



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### **Ho Chi Minh takes lead in applying new poverty measures to design better-targeted policies**

**Ho Chi Minh City, 16 October 2014-** A seminar today highlighted the value-added offered by the Multi-dimensional Poverty (MDP) methods to the governance and delivery of public services. Representatives from Ho Chi Minh City's authorities, the central government and the National Assembly gathered in the City to discuss plans to implement the MDP in the City and useful lessons for the National MDP process.

The seminar on Multidimensional Poverty Measurement in Ho Chi Minh City was jointly hosted by the City's Steering Committee for Poverty Reduction and Improved Household Livelihoods and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with the Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI).

In the years since *Doi Moi* very considerable poverty reduction has seen traditional (income) poverty metrics become less relevant in mapping material deprivations, and especially so in HCMC (with a national poverty headcount of around 11.1% and an HCMC rate of 0.1%)<sup>1</sup>. Equally, the character of urban poverty is different, being less defined by livelihoods and more by deficiencies in key capabilities and capacities. These are all linked to access to public services.

Ho Chi Minh City piloted the MDP for monitoring, evaluation and policy formulation. The first Urban Poverty Survey (UPS) took place in 2009, as part of the UNDP project "Support to In-depth Study on Urban Poverty in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City". This survey provided basic information on multidimensional poverty. The second UPS, conducted in 2012, was part of the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey. It provided more detail data on the trends and scope of multidimensional poverty in the two cities.

The key concern of Ho Chi Minh City is to investigate the practicalities of MDP application in policy development and resource targeting. With UNDP technical and financial support, the City piloted data collection in late 2013 via a full census of households MDP characteristics in District No. 11 and among those on the poverty list (poor and near poor) in three other districts.

The results of the MDP census in these districts enabled the City to prioritize policies for targeted beneficiaries and areas of support. At the same time, it suggested ways to combine income poverty and MDP approaches in monitoring, evaluation and identifying poor people.

The seminar focused on results of researches on MDP specification, the uses of MDP and data collection models. Mr Nguyen Xe on behalf of the Steering Committee presented the plans for use and implementation of the MDP in the City. Documents shared at the seminar include a summary MDP results, policy paper and the Urban Poverty Survey (UPS) in 2013.

---

<sup>1</sup> Viet Nam Household Living Standard Survey, GSO (2012), poverty line is the nationally based one.

“Multidimensional poverty approaches have achieved global traction by providing a robust alternative to – and complement – income-based measures,” said UNDP Deputy Country Director Bakhodir Burkhanov at the seminar. “They are particularly applicable in Middle Income Countries like Viet Nam and in such urban context as Ho Chi Minh City, where poverty is more complex and defined by a number of interlocking deprivations.”

Mr Burkhanov praised Ho Chi Minh City’s use of multi-dimensional poverty as pioneering efforts. “There are enormous opportunities for the City’s work to further inform the national process, and to provide a template for replication elsewhere in Viet Nam,” he said.

The world-renowned team OPHI at Oxford University originally developed the MDP framework. It offers a flexible toolkit that can be tailored to different countries and localities.

With the UN support, Viet Nam is among the 32 countries in the world to pioneer the research and application of multi-dimensional poverty measures. This helps Viet Nam better understand the root causes of poverty and design better-targeted policies and programs.

***More resources:***

Speech of UNDP Deputy Country Director in Viet Nam

***Media contacts:***

Nguyen Viet Lan, UN Communication Team,

Tel: (84-4) 38224383 x121, email: [nguyen.viet.lan@undp.org](mailto:nguyen.viet.lan@undp.org)