



Special Side-Event at the 71st UN General Assembly

Measuring and Tackling Poverty in All Its Dimensions

22 September 2016, 1:15-2:30pm

Conference Room 7, UN Headquarters, New York

Concept Note

Introduction:

Poverty is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond the simple lack of income. Target 1.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals clearly recognizes this phenomenon and calls on countries to reduce poverty in all its forms by half by 2030. It is now accepted that ending \$1.90/day poverty is unlikely to mean the end of the many overlapping deprivations faced by people living in poverty, including malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of electricity, or poor education, among others.

This paradigm shift has called for innovation on the part of national Governments. This side event will highlight what a number of Governments have done to both measure and tackle multidimensional poverty. A growing number of countries have adopted an official national multidimensional poverty index (MPI) to provide the needed information to guide new policies.

Others that have not yet developed their national MPI have used the existing global MPI to tackle poverty. The global MPI thus not only helps to compare across countries but also provides essential information in some countries to guide policy.

National MPIs have been used for targeting, for evaluation, for the coordination of policies, for more effective budgeting, for improved communication and governance. By showing how different dimensions of poverty overlap and interconnect, the MPI helps to break apart the silos of poverty reduction. And because it shows which groups or regions are experiencing poverty most acutely, it focuses attention on the most vulnerable populations, helping to ensure that no one is left behind. It also provides political incentives to reduce the many different aspects of poverty together and rewards effective interventions. By bringing under one index a number of programs handled by different ministries, the MPI has been a powerful tool for helping to improve governance. Country experiences will be highlighted in this side event.

“We are almost blind when the metrics on which action is based are ill-designed... For many purposes, we need better metrics.” Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen & Jean-Paul Fitoussi (2009)

Background:

To date, the governments of Bhutan, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa, and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, have adopted *official* multidimensional poverty measures. A rapidly increasing number of new countries, including the

Dominican Republic, Panama, Paraguay, the Philippines, Senegal, Tunisia, Vietnam, the countries in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, and many others are developing their own MPIs. At the United Nations, the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) along with the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has been releasing annual updates of the global MPI since 2010.

The presentations and discussions on “Measuring and Tackling Multidimensional Poverty in All its Dimensions” will be hosted by the Government of South Africa on behalf of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN), with the support of the Government of Seychelles and OPHI. The MPPN is a South-South network of senior government officials from over 45 countries. It endorses the use of the global MPI for monitoring SDG target 1.2. It also promotes the design and use of national MPIs as powerful policy tools for both the eradication of poverty and better governance. The Steering committee includes South Africa, Mexico, Colombia and China as well as OPHI. MPPN members include, besides the countries listed above, Afghanistan, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Honduras, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uruguay and Vietnam.

Expected Outcomes:

Outcome 1

Presentation and discussion of specific ways to use an MPI as an indicator at the national and global level to support the monitoring of SDG target 1.2.

Outcome 2

Presentation and discussion on how an MPI can be used as a governance tool to inform policymaking towards achieving the SDGs.

Outcome 3

Discussion of reporting national and global MPIs or both for indicator 1.2.2 in the SDGs.

Format:

The High-Level Event will take the format of an interactive meeting, hosted by the Government of South Africa, with support from the Government of Seychelles and OPHI. Participation is expected to be at the highest level possible from representatives of national governments. The side event will take place on Thursday, 22nd September 2016, from 1:15-2:30 pm during the 71st United Nations General Assembly in New York, in Conference Room 7.