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Virtual

Report of Roundtable on SDG 10 on “Reduced Inequalities”



1. **Responsible Officers** Ermina Sokou, Social Affairs Officer, Social Development Division, UNESCAP
2. **Overall Moderator:** Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, UNESCAP
3. **Moderator for breakout groups:** Iria Touzon Calle & Branwen Millar, Programme Management Officers, UNDRR, Andrea Rossi, Regional Adviser Social Policy and Economic Analysis, UNICEF, Pia Oberoi, Senior Advisor on Migration and Human Rights OHCHR, Sashini Gomez, Regional Policy and Liaison Officer, IOM.
4. **Rapporteur:** Saritha Ranatunga, First Secretary, Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in Thailand

1. Feedback received on the content of the goal profile during the Q&A sessions.

- Malaysia would like to refer to the Report of SDG 10, Figure 1 on page 2. The report stated the Gini coefficient was 0.41 in 2015. The official statistics for Gini coefficient was 0.401 (2014), 0.399 (2016) and 0.407 (2019).

2. Policy recommendations on priority for action to make further progress on SDG 10 in Asia and the Pacific.

The round table on Sustainable Development Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) made several recommendations on the Goal for Asia and the Pacific.

1. It recommended that, across the region, all countries needed to step up investments in universal, accessible, gender-sensitive and disaster-responsive social protection, in accordance with the social protection floor. If properly designed and implemented, social protection was a transformative investment in people. It boosted economic growth, dampened inequality, and protected against environmental and disaster risks. Social protection also shielded children from compounding risks. COVID-19 had brought these important functions of social protection into focus. Governments in the region should continue prioritizing human capital development through appropriate fiscal policies, such as progressive taxation.
2. It recommended that policies should be developed along the four pillars of decent work, including principles and rights at work, job creation, social protection, and social dialogue. Achieving equal pay for work of equal value required policies aimed at combating discriminatory practices and gender-based stereotypes, including concerning the value of women's work. It also required effective policies on maternity, paternity, and parental leave, as well as advocacy for better sharing of family responsibilities. As national economies continue to adjust to the challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 crisis, policymakers must be cognizant of the challenges facing low-income workers and those in the informal economy to ensure they are not excluded from the benefits of economic recovery.
3. It recommended that Governments should adopt and implement effective anti-discrimination legislation and policies, in recognition that inequalities are often the result of discriminatory laws, policies, and social practices that leave particular groups of people behind. The legislation should contain comprehensive definitions of discrimination and grounds for discrimination, which should include all aspects prohibited under international human rights law including sex, race, skin colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, disability, economic position, property, marital status, birth and migration status. Governments needed to be accountable for the implementation of legislation by ensuring accessible mechanisms that provided equitable and effective remedies for discrimination. Efforts were also needed to address unconscious bias in the policymaking process as well as stigma and discrimination based on local and historical particularities.
4. It recommended addressing the disempowerment of marginalized communities and their lack of voice and visibility as a root cause of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, environmental hazards, and other large-scale crises. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated acutely how the most vulnerable are disproportionately affected by shocks and unexpected disruptions, thus widening inequality gaps. Disaster risk reduction mechanisms needed to be inclusive, taking into account the vulnerabilities of all groups irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status, and built on traditional knowledge systems and practices.

5. It recommended that efforts to achieve equality must address inequality as a driver of precarious migration, climate and disaster displacement, and reduce inequalities faced by migrants, especially migrants in vulnerable situations. Migration should be a choice made free of duress and take place in a safe, orderly, and regular fashion, respecting the human rights of migrants and their families in line with international law. Regular pathways for migration, including bridging the gaps between recruitment and re-integration of migrants, needed to be enhanced and institutionalized through a multi-stakeholder approach. Governments should ensure that all migrants have non-discriminatory access to social protection, including through decent job creation, ethical recruitment and employer pay principles. Migrants' freedom of movement should be respected, including during crises. Mechanisms should also be developed to produce and share accurate, disaggregated data, including on the grounds of migration status, that are used to guide policy.
6. It recommended identifying those who were the furthest behind through rigorous analysis, as this evidence would be the foundation for developing inequality-reducing policies. Intersecting characteristics that aggravated disadvantage (or accentuated advantage), should also be explored, as ESCAP had recently started doing to support UN Country Teams' analysis. For example, when gender inequality intersects with other forms of discrimination, the impacts intensify on marginalized women and girls. Policymakers needed to emphasize the collection of disaggregated data, including on gender, age, disability, migrant status, and other relevant grounds. Additionally, strengthened regional cooperation for monitoring of emerging transboundary disaster 'hotspots' was needed, including disaggregated data highlighting the groups most at risk and comparatively most affected by disasters. For underrepresented and marginalized populations, citizen-led data and qualitative data might complement official statistics.
7. It recommended addressing a growing digital divide in the region by prioritizing digital literacy, infrastructure and accessibility related to digital spaces. Increased digitization held the potential to flatten inequalities by granting universal access to opportunities and services previously accessible only to some. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated how digital systems could exacerbate pre-existing inequalities and lead to discrimination, for example children without electricity or internet access who were unable to attend online school or workers in the informal economy who could not work remotely. Specific attention should be given to the existing and projected future digital divide in the region as it pertained to the socioeconomically disadvantaged, marginalized and excluded populations, older persons, and persons with disabilities.