



BEYOND RECOVERY TOWARDS 2030

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS INEQUALITY



The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing inequalities in LDCs and threatens to reverse the development gains made during the IPoA decade towards inclusive growth, gender equality, poverty and income inequality reduction, and overall SDG achievement.

Join us to discuss how the development of LDCs during the post-pandemic period can reduce inequalities, and how to leverage lessons learned from the COVID-19 socio-economic responses to build a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable future. Hosted by UNDP's Inclusive Growth team.



**H.E. Ambassador
Tijjani Muhammad-
Bande**
Permanent Representative
of Nigeria



**H.E. Ambassador
Perks Ligoya**
Permanent Representative
of Malawi



**Rosemary
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UNDCO, Deputy
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Joy Kategekwa
UNDP, Regional
Bureau for Africa



Stefan Dercon
University of Oxford
and UK Government



Swarnim Wagle
UNDP, Regional Bureau
for Asia and the Pacific



**Tuesday 25 May 2021
13:30-15:00 (EST)**

Join us by registering at: bit.ly/PrepCom1Inequality

Beyond recovery & towards 2030: Policy recommendations to address inequality

Tuesday 25 May, 13:30–15:00 (EST)



Side Event at the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (PrepCom1), 24–28 May, 2021

This side event contributes in a cross-cutting way to the themes of the PrepCom1 meeting. It addresses the multiple inequalities which LDCs have been increasingly exposed to and seeks to find answers for policy makers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been exacerbating inequalities within LDCs and threatens to reverse gains in reducing inequalities made during the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA).

The Africa Regional Review Meeting in preparation of the Fifth United Nations Conference on LDCs (LDC5), was held in Lilongwe, Malawi in February 2021. Ministers from African LDCs and Haiti expressed concern that much of the progress made in terms of growth, gender equality, poverty reduction, income inequality reduction and SDG achievements were in danger of being reversed. Ministers called partner agencies for enhanced support in reducing inequalities via inclusive growth and sustainable development that includes the voices of the youth.

UNDP research confirms this view and shows that even before the pandemic, inequalities in LDCs were at high levels. As per UNDP's 2019 Human Development Report (HDR), “the unequal distribution of education, health and living standards stymied countries' progress” and “20 per cent of human development progress was lost through inequalities in 2018.” Latest research by the World Inequality Lab and UNDP re-emphasizes how inequalities in health, education and income were already at high levels before 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, inequality in access to healthcare has been starkly exposed by tragic events in South Asia, where only the most fortunate have been able to secure life-saving healthcare. With more contagious mutations of the virus spreading across Africa and Asia, it is feared that similar events may occur soon across African LDCs as well. As of now, African LDCs have been largely left out of the international roll-out of vaccines, with only 2 percent of the world's COVID-19 vaccines administered in Africa.

Can a new society emerge? Ways out of the pandemic via reduced inequalities

Early on in the pandemic, Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen hoped that the pandemic may become a catalyst for a more equal world and that a “better society can emerge”.¹ Sen argued that the COVID-19 pandemic may bring about a paradigm shift in international cooperation towards more just societies. However, inequalities in government capacity and revenue across countries have so far meant that many LDCs have not been able to support local economies as much as richer nations.

Inequalities in many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were evident before the pandemic and full SDG achievement was in doubt for many countries, as emphasized in the 2019 HDR. The pandemic is creating a dynamic of reversal of development gains made over the last twenty years. As a response, the UNDP 2021 flagship publication calls for an ‘SDG Push’ to redress course and

¹ <https://www.ft.com/content/5b41ffc2-7e5e-11ea-b0fb-13524ae1056b>

accelerate the realization of SDGs. The ‘SDG Push’ scenario proposes targeted interventions in inclusive green growth, including integrated policy choices in governance, social protection, green economy, and digitalization. Ambitious yet realistic, it is an effort that can mitigate the setback due to the pandemic and put countries back on a faster track towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

Against this background, the side-event seeks to discuss policies that address and reduce inequalities in human development in LDCs.

Format and run of show

Introduction by Mansour Ndiaye (UNDP Global Head Inclusive Growth) (5 minutes)

Presentation by World Inequality Lab (WIL) (10 minutes)

Swarnim Wagle (UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific): Reflections on WIL presentation and implications (7 minutes)

Intervention by panelists (7 minutes each):

- a) Stefan Dercon (University of Oxford)
- b) Rosemary Kalapurakal (UN DCO, Deputy Director)
- c) Antonia Joy Kategekwa (UNDP, Regional Bureau for Africa)
- d) H.E. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande (UN PR Nigeria)
- e) H.E. Perks Ligoya (UN PR Malawi)

Panel discussion moderated by Swarnim Wagle

Focus of the discussion: How can the main lessons from the socio-economic responses foster growth that benefits all in LDCs?

Preparatory Committee for the 5th UN Conference on the
Least Developed Countries (PrepCom1), 24-28 May 2021

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