



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

27 May 2020

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to invite you to the virtual High-level Meeting (HLM) on Poverty Eradication under the theme, “*Trends, Options and Strategies in Poverty Eradication Across the World*”. The event is being organised to mark the formal inauguration of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication. It is scheduled to take place on 30 June 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The HLM will, inter-alia, provide a forum to highlight the major impediments to poverty eradication and the measures needed to ameliorate widespread poverty and its attendant consequences. It is also expected to facilitate the exchange of ideas and good practices in poverty eradication. The draft concept note and provisional programme for the event are attached.

The HLM will be held via an online platform. An information note providing guidance on how to join the event will be conveyed in due course.

Further information on the meeting may be obtained from the focal points in my Office: Special Adviser on Poverty Eradication, Prof. M. J. Balogun, (murtala.balogun@un.org); and Special Assistant on Poverty Eradication, Mr. Yazid Abdull (yazid.abdull@un.org).

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my solidarity with Member States that are fighting COVID-19 and extend my sincere condolences for their loss.

While looking forward to your participation, please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



VIRTUAL HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRENDS, OPTIONS AND STRATEGIES IN POVERTY ERADICATION ACROSS THE WORLD

(An Event marking the inauguration of the United Nations' Alliance for Poverty Eradication)

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Theme: Trends, Options and Strategies in Poverty Eradication Across the World

Venue: @ Online Platform (TBC)

Date: 30 June 2020

Time: 10:00 am to 1.00 pm

A Snapshot of the Global Poverty Profile

Poverty may be defined as a condition in which a human being lacks the resources to meet basic subsistence and daily needs. There are many studies and reports on the state of poverty and inequality within and between nations.

2. Poverty is a worldwide nuisance. However, it has taken a worrisome and endemic form in certain regions, notably, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia. With a poverty rate of 41.1 percent in 2018, Sub-Saharan Africa topped the list of poverty-ravaged regions. The poverty rate for South Asia was 12.4 per cent; for Latin America and the Caribbean, 4.1 percent; for the Middle East and North Africa, 2.7 percent; for East Asia and the Pacific, 2.3 percent; and for Europe and Central Asia, 1.5 percent.

3. In adopting Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the world made a pledge to leave no one behind and to reach those furthest behind first. Moreover Agenda 2030 recognizes that ending poverty in all its forms everywhere is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. While the world has made progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1, poverty has been persistent and remains a major cause for concern in developing countries.

4. While the World Bank's International Poverty Line (IPL) of \$1.90 per day may appear to some observers as culture-bound and arbitrarily drawn, it serves as an income threshold below which one is considered "poor". Using this as its benchmark, a World Bank report released in 2018 notes that the world attained the first Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target by reducing the global poverty rate in 1990 by half in 2010, five years ahead of the scheduled date of 2015.

5. The report, however, adds that despite the progress made in reducing poverty, the number of people living in extreme poverty globally remains unacceptably high. The World Bank in fact estimates that poverty reduction may not be fast enough to reach the target of ending extreme poverty by 2030.

6. The Bank notes that more than half of the extreme poor live in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of poor persons increased by 9 million, with 413 million people living on less than US\$1.90 a day in 2015. It warns that if the trend continues, nearly 9 out of 10 persons in extreme poverty will, by 2030, be in Sub-Saharan Africa! The Bank reckons that the majority of the global poor lives in rural areas, tends to be poorly educated, and is likely to be employed or under-employed in the agricultural sector. The majority considered poor also falls under 18 years of age.

7. Of serious concern is the fact that even for those countries that have been able to move their citizens out of poverty, progress is often temporary, as economic shocks, food insecurity, climate change, among other factors,

threaten to rob them of their hard-won gains and to force them back into poverty. This underscores the critical need to devise innovative ways to tackle the challenge of global poverty in a sustainable way.

8. The onset of COVID-19 has, in any case, exacerbated an already grim situation. Before the pandemic practically shut down socio-economic activities across the globe in the first quarter of 2020, the number of people classified as poor worldwide was approximately 2.1 billion. Of this number, 767 million were living in *extreme poverty*. While the extent of the damage wrought by COVID-19 to the world economy is yet to be determined, the pandemic threatens not only to erase past gains but also to force an additional half a billion of the world population into poverty. The social distancing protocols dictated by the pandemic are already triggering plant shutdowns, decreasing capacity utilization, and employee layoffs across countries, rich and poor.

9. According to a study released in the first week of April 2020 by Kings College London and the Australian National University, approximately 850 million (roughly 8 percent of humanity) risked falling into poverty as a result of the sharp fall in economic activity in every part of the COVID19-ravaged world. It is further estimated that a 5 percent decline in household income in rich countries would automatically lead to sharp declines in economic opportunities in countries that are already poverty-stricken, as well as the addition of between 85 million and 135 million to the number in poverty.

High-Level Meeting on Poverty Eradication Trends and Strategies: Background and Justification

10. Even before COVID-19 struck and incapacitated economies, the international community has consistently identified poverty as a global challenge, one that is linked to other social, political and security nightmares. In its resolution A/50/107 of 1995, the General Assembly proclaimed 1997-2006 as the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. In December 1996, the General Assembly declared the theme for the Decade to be “Eradicating poverty is an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind.”

11. In its resolution A/63/230 of 2008, the General Assembly proclaimed the Second UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) with the theme “Full employment and decent work for all”. The resolution called for a more coherent and integrated UN system-wide response to poverty and reiterated that eradicating poverty was the greatest global challenge facing the world and a core requirement for the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, especially for developing countries.

12. In its resolution A/72/233 of 2017, the General Assembly declared 2018-2027 the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, choosing as the Decade’s theme, “Accelerating global actions for a world without poverty,” in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolution recognized some important landmarks during the implementation of the Second International Decade, notably:

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development;
- The Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030;
- The New Urban Agenda;
- The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development entitled “The future we want;”
- The Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020;
- The Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020;
- The SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway; and
- The Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008–2017); The Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024.

13. While recognizing the importance of UN and other international initiatives on poverty eradication, it needs to be emphasized that success in lifting millions out of poverty hinges largely on the proactive measures undertaken precisely at the place where its impact is most felt, that is, at the national level. To put it bluntly, poverty will continue to deepen rather than abate where policy directions are unclear, where institutions are either weak or totally absent, where productivity and international competitiveness are not among items on the policy agenda, and where no attempt is made to install and *voluntarily* apply effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms.

14. The issues flagged in the preceding paragraphs are among those that were meant to be addressed at an annual series of Ministerial level policy dialogues (or colloquia). However, due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided to flag off the colloquium series with the organization of a High-Level Meeting focusing on trends, options and strategies in poverty eradication across the world.

15. In effect, therefore, the High-Level Meeting will set stage for, and assist the organization of, the subsequent Annual Colloquium series on Poverty Eradication Challenges and Priorities.

Objectives of the High-Level Meeting

16. The objectives of the High-Level Meeting are to provide a forum at which Member States can:

- a. Reflect on the role of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication in raising awareness about the measures that need to be instituted to accelerate the attainment of SDG 1 and the implementation of Agenda 2030;
- b. Deliberate on measures that need to be instituted to ameliorate widespread poverty and its attendant consequences, particularly, the consequences that are aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- c. Compare notes and exchange ideas on cross-national good practices in poverty eradication, especially the short- and long-term policies

that should be strengthened and replicated, to log in unbroken gains in poverty eradication;

- d. Reflect on the major (including policy, institutional, attitudinal, and resource) changes that need to be instituted to enhance production capacities within and across sectors, while, at the same time, making visible dents on poverty during and after the Covid-19 lockdown;
- e. Propose modalities for funding poverty eradication schemes, based on priorities identified by, and requests received from, Member States; and, hopefully,
- f. Reach a consensus on UN's role in meeting the challenges of poverty eradication and in accumulating measurable and sustainable gains within the shortest possible period.

HLM Participants and Structure

17. As the first in the Colloquium series, the HLM is expected to bring together Ministers and Ministerial-level officials handling poverty eradication matters in Member States. However, and in view of the ongoing public health emergency, participation in the HLM has been restricted to New York-based representatives of Member States, notably, Permanent Representatives and Deputy Permanent Representatives.

18. The HLM comprises four segments. The first, the high-level segment, will feature addresses by the PGA, the President of ECOSOC, the Secretary-General, and the Co-Chairs of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication. The second segment will bring together a panel of experts to make brief (*no longer than 10-minute*) presentations on aspects of the Meeting's overarching theme. The third segment will afford Member States an opportunity not only to ask the Panelists relevant questions but also to share knowledge of good (or, as the case may be, failed) practices in poverty eradication. The interventions are expected to be brief, leaving Member States the option of depositing detailed written statements with the OPGA. The fourth and final segment is devoted to closing formalities.

19. The panel discussions and the follow-up Member States' interventions will be presided over by a Moderator, who will direct appropriately framed guiding questions to each Panelist and ensure effective management of time.

20. Hopefully, when the public health situation returns to normal, the Colloquium series will continue to be organized annually and, as originally expected, to be attended by Ministers and officials of equivalent rank.

Outcome document

21. A summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the HLM will be prepared and circulated to Member States.



HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRENDS, OPTIONS AND STRATEGIES IN POVERTY ERADICATION ACROSS THE WORLD

(An Event marking the inauguration of the United Nations’ Alliance for Poverty Eradication)

Date: Tuesday, 30 June, 2020

Time: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Venue: Online Platform

DRAFT PROGRAMME

10:00am-10:10am	Opening Remarks and Launching of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication by the PGA
10:10am-10:20am	Remarks
10:20am-10:30am	Remarks
10:30am-10:35 am	Remarks by one of the co-chairs of the Alliance for Poverty Eradication (TBC)
10:35 am-11:40 am	<p><i>Panel Discussion- Trends, Options and Strategies in Poverty Eradication Across the Globe</i></p> <p><u>Moderator-</u></p>
	<p><i>1. The scope and magnitude of the poverty before and after COVID-19: a global survey</i> (Panelist 1)</p> <p><i>2. Constraints on productivity, international competitiveness, and poverty eradication</i> (Panelist 2)</p> <p><i>3. The food and agriculture gateway to poverty eradication: moving from lamentation to action</i></p>

	<p>(Panelist 3)</p> <p>4. Sharing international best practices in poverty eradication (Panelist 5)</p> <p>5. Financing Poverty Eradication Programmes: the Way forward (Panelist 6)</p>
11:40am-12:50pm	Sharing Experiences and Good Practices in Poverty Eradication: Brief Statements by Member States
12:50pm-12.55pm	Vote of Thanks by the other Co-Chair of Alliance for Poverty Eradication (TBC)
12:55-13.00hrs	PGA's Closing Remarks