **2. *What are new evidence and innovations in poverty eradication efforts through integrated policies and programmes that address poverty in all its dimensions?***

- Innovative entrepreneurial and sustainable business projects provide a great opportunity to alleviate poverty and to provide sustainable business opportunities around the world. They provide technical, financial and business expertise, an improved understanding of sustainable business practices, skilled and efficient training resources and access to small amounts of financing for projects. Food production and processing, crafts, tourism and recycling are among the business sectors that are most amenable to these projects. Many small projects, each employing a small number of people pose less risk and more opportunity than efforts to undertake a small number of much larger projects.
- Policies to eradicate poverty may include population control, reducing profit margins and strengthening research and development.
- An NGO in Kuala Lumpur has been providing free education to many disadvantaged young people. The activities of the NGO include monthly home provisions provided to needy families and spiritual camps where students are taught about values.
- There is a growing recognition that reducing only the level of poverty may not be a wholly satisfactory approach to poverty reduction. The approach must also be risk-informed, namely to take into account the vulnerability to falling into poverty. The poor will always be a subset within the vulnerable. Exiting poverty is not something that happens once and for all, people are frequently thrown back into poverty for a variety of reasons, often due to shocks. In this connection, the importance of strengthening resilience was stressed.
- Using dynamic information provided by big data to measure poverty across China, UNDP is exploring new ways to review and track poverty. UNDP is using a measure called the Living Standard Dimension of the Human Development Index that combines eight indicators to evaluate the provision of services across the country. The eight indicators include: access to piped water, access to sanitary toilets, access to indoor kitchens, access to living services, access to financial services, access to roads, mobile internet coverage, and nighttime light density.
- As an important step in exploring new modalities for financing development, UNDP has been looking in to crowdfunding as an alternative financing model. UNDP Bangladesh has developed the Youth Employment through Skills (YES) programme, which bridges the challenges of poverty and unemployment through an innovative crowd-funding campaign. The objective of the campaign is to set up virtual classrooms to transform unemployed youth into freelancers by teaching them basic Information Technology skills for 6 months.
- UNESCO's action for Africa 2014 – 2021 focuses on building institutional capacity for sustainable development and poverty reduction : The objective is to implement a stronger and better targeted strategy to eradicate poverty and achieve inclusive sustainable development by improving the quality, equity and relevance of education, by harnessing

science, technology and innovation to boost development and build related capacities and by using ICTs for development, gender equality and citizenship education.

**3. *What are ways in which opportunities have been expanded to empower persons living in poverty through participation in political, economic and public life?***

- Education, including career counselling, and civic engagement, especially at local levels and by youth, open up empowerment opportunities of empowerment to persons living in poverty that enable them to more fully participate in political, economic and public life.
- Those 'left behind' are the ones who cannot find a participatory forum to engage in meaningful conversations and have nowhere to voice their opinions. This is the opportune moment for the UN ECOSOC to strengthen the bottom up approaches that enable universal participation and empowerment, especially for those 'left behind'. The Neighbourhood Community Network promotes multi-tier global federation of neighbourhood parliaments for sustainable development.
- Kudumbashree was launched by the government of Kerala, India in 1998 to wipeout absolute poverty from the State through concerted community action under the leadership of Local Self Governments. The programme is built around three critical components of credit, entrepreneurship and empowerment and is one of the largest women-empowering projects in the country.
- The Pankowri Fisheries Project was created in Bangladesh in 1996, based on the idea of the possibility of better utilization of seasonally flooded lands (mostly privately owned) for community-managed aquaculture with support from the NGO SHISUK. Local households provide capital investment for the development of infrastructure and subsequent investment of a freshwater fisheries business with equitable ownership of shares in the community. While the NGO provided a platform for dialogue, ideas and the offer for support, it allowed the solutions to unfold from the farming community itself.
- UNDP has launched UN Social Impact Fund that focuses on impact investment, which aims to bring in the private sector to provide financial support to SDG-aligned enterprises. This would help them scale up operations and also benefit the ecosystem in developing countries. The public and private sectors can use blended financing models to create both economic and social returns.
- The All Together in Dignity Fourth World People's University is a project that creates opportunities to empower persons living in poverty through participation not only in political, economic and public life but also in the production of knowledge. People's Universities are spaces where people from different social backgrounds can come together to meet, discuss and share ideas.
- Poverty will never be eradicated until structural deficiencies such as corruption and inequalities of resources and opportunity are meaningfully addressed at the governmental level. However, the ability of a population to forge a shared vision of the future and commitment to a common line of action in the empowerment and mobilization of community members can also play a vital role.

**4. *How can access to land, natural resources and other assets be ensured to facilitate and support poverty eradication, while reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate change and other extreme events?***

- The importance of ensuring access to science, technology and information on water, food and energy was stressed. It is vital for such information to be freely available online.



- Under an initiative started in 2014 by the Indian Government, 25 cable television channels are providing free information on horticulture, irrigation and agriculture. An Internet based discussion group exchanges information on health, finance, government policies.
- The need for more prudent use of water was emphasized. Some poor people own some land that has become un-arable due to lack of rainfall. This land could be made arable again through measures including creating small ponds adjacent to farms and houses to provide water for drinking and cooking. The amount of money spent on urban water supply/availability could be greatly reduced by more prudent use of water as well.
- Development cannot occur without access to basic energy services and unequal access to electricity results in social inequality. UNESCO is playing a catalytic role in promoting comprehensive, holistic approaches to energy, climate change and sustainable development through its solar electrification of rural school projects in five sub-Saharan countries that also includes the use of modern ICT tools. By using locally available energy resources, this initiative addresses energy poverty while improving educational capacity and quality.

### **C. *Systemic challenges and opportunities in eradicating poverty***

Thematic Window III on “*systemic challenges and opportunities in eradicating poverty*” focused on identifying the key factors in ensuring national flexibility and policy space to address poverty and the ways in which the SDGs may contribute to strengthening the international enabling environment for poverty reduction.

The window was moderated by Mr. Vinicius Pinheiro, Special Representative to the UN and Director, ILO Office for the UN. There were 60 contributions from civil society, the private sector, academia and the UN system.

The key messages and policy recommendations from the window include:

#### **1. What are key factors in ensuring national flexibility and policy space to address poverty? What are successful strategies for preserving this policy and fiscal space in the context of economic, social or environmental shocks?**

- There is a need to develop a global and a country-specific definition of poverty. One cannot aim to eradicate something which was not clearly defined. Such a definition would also help ensure resources were truly being devoted to poverty eradication.
- There is a need to consider the multiple dimensions of poverty including a review of the theoretical, historical and policy perspectives. Greater efforts are needed to understand the cause of global abject poverty which affects some 4.3 billion people as well as a need to understand the constraints of the current economic paradigm upon which the SDGs are based. Such constraints include the effects of post-colonialism, unequal distribution of wealth, tax evasion, dubious arbitrage and unfair trade treaties.
- Questions were raised about the connections between capitalism and poverty and the need to address the underlying constraints of the current global economic system. It was noted that the steady transfer of wealth from producers to owners was one of the root causes of inequality. The theory that economic gains would “trickle-down” to poorer members of society, creating new opportunities for the economically disadvantaged to attain a better standard of living, was disproven. A more equitable approach through reinventing a new economic system and by changing a few constraints in the current system is needed.
- There were additional comments and views about the need for systemic change in the national policy space, with suggestions for monetary and fiscal reforms to finance the SDGs.

Monetary reform would necessitate a new global or national mechanism for central banks to guarantee a more stable control over the money supply without damage to the economy.

- Economic growth does not necessarily translate into poverty eradication and job creation. Poverty eradication can only be achieved through political will and social policy changes. Governments should put in place policies that create skills and jobs, social protection schemes and redistributive policies. The SDGs provide an opportunity to go in the right direction by highlighting requisite targets and indicators for overcoming such systemic constraints.
- There is a need to change education and business models to integrate social and environmental aspects in decision-making processes including in the area of corporate social responsibility.
- Engagement of the local community is a key factor in ensuring national flexibility and policy space – a public library space in each community could facilitate such engagement. Moreover, while national policies around poverty eradication are needed, such policies must also have a local component or context otherwise the threat of leaving no one behind could be compromised.
- The role of the media was cited as an important mechanism for encouraging civic engagement in government decision making to ensure national flexibility and policy space. TV and radio could donate free advertising minutes for such causes. New digital applications should also be created to leverage the power of social networks to generate positive social impact.
- In the context of addressing systemic issues, one participant highlighted the need for coherence at various levels of governance. Coherence at the international level remains the most problematic as it fuels inequalities and hampers poverty eradication through imbalances in the rules of international financing/banking, climate deregulation, trafficking, unfair international trade terms and also spurred conflicts which further marginalized the most vulnerable.
- It is impossible to think of eradicating poverty without first thinking about eradicating political corruption, investing in quality education, public health and job opportunities.
- The UN has a lead role in developing a stronger, more visible, and independent, monitoring system around systemic coherence/synergies and incoherencies of development and anti-development activities in the fight against poverty.

**2. What are some ways in which the SDGs and 2030 Agenda may contribute towards strengthening the international enabling environment for poverty reduction in key priority areas, such as decent work, social protection floors, globalization and trade, infrastructure, post-conflict reconstruction and climate change, including through development cooperation and multistakeholder partnerships?**

- Good governance was highlighted as one of the core areas for creating an enabling environment conducive for rolling out effective development programmes. NGOs have an important role to play in helping to implement such programmes including in monitoring progress. There is also a need to ensure more scrutiny over development projects to ensure they respond to local needs. Volunteerism, local authorities, and civil society could play an important role in ensuring effectively tailored programmes. An example of a holistic systemic approach to sustainable development has been developed by the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN).
- It is important to remain vigilant about the implications of what the future of work may entail, including challenges associated with the disappearance of jobs due to technological advancements. Efforts are needed to redesign the viability of how wealth is produced and shared. Social protection policies would become more important as jobs are transformed or phased out. Policy makers may need to consider providing a universal basic wage in order to respond to labour market transformations and in order to reduce global inequities that

perpetuate poverty. Furthermore, many communities require greater access to and knowledge about finance and entrepreneurship.

- Greater attention is also needed to enhance opportunities for technical education, particularly in developing countries. Lack of technical education has contributed to higher levels of unemployment in many countries due to severe skills mismatches. Increased opportunities for education and training are possible due to the rise in online learning institutions. Connecting institutions that provide online learning with opportunities for internships and volunteering could help strengthen skills development and employment opportunities for poor or marginalized members of society.
- Thus far an area where SDGs and the 2030 Agenda had done very little towards strengthening the international enabling environment for poverty eradication was in the area of knowledge as a public good - initiatives such as Technology Facilitation Mechanism remained marginalized. If efforts are not substantially enhanced, the knowledge access and conversion in developing countries would be a substantial missed opportunity and a root cause of failure in delivering the 2030 Agenda.
- Some have suggested ways in which the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda provide partners and policy makers the framework for poverty eradication. One example was by taking advantage of cross-sectoral partnerships to allocate resources like special purpose funds.
- Some ways in which the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda may contribute to poverty eradication may be achieved by partnering with multi-stakeholders and non-profit organizations and by allocating funds to for this specific purpose. Also, partnering with government, the private sector and civil society can help create new innovative policies for poverty eradication and connects needs with possibilities on a multitude of issues ranging from debt, technology and trade.
- Cooperatives were highlighted as a best practice in eradicating poverty and would provide a leading conduit for achieving the SDGs. ILO Recommendation 193 could form the basis for providing a roadmap for policy makers to promote cooperatives at the national level.
- In order for a community to benefit from decent work and to ensure a fair share in globalization and trade, local voices were needed in terms of allocation of infrastructure priorities and know-how regarding infrastructure maintenance, post-conflict reconstruction, development cooperation and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- While robust, stable economic growth was necessary to reduce poverty, it was not sufficient in and of itself. Economic growth must be sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and create decent work and livelihood opportunities for all, especially the poor and vulnerable members of society. It must lower inequalities within and between countries.
- In the context of national reporting on the SDGs, it was important that all volunteering countries present clear and concise reporting that ensures that food security, nutrition, poverty reduction, rural investment and sustainable agriculture are highlighted and received the highest-level of attention that is commensurate with their impact on national security and sustainable development. By providing reliable and disaggregated data, the Voluntary National Reviews could help all stakeholders plan new strategies and help define effective partnerships.

**3. Is a “level playing field” in international trade, debt, technology and knowledge possible through global partnerships for poverty eradication? If so, how? If not, why not?**

- There is great potential for strengthened partnerships to eradicate poverty. At the national level, governments should engage much more closely with civil society organizations to ensure more effective monitoring and review of development programmes. It was proposed that donors and recipient countries consider establishing bilateral or multilateral agreements with civil society organizations so they can directly access such development funding sources.

- There is a need to better engage civil society in development programming including by developing a more solid understanding of the role of civil society in driving development outcomes.
- International partnerships on trade could help increase country production of goods and services, expand SMEs and open up new trade opportunities. Technology would be an important catalyst to drive such partnerships.
- Knowledge sharing partnerships have great potential for disseminating information and replicating successes.
- Cross-sectoral partnerships are needed with an emphasis on education and life-long learning. Education is essential for fostering the right types of skills, attitudes and behaviours that are needed to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth.
- When addressing a level playing field, this concept pertains to fairness and allowing a chance for everyone to succeed in life. This could not however, be achieved without a collaborative and coordinated effort by various stakeholders in order to help cultivate knowledge and a conducive environment for policy implementation.
- A level playing field could also be interpreted as ensuring flexibility and adequate policy space to address poverty. Not every policy will bring perfect results. Therefore, continuous monitoring and follow up on the overall results of implementation is important, which should not be the sole responsibility of governments. There was great potential for civil society to participate in such evaluations.
- Many low-income countries are trapped in debt crises. There is a shortfall in the international financial system – the lack of an orderly and fair debt reconciliation mechanism with fair burden sharing between debtors and creditors.
- Many countries are still facing significant obstacles with regard to access to finance, capacity building and training throughout different stages of the technology life cycle, from research to development, demonstration, market formation, and eventual diffusion in the market place. An effective technology innovation system is needed to bridge these gaps.

#### **4. What are best practices in implementing policy frameworks and rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches in eradicating poverty?**

- Many respondents agreed that in any discussion about poverty, cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, protection, and good governance must be considered.
- There was a strong emphasis on the need to ensure women and girls were prioritized in poverty eradication programming. Poverty was eliminated when girls obtained an opportunity to get educated in science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) and obtain a career in science.
- All governments should promote gender equality and have in place appropriate legislation to promote women’s economic empowerment, labour policy reform, domestic and unpaid care work and sexual and reproductive rights. Moreover, there is a need for governments to ensure affordable and universal access to women’s reproductive health services.
- The feminization of poverty, which has many layers, including structural violence, discrimination and denial of opportunities, was highlighted. Access to education and to microcredit were important factors for breaking the poverty trap.
- Challenging the gender norms that perpetuate the feminization of poverty also entails challenging social taboos on female inheritance and land ownership for women, which can be eliminated through affirmative action and with government enforcement of gender-based policies and reforms.
- Gender-sensitive approaches and human rights are best achieved domestically through a participatory approach and adopted by higher governing bodies.

- When discussing rights-based and gender sensitive policy approaches to eradicating poverty, the need for including diversity in the educational curriculum was stressed.
- Investing in human capital is a cornerstone to achieving a healthy and successful nation and a more stable and balanced political system. The policies of a rights-based policy framework must be non-discriminatory and void of ambiguity and implicit biases.
- Poverty should not be seen only as a lack of income, but also as a deprivation of human rights. In order to achieve sustainable development, efforts to promote environmental protection is required since environmental degradation often leads directly or indirectly to violations of human rights.
- A human rights approach to poverty eradication should be firmly embedded in efforts to promote the empowerment of the poor. Such an approach to poverty also requires the active and informed participation of the poor including in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies.
- Governments must take special measures in order to protect the most vulnerable, discriminated and socially excluded groups, including effective protection against discrimination.