

UNEP Input to the Report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)

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Through its core mandate to address the three interconnected environmental crises: climate change; biodiversity loss, desertification, drought and land degradation and water scarcity; and pollution, UNEP actively supports efforts to tackle drivers of poverty and inequality. Environmental degradation disproportionately affects the most vulnerable populations, and UNEP's work aims to integrate environmental sustainability with social equity and economic transformation. This submission highlights UNEP's efforts in supporting the implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027), as called for under General Assembly resolution 79/221. It draws from UNEP's policy and programmatic work, institutional developments, and field-level impact, showcasing how environmental action serves as a catalyst for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development.

I. Supporting Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Livelihoods

In 2024, UNEP supported over 50 countries to implement adaptation and mitigation projects, benefiting 3.5 million people and restoring 241,000 hectares of land. In Jordan and Nepal, these efforts enhanced water security and mobilized finance to reach national adaptation targets. UNEP also promoted inclusive economic transformation through nature-based solutions and green finance. The UN-REDD Programme advised 11 countries on safeguards for forest carbon markets, preventing emissions of 138 million tonnes of CO₂ and supporting forest-based communities. Furthermore, UNEP, in collaboration with UN-Habitat, WHO and the African Union, launched the Pan-African Action Plan for Active Mobility (PAAPAM) – a regional framework that empowers African governments to prioritize investments in walking and cycling infrastructure.

II. Tackling Inequality through Community Empowerment

In Asia-Pacific, UNEP and UN Women supported over 100,000 women in accessing clean energy solutions. UNEP's accelerator supported 100 green startups, 30 led by women, raising \$350 million since 2021. In the first half of 2024, 94% of UNEP projects demonstrated strong gender integration. UNEP also worked with Indigenous Peoples and local communities through ecosystem-based approaches. For instance, the Great Green Wall initiative in Africa, backed by over \$80 million, aims to restore 6.9 million hectares and benefit 5 million people.

III. Institutionalizing Poverty Eradication through Strategic Environmental Policy

In 2024, UNEP advanced its institutional efforts to strengthen the link between environmental action, poverty eradication, and the reduction of inequalities. As part of the development of the Medium-Term Strategy 2026–2029, UNEP is working to better integrate equity considerations into subprogramme design, project development, and monitoring. This includes a stronger focus on vulnerable settings such as disaster- and conflict-affected areas, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

UNEP has also been strengthening its efforts to integrate green accounting and green financing into broader strategies for poverty eradication and sustainable development. By promoting environmentally inclusive economic policies and aligning public and private finance with climate, environment, and poverty objectives, UNEP supports Member States in implementing transformative solutions that advance both ecological sustainability and social equity.

Looking ahead, UNEP will continue to draw on its scientific expertise and policy influence to support environmental solutions that help address the underlying drivers of poverty and inequality - promoting fairer, more inclusive outcomes through systemic change.

IV. Interagency Collaboration

UNEP contributes to the UN's system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication through joint initiatives with UN Women, UNDP, UN-Water, and FAO. Additionally, flagship UNEP reports such as the Emissions Gap Report, Adaptation Gap Report and Global Resources outlook guided decision-making at global forums such as COP29, the G20, and UNEA-6.

V. Recommendation

To accelerate poverty eradication, UNEP recommends:

- a. **Advancing the development of alternative metrics to GDP** that better reflect ecological sustainability, social equity, multidimensional poverty, and long-term well-being. Acknowledging the UN initiative, *Valuing What Counts*, which seeks to promote more inclusive and sustainability-oriented metrics, and in the broader commitments made under the *Pact for the Future*. UNEP's work—particularly in environmental science, sustainability reporting, and natural capital accounting—can play a critical role in informing the development of such metrics.
- b. **Promote a coordinated UN effort to strengthen multidimensional poverty measurement** by integrating environmental dimensions into existing frameworks such as the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), investing in national data systems, and enhancing methodological alignment across agencies—ensuring that poverty-environment linkages are better captured and used to inform policy and programming as part of the Decade's push towards 2030.