



Social Development policies after the COVID-19 pandemic: reducing inequalities to make everyone count

Side-event of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

July 6th 2021

13:00-14:30 (New York time) / 19:00-20:30 (CET Time)

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As the world slowly emerges from the pandemic, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs remain the guiding framework for global development. The Decade of Action shall reflect on the efforts and adjustments needed to make good on the promise of the SDGs between now and 2030 and the lessons learned from COVID-19 will inevitably shape these reflections.

In that context, we call on to the importance of tackling Goal 10 on Reducing Inequalities as the best framework to promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all. Inequalities can take different forms and, social exclusion is one of them. It is necessary to ensure equal opportunity for all individuals and groups taking part in our society, independently of their characteristics, backgrounds or identity.

All around the world, socio-economic status has conditioned individuals' ability to protect their health and withstand the economic consequences of COVID-19. Unequal access to healthcare, housing, remote work or education, livelihood support and social protection has placed certain communities – many identifiable as migrants, racial, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities – in a position of heightened vulnerability to the pandemic, with disproportionate loss of lives and livelihoods. Building back better after COVID-19 and achieving the SDGs will require renewed attention to the social aspects of development, especially those related to education, employment, social protection and health care, as social progress rests on affording every individual in society the opportunity to reach his/her full potential.

The case of migrants is particularly eloquent. As many countries rely on migrant medical and health personnel as front-line workers, and migrant workers make up a disproportionate share of the workforce in sectors that have remained open and active throughout the “global lockdown”, migrants were disproportionately exposed to the health risks posed by the pandemic. Migrants in the informal economy have minimum protection in the face of job loss and reduction in income, and face challenges to access health and social services. While some of the measures implemented to contain the virus have at times worsened the living conditions of migrants, other measures have promoted their inclusion in the health and socioeconomic response to COVID-19, ensuring that no one is left behind.

One year into the Decade of Action to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, the global community needs to reinvigorate its approach and commitments in light of the post-COVID reality. As Club de Madrid Members have suggested, such an endeavour requires a global consensus at the highest political level, one that can probably best be organized and achieved in the context of a Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD II) that will allow us to assess the situation globally and comprehensively, spur the final stretch of

implementation of the 2030 Agenda and lay the foundation for a renewed commitment to a post-2030 global development framework, a new social contract, apt to deliver on long-pursued objectives of social justice and inclusion, already enunciated in the milestone Copenhagen Declaration of 1995 .

Club de Madrid, a unique assembly of more than 100 democratic, former Presidents and Prime Ministers from over 70 countries, is determined to promote social inclusion and, building on its recent engagement in countries such as Pakistan and Paraguay, to contribute with a reflection on the importance of including marginalized groups and minorities in crafting and implementing development policies, offering concrete examples of good practices in doing so.

Objectives

General

- Increased awareness among UN Member States and key international stakeholders on the importance of ensuring that SDG implementation plans adequately address the increasing social inequalities within and amongst countries often overlooked social inequalities.

Specifics

- Explore how the UN and the rest of the multilateral system can more effectively reinforce global and national social development frameworks with specific emphasis on the achievement of SDG 10 on Reducing Inequalities.
- Encourage Member States to share assessments on the inclusion/exclusion of marginalized groups as a first step in fostering their inclusion, pro-actively acknowledging minorities, migrants and other vulnerable populations often absent in SDG implementation and monitoring plans.
- Promote and mobilize political will towards a new global consensus on social development with the concurrence of the broad global community and its multiple stakeholders.