

An integrated approach to the Sustainable Development Agenda through poverty eradication

Submitted by: Dianova International
NGO in Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC of the United Nations

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda introduced a holistic approach to governments, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders in addressing challenges relate to the development of our societies. This comprehensive agenda presented us with an innovative perspective to work on each of the issues it conveys, highlighting the value and necessity of addressing the infinite needs of humanity, environment and institutions with an integrated and interdependent approach.

While every goal of this agenda should be perceived as essential to the realization of each other, eradicating poverty in accordance with SGD 1 is truly a basic requisite to enabling people's access to the entire agenda. Today, 12.8% of people in developing or emerging countries live in extreme poverty, compared to 44% thirty years ago. The rate of extreme poverty has thus been reduced threefold when we consider global population growth (4.5 to 7 billion). Yet, as positive as these numbers may sound, it still means that for approximately 900 million people the access to basic food, services and rights is compromised.

Despite enormous demographic pressure, extreme poverty has declined and living conditions have improved across the world over the past thirty years. Yet, these global data represent only a general trend that masks the persistent, widespread poverty. Moreover, the threshold of \$1.90 to define extreme poverty is very low, and ignores the growing wealth in countries that perseveres in benefiting only a small minority of the population.

Thus, while this threshold is instrumental to lifting populations from extremely inhumane conditions, in order to effectively achieve the full Agenda 2030 and its goals, governments and stakeholders should build their work in aiming for higher standards. After all, in most countries – if not everywhere, living on \$2.00 per day, for instance, still means that one probably doesn't have access to decent work (SDG 8), to quality nutrition (SDG 2) and education (SDG 4), and will likely face extra layers of challenges to free her or himself from firm gender roles (SDG 5) in her or his family and community. At the same time, it possibly indicates that the country is struggling with ineffective institutions (SDG 16) and is immersed in high rates of inequality (SDG 10).

Mainstreaming SDG 1 (no poverty) into all policies is, therefore, of utmost importance to address a much more comprehensive set of issues in the sustainable development agenda. To do so, it is imperative that governments and other stakeholders in so-called developed, developing and least developed countries identify what is the meaning of poverty in each of their specific contexts and in which ways it interferes with the interaction between the affected population in regard to each of the other SDGs.

For instance, discussing the relationship between poverty (SDG 1) and inequality (SDG 10) can be a useful tool to make such identifications. While it is true that inequality between countries has fallen

significantly, internal inequality has been growing expressively. At the same time, inequality has been undeniably instrumental in the perpetuation of poverty.

The population in developing and in least developed countries unarguably carries the heaviest burden of poverty and inequality. Yet, growing levels of poverty and inequality have been observed in developed countries which have often overlooked their roles in addressing these issues in their own territories. Although it may not be possible to apply standards of absolute poverty to some of these contexts, poverty has become a reality to the growing number of people losing access to services in housing, employment, education and training, health, leisure and culture, etc.

Also in developed countries, hundreds of thousands of people are homeless and face the dangers of the streets every day. Foreign undocumented workers are exploited in uncertain and unsafe jobs, while forced to pay excessive rents in slum dwellings. Millions of people live in substandard housing and are unable to feed themselves properly, living in destructive social and economic vulnerability.

Thus, eradicating poverty, as well as integrating its perspective into policies related to the achievement of the entire sustainable development agenda, is needed in every country, in its own ways. It is essential to consider the extent of poverty and inequality across the world to be able to, one day, grant all human beings, in every country, with a substantive enjoyment of the rights to life, liberty and personal safety.

Until then, the current living conditions of the world's poorest populations is a call for action on everyone. Likewise, there is an urgent need to aid the growing number of people in socially vulnerable situations linked to the growing inequality in developed countries. In both contexts, any durable solution to these problems must promote the inclusion of the most marginalized as a fundamental requisite for achieving sustainable peace (SDG16).

Our societies have the means to address these issues: producing integrated policies that are capable of addressing poverty in connection to gender equality, education, food security, health, inclusion, and the environment is the only pathway to creating sustainable communities and peaceful societies. Governments, civil society and the private sector must learn how to work as mutual contributors to enhance each other's capacities to support the economic, democratic and social development of their communities. Partnership (SDG 17) is key.

A partner in this effort, Dianova International is a network of civil society organizations operating in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa. Dianova's member organizations contribute to the development of individuals, communities and organizations through a variety of programmes and interventions in the social, health and humanitarian sectors, maintaining strategic alliances to contribute to a more just and equitable development of societies.