

Poverty Eradication Cluster¹ – Position paper for HLPF 2017

Poverty is a state that should not only be defined by a lack of income but also as a set of multiple and cumulative deprivations in the access of fundamental human rights and dignity such as the right to food and nutrition, access to education, health, housing, decent work, lack of political voice and power. Multidimensionality of poverty and interconnectedness of dimensions need to be recognized to design policies and programs that tackle poverty in a comprehensive and holistic way.

Poverty has strong structural causes and governments, in this regard, have a crucial role to play in addressing these root causes and creating an enabling environment for each segment of the population to be able to enjoy their rights and have their dignity respected. Member States ought to start with the political reforms to make the 'Right to live in dignity' a fundamental right in their constitution – without which ending poverty will remain as a slogan. Addressing poverty has to be essentially linked to reducing inequalities.

Clear identification of the vulnerable and marginalized groups is needed such as women, children, persons with disabilities, the elderly, victims of sexual orientation discriminations, Indigenous communities, members of castes and outcasts (Dalits), (un)documented migrants, refugees etc. For many of these groups or individuals, constant stigmatization and discriminations push them into a vicious circle of poverty, powerlessness and exclusion. For children, poverty has devastating effects due to their particular life stage that lead to lifelong consequences.

To be able to break this negative circle, approaches to end poverty should be based on the values of human and environmental rights, democracy and justice (goal 16). People living in poverty should be seen as rights-holders and recognized as active agents in the fight against poverty. Institutionalizing participatory decision-making and implementation processes in a decentralized and inclusive manner are fundamental in order to leave no one behind.

Fostering a new model of development that is inclusive and sustainable for all is vital for poverty reduction. In accordance with ILO Recommendation n°202, the multi-pronged approach to address poverty should start with creating or strengthening national mechanisms of Social Protection which includes – in unambiguous terms - ending hunger by adequate provisions of food and nutrition for all (goal 2), provisions of free basic health facilities for the poor and affordable other health facilities (goal 3), safe and affordable housing (goal 11), free and compulsory universal elementary education (Goal 4) and water and sanitation (goal 6), access to full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value (goal 8).

In connection with goal 2 on sustainable production and consumption, agriculture plays a major role for the poorest communities in LDCs and middle-income countries and as such, needs promotion, product storage facilities, processing and marketing, insurance against loss etc. The informal sector gives employment to the poorest. Here, legal protection needs to be developed to promote decent work and cover not only informal workers but also give protection to migrant labors. In addition, sustainable models of agriculture that promote alternative systems that respect local indigenous practices should be encouraged as well as the establishment of cooperative means of ownership and production.

Gradual switching over to green development model, extensive measures for resilience against climate change and disaster are key. Innovative solutions towards technology transfer and increase of the quantum of development cooperation associated with adequate financing need urgent attention, if we want to fully achieve the Goals by 2030.

1 The Poverty Eradication Cluster is a sub-group of the NGO Major Group with a focus on poverty eradication and reduction of inequalities. The Cluster was created in May 2017 in connection with the theme of HLPF 2017 « Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world » .