

Accelerating Social Progress to Boost SDG Implementation: A UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue

Monday, 21 July 2025
11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. EDT
Conference Room 11 and online
UN Headquarters, New York

Concept note

Introduction

With just five years remaining to realize the 2030 Agenda, the world faces a deepening social crisis. Economic insecurity, widening inequalities, and declining social trust undermine progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and threaten the foundations of peaceful, inclusive societies.

Despite significant gains in poverty reduction, more than 2.8 billion people continue to live in harsh conditions, leaving them highly vulnerable to shocks. Precarious employment, growing income inequality, and persistent discrimination based on race, gender, and other measures are reinforcing cycles of exclusion and insecurity. At the same time, trust in public institutions is eroding rapidly, with over half the global population expressing little or no confidence in their governments.

To confront these challenges, the [World Social Report 2025](#) from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) calls for a renewed policy consensus grounded in equity, economic security, and solidarity—principles essential to building inclusive and resilient societies.

UN DESA will organize a Global Policy Dialogue to explore how these principles can guide integrated policy solutions to advance several of the SDGs under review at this year's High-level Political Forum: SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Drawing on the insights of UN High-level Advisory Board members on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB), the event will feature two high-level panel discussions, interactive polls, and audience Q&A. It aims to generate actionable recommendations for governments and stakeholders to help restore trust, expand opportunity, and accelerate SDG implementation through inclusive, people-centered policy innovation.

This dialogue is made possible by the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund and will feature an in-person (if in a conference room) and online audience. All are welcome to join.

Format

The 90-minute event will feature opening remarks, a video presentation, two panel discussions, and an audience Q&A session. The discussion will be interactive and led by a professional moderator. Time will be reserved during the polls. The audience will be invited to submit questions in advance at registration and during the session using Slido.

Location

The event will be held in a hybrid format, in a conference room at UN Headquarters in New York or with in-person speakers and an in-person and online audience.

Platform

The event will be produced with the support of the SDG Studio technical crew. It will be streamed live on Zoom, UN DESA's Facebook Page, and UN WebTV. The audience can access the online Slido platform (via QR code and/or provided link) to participate in the polls, submit their questions, or vote up questions posed by others.

Language

The event will be in English with online multilingual captioning available in the six UN languages where possible.

Host/moderator

DESA will hire a professional moderator, Meggie Palmer, to facilitate this event.

Programme

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Moderator makes welcome remarks and provides logistical information
- Moderator launches interactive poll 1

Video 1 (2 minutes)

- Video from UN DESA on social inclusion (coming soon)

Discussion 1: Social inclusion as an accelerator for the SDGs (38 minutes)

Speakers:

- **Ms. Sabina Alkire**, Director, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford, member of the UN Committee for Development Policy
- **Mr. Parfait Eloundou-Enyegue**, Professor of Global Development and Brooks School of Policy, Cornell University, and member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (virtual)
- **Ms. Tatiana Molcean**, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe
- **Ms. Poorvaprabha Patil**, surgeon-in-training and the UN Major Group on Children and Youth's focal point on health

- **Moderator launches poll 2**
- **Moderator to ask each participant 2-3 guiding questions**
 - *What policy approaches are most effective in addressing intersecting inequalities—across gender, health, income, and geography—within and between countries?*
 - *How can investments in health systems (SDG 3) and gender equality (SDG 5) promote well-being and restore faith in governments' capacity to deliver?*
 - *What policies are needed to rebuild trust in public institutions?*
 - *What role do universal social protection and education systems play in strengthening social cohesion and public trust?*
 - *How can partnerships (SDG 17) and international cooperation be leveraged to rebuild trust, promote solidarity, and support countries in delivering equitable and resilient societies?*
- **Moderator to ask questions from the audience**

Video 2

(3 minutes)

- [Stocktaking: What will it take to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals? \(UN\)](#)

Panel discussion 2: Decent work, well-being and shared prosperity

(38 minutes)

Speakers:

- **Ms. Jayati Ghosh**, Professor, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and member of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (virtual)
 - **Mr. Norichika Kanie**, Professor, Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University, and member of the Independent Group of Scientists that produced the *Global Sustainable Development Report 2023*
 - **Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs**, Executive Secretary, UN Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
 - **Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær**, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination, UN DESA
- **Moderator launches poll 3**
 - **Moderator to ask each participant 2-3 guiding questions**
 - *What are the main messages of the 2025 edition of the World Social Report?*
 - *What policy shifts are needed to achieve equitable, inclusive and resilient societies?*
 - *What role do universal social protection and education systems play in strengthening social cohesion and public trust?*
 - *How does decent work restore public trust and social stability during economic uncertainty?*
 - *What policy levers can governments use to promote economic security, especially for informal sector workers?*
 - *How can labor market reforms, especially those aimed at inclusion and equity, help renew the social contract?*
 - *How can partnerships (SDG 17) and international cooperation support promoting decent work for all?*

- *How do we align this economic growth with environmental justice?*
- **Moderator to ask questions from the audience**

Wrap-up

(3 minutes)

- Moderator's final remarks
- The exit survey will launch upon the end of the event