

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
“Review of SDG Implementation and interrelations among goals:

Discussion on SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities”

July 11, 2019, 3:00-6:00pm, Conference Room 4

Remarks by Eun Mee Kim

I. First Intervention

- As a member of the Independent Group of Scientists (IGS) appointed by the UN to write the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2019, I would like to share some alarming findings from our report. Since the adoption of the SDGs, we have witnessed that some goals are not going in the right direction, which includes rising inequalities, climate change, biodiversity loss, and increases in waste from human activity that are overwhelming natural capacities to process them.
- Since today’s discussion is about inequalities, I would like to emphasize the impact of inequalities on education and vice versa. We have observed that education can no longer be the primary source of social and economic mobility for individuals, and that inequalities can lead to intergenerational poverty – i.e., inheritance of poverty – if inequalities in education are not resolved. Unless we are able to remove structural obstacles and institutional discrimination against marginalized groups, education will not be available to all.
- Marginalization of education has happened with gender minorities, but is also found in developing countries, rural areas, with racial and ethnic minorities, indigenous groups, and in children with disabilities, etc. We have also found that marginalization in one dimension, such as gender, is often compounded with other inequalities, which exacerbates inequalities.
- The key to solve this problem should focus on two levels: on the one hand, we must enhance opportunities for education for all individual children so that “No One is Left Behind,” but also recognize that, on the other hand, we must work to remove institutional and structural discrimination that has denied the right to education to all children.
- In developing countries, where we find the greatest gaps in primary and secondary education, we must not only work hard to improve education and learning at the primary and secondary school, but we must also help with establishing good higher education.
- At this year’s HLPF, we have talked about inequalities, and lamented on the lack of disaggregated data on inequalities, and hence solutions to them. In the GSDR 2019 report, we found another alarming discrepancy in the world in terms of research and

development (R & D) expenditure. The Global South has disproportionately little in terms of R & D expenditure, so it is natural that this had resulted in lack of sound disaggregated data from the Global South. Thus, in order to produce disaggregated data, especially from the Global South, we need to provide either through official development assistance (ODA) or other means of domestic and international support, higher education, and research capacity to produce disaggregated data. Higher education and research capability in data generation and science and technology in developing countries should be our top priority in our efforts to reduce inequalities.

II. Second Intervention

- There is no one in this room or any UN member state that would disagree that education is important for our future generation, yet we see that this is not realized in the government budget of our countries. If we agree that education has a transformative power to change the lives of individuals, communities, and countries; that education is a fundamental human right; and that education has multiplying effects in the health and well-being of people, and peace and development of our communities, nations, and the world, we must make access to education a top priority of our government's policies and budgets.

III. Final Intervention

- Many of us today have spoken about the need to have more disaggregated data to measure inequalities in order to make better policies to remove inequalities.
- In the GSDR 2019 report, we included an important map of the world that showed where the R & D expenditure were, and the total amount of R & D expenditure by nations and regions. The map showed a stark difference between the Global North and the Global South. It is a striking map that clearly implies where the gap in disaggregated data and science and technology is: it is in the Global South.
- Thus, I call for action that we must make it a priority to support the Global South (1) to enhance the capability to produce disaggregated data; (2) provide greater access to, and enhance, science and technology capability; and (3) establish higher education in developing countries so that they will be able to produce disaggregated data. The world must work together to support R & D, higher education and science and technology in the Global South through domestic taxation and national budget priority, and through global partnership using ODA and other means.
- This is an urgent matter that requires our attention in order to reduce inequalities, and truly "Leave No One Behind."