



STATEMENT BY
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AND EVALUATION AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL
PLANNING COMMISSION
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
AT THE HIGH LEVEL SPECIAL SIDE EVENT ON
“MEASURING AND TACKLING POVERTY IN ALL ITS DIMENSIONS”
HOSTED BY SOUTH AFRICA ON BEHALF OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL
POVERTY PEER NETWORK
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CONFERENCE ROOM 7
UN HEADQUARTERS

Madam Moderator

We are indeed, as Ambassador Matjila indicated, pleased to host this Special Side-Event entitled **“Measuring and Tackling Poverty in All Its Dimensions”** on behalf of the *Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network* on the margins of the 71st UN General Assembly.

On behalf of my Government and the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN), I would like to recognize our special guests/speakers for this side event, H.E Juan Orlando Hernández, President of Honduras; H.E Ralph

Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and H.E. Joel Morgan, Foreign Affairs Minister of Seychelles.

Excellencies, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you today to this session

Let me remind ourselves – that none other than the late former South African icon and former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela uttered these words. **“As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persists in this world, none of us can truly rest!”**

Fast forward to today, Africa and all of us continue to search for lasting solutions to deal decisively with the scourge of poverty in all its dimensions. This moment, now, calls for a greater sense of urgency, collaboration and co-ordination to connect the dots more presciently and to work even more assiduously. Those of us who are here today have the gift, the fortune and privilege to understand the immensity of that vision, the lasting power of his actions and the endurance of his influence and this indeed for generations to come. We must do so with restless commitment and conviction that poverty can be relegated to the dustbin of history.

South Africa holds the view that the eradication of poverty remains the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for this to be effected through the provision of an adequate mechanism and means of implementation. We reiterate that the fulfilment of all previous commitments including ODA remain crucial in the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

South Africa's first Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) showed progress at the level of census districts over 10 years, bringing together a breadth of vision with precision of measurement locally. The MPI vividly captured the diverse elements of poverty better than any single measure could. MPI maps showed, starkly, the on-going pockets of poverty and assisted our government as to how to fight these.

South Africa seeks to ensure that its MPI reflects the voices and values of poor people and their communities. Statistics SA recently undertook an innovative community survey asking people what dimensions matter most to them. This information is being used in the next generation of poverty assessments.

Madam Moderator: I wish to share some of the results. The results indicate a significant drop in the proportion of households that were multidimensionally poor between 2001 and 2011 from 17.9% to 8.0% thus moving 17 million people out of poverty.

However, in the last five years this drop was only a percentage point. A slight decrease in the intensity of poverty was experienced from 43.9% in 2001 to 42.3% in 2011. However, there was a slight increase between 2011 and 2016 from 42.3% to 42.8%.

A disaggregation by province, district and municipality indicates that the national drop in poverty was recorded by all between 2001 and 2011. However, between 2011 and 2016 the tide did not lift all boats, with some improving whilst others regressed.

Just over a quarter of the municipalities managed to reduce both poverty headcount and intensity of poverty between 2011 and 2016. What is the driver of poverty? Unemployment and fewer years of schooling are the major contributors of poverty in South Africa and the contribution of unemployment is growing rapidly. In 2001 unemployment contributed 33%, in 2011 it contributed 40%% and in 2016 it contributed 52% to the poverty situation of this country.

South Africa supports the global MPI as a monitoring tool for SDG 1, which refers to tackling poverty in all its dimensions. StatsSA adopted the MPI as a lead indicator for Africa on poverty. South Africa also worked closely with other African countries in the Inter-Agency Expert Group (IAEG) process to include the MPI as indicator 1.2.2.

Your Excellencies and Distinguished Delegations, as I conclude, let me once more welcome you all to this timely Special Side-Event and take this opportunity to hand-over the baton back to you Madam Moderator, Dr. Sabina Alkire, Director of OPHI.

In conclusion: South Africa, expresses its gratitude to the United Nations Secretary General - His Excellency Ban Ki Moon to have deemed it fit to accord South Africa the privilege of hosting the very first United Nations World Data Forum. I am thus pleased to invite you all to South Africa to participate actively in this maiden forum - the very first United Nations World Data Forum to be held in the majestic city of Cape Town from 16-18 January 2017.

I THANK YOU.