

8th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

23-26 March 2021, Bangkok, Thailand

Virtual

Report of Roundtable on SDG 1 - 'No Poverty'



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2. **Moderator and notetakers of breakout groups:** Andrea Rossi, UNICEF; Rajesh Sharma and Sooin Bang, UNDP, Iria Touzon Calle, Yanick Michaud Marcotte, Tejas Tamobhid Patnaik, UNDRR, Heike Alefsen, UNOHCHR, Kieren McGovern, UNDP.
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1. Feedback received on the content of the goal profile during the Q&A sessions

- The goal profile should provide more information on gender perspectives other than those of women, it needs to include disaggregated information on LGBTIQ, persons with disabilities etc.
 - Suggested to replace “vulnerable groups” by at risk and marginalized. Those referred as “vulnerable groups” are not always seen like this since their skills and capacities need to be recognized. They can be presented as marginalized and populations at-risk, for example undocumented workers, persons with disabilities, etc.
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2. Policy recommendations on priority for actions to make further progress on SDG 1 in Asia and the Pacific

- 1. Build human capabilities and empower people and government's service providers.** Increasing investment in building peoples' capacities before a crisis, and not only during a crisis is necessary. Countries that invested in human capabilities earlier saw a quicker recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Such investments could focus on supporting people to build their own capacities, such as through alternative livelihood opportunities, and on building skills for household financial literacy to empower people to make informed financial decisions. Governments can work with the private sector to build human capacities. Partnerships with the private sector can also help cities to reframe their thinking and build upon gaps and opportunities.

Widening the scope of systems for human capacity development is necessary, in particular by equipping civil servants and social service providers at different levels of governments with the capacities to deliver broad responses. Officials working on reducing poverty could be stationed directly in the field and use a whole-of-society approach to strengthen human capacities and promote leadership. A multi-tiered qualification system could be developed for social service providers in government to support a broad-based public service delivery approach that would see a shift in public trust and improve public service delivery.

- 2. Promote and protect economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to social security.** Social protection programs are currently fragmented, and its coverage is low across the Asia and the Pacific region. Expanding universal social protection along the Social Protection Floors following a life cycle approach using the maximum available resources, in line with the right to security under international human rights treaties that all countries have ratified, and investing in people and social services, is key to reducing poverty. Social protection systems need to be enhanced through strengthening integrated, inclusive, transparent and accountable processes that are age and gender sensitive with mechanisms that allow grievances to be submitted and fairly addressed. Social protection programmes must be accompanied by other investments in good governance, such as independent and effective national human rights institutions and right to information laws. Participation and consultation is a key element of accountability in social protection programmes, and going forward, policies and programmes adopted without sufficient public participation must be avoided, as was the case in the context of Covid-19.

Social protection systems need to be universal in coverage, coherent with other policies and be disaster-responsive and risk-informed. While progress is noted in the adoption of national disaster risk reduction strategies, additional investments are required to strengthen multi-hazard disaster risk governance systems to enable multisectoral implementation of such strategies for effective reduction of risks and losses.

To this end, States must secure the fiscal policy space to guarantee minimum essential levels of economic and social rights and consider reallocating existing resources and ringfencing social spending.

For equitable financing, States must also ensure that the burden does not fall disproportionately on those left behind, and adopt fair and progressive taxation, address tax avoidance, illicit financial flows and corruption. As a lesson learned from COVID-19, we must also urgently address the underlying causes of vulnerability, marginalization and discrimination.

- 3. Build the resilience of poor and at-risk and marginalized groups and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to shocks.** Expanding the coverage of social protection is necessary for building the resilience and for sustained poverty eradication. Expenditure on social protection should be viewed as an investment in capital with return. The imperative of inclusive social protection is moved beyond its traditional protective role to promotive and transformative function -- a role which helps build resilience as well as reduce vulnerability and thus sustain human progress protecting from increased frequency and intensity of shocks including health shocks such as COVID-19. Enhanced risk-informed social protection systems, factoring in scalability and adaptability of social protection schemas in existing policies would contribute to enhanced responsiveness of social protection systems in times of crisis as well as enhance their value to prevent negative coping strategies, enable recovery as well as to reduce vulnerabilities to climate and disaster risks.
- 4. Enhance climate and disaster risk reduction action to protect life, livelihoods and reduce disruptions in access to infrastructures and basic services.** Management of disaster and climate risks is very much necessary to minimise the human and economic loss in Asia and the Pacific, a region which is most prone to disaster and suffers from higher loss compared to the other regions of the world. While progress is noted in the adoption of national disaster risk reduction strategies (with thirty countries in the Asia Pacific), additional investments are required in strengthening multi-hazard disaster risk governance systems to enable multisectoral implementation of such strategies for effective reduction of risks and losses.
- 5. Foster women's participation in all facets of decision makings for nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures.** To enhance economic empowerment by providing inclusive social protection, targeted efforts are required to address women's needs. It is important to recognise the transformational impact for women of increased ownership and opportunity to access to land and resources. Investment is needed in small-and medium sized enterprises owned by women and special support for women's access to decent jobs, while also reflecting the nuance of gender identification and the impact this has on the effectiveness of response measures. Social protection programmes must be more reflective of such nuances.

Crafting gender-responsive fiscal stimulus packages and social protection programmes is vital to achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable. Ensuring gender diverse perspectives and women's participation in all stages of decision makings for national social protection systems is a key to a more inclusive and prosperous society. There must be adequate grievance and redress mechanisms and a focus on formal as well as informal social protection systems.

- 6. Enhance the capacity for collecting disaggregated data and analysis.** It is necessary to collect high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics as mentioned in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Disaggregated data on who and how people are left behind is required for scalable and responsive social protection. Social protection should reach those that needs it most. We need data collection and management system to collect information on marginalized groups for governments to identify these vulnerable groups, and know where they live. Data is also key to ensure economic stimulus and other policy and programme initiatives and reach those who need them most (e.g., within the private sector).

Robust data, information and statistics systems are enabler to strengthen social protection system. Government needs to know who those marginalized peoples are, where they are and how to reach them.

Collecting comprehensive and disaggregated data requires building frameworks for enhancing data development and analytical skills in governments, like skills for surveying, GIS, and aggregation, in order to ensure quality and accessible disaggregated data is collected and made available. Securing access to demographic data for marginalised and vulnerable groups is key, as well as to accurate population measuring and demography for identification of tenure security (indicator 1.4.2), but developing data collection systems that anonymise data but that are still useful for analysis comes with both technical and social acceptance issues related to data privacy.

Governments should partner with civil society and the private sector to enhance their data collection capacities, in particular partnering with cities to identify their needs and options for digitalisation, and to promote city-led local initiatives.