High-Level Side Event at the United Nations General Assembly

Using the Multidimensional Poverty Index to Track Progress in the SDGs

19 September 2017, 11am-1pm
CR 2, UN HQ, New York

Concept Note

Introduction:

Poverty is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that goes beyond the simple lack of income. It is now widely accepted that ending monetary 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, and poor education, among others.

Multidimensional poverty measures, such as a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), can be used to create a more comprehensive picture of the lived experiences of the poor. They can show the overlap of deprivations associated with many different SDGs, encouraging integrated, multi-sectoral policies. They can reveal both who is poor and how they are poor—the range of different disadvantages they experience. As well as providing a headline measure of poverty, an MPI can be

> *"We need to build a great alliance against multidimensional poverty and assume and share responsibilities: government, private sector, civil society, academia and the international community because our goal is that no one is left behind." – First Lady Ana García de Hernández of Honduras, August 2016*

disaggregated to reveal poverty levels and compositions in different areas of a country and among different sub-groups of people. This focuses attention on the most vulnerable populations, helping to ensure that "no one is left behind". By bringing under one index a number of programs handled by different ministries, the MPI has been used as a powerful tool for helping to improve poverty reduction governance. Country experiences developing and using MPIs will be highlighted at this side event.

Background:

To date, the governments of Mexico, Bhutan, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Honduras, Pakistan, Armenia, Mozambique, Panama, and Dominican Republic have adopted official multidimensional poverty measures, with a rapidly increasing number of other countries in the process of developing their own measures. These National MPIs reflect their particular contexts, in much the same way that national income poverty statistics do, but are not suitable for international comparisons. In addition, since 2010, the United Nations' Human Development Report Office (HDRO), along with the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI), has calculated and reported an internationally comparable Global MPI.

The presentations and discussions on "Using the Multidimensional Poverty Index to Track Progress in the SDGs" will be hosted by the Government of Honduras, on behalf of the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN). The MPPN is a South-South network of senior officials from over 54 national governments and 15 international institutions. As affirmed in the communiqué from its 2016 Annual Meeting, the MPPN endorses the use of a MPI in the SDGs as a means of making visible interlinkages across SDG indicators, coordinating multi-sectoral policies, and supporting interventions that leave no one behind.

Expected Outcomes:

Outcome 1

Presentation and discussion of specific ways to use an MPI as a governance tool to energize coordinated action on poverty reduction

Outcome 2

Presentation and discussion on how an MPI can be used for tackling and reporting progress toward the SDGs

Outcome 3

Exchange on the successes of developing and implementing an MPI

Format:

The high-level event will take the format of an interactive meeting, hosted by the Government of Honduras, with support from the MPPN. Participation is expected to be at the highest level possible from representatives of national governments and international agencies. The event will take place on Tuesday, 19 September 2017, from 11:00am-1:00pm in the margins of the 72nd United Nations General Assembly and will be held at the UN Headquarters in New York, in Conference Room 2.