



**United  
Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

## **Aide-Mémoire**

### **UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY EXPERT GROUP MEETING: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY (2018–2027)**

#### **“ACCELERATING GLOBAL ACTIONS FOR A WORLD WITHOUT POVERTY”**

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) ▪ Addis Ababa

Conference Room 6

10 – 12 May 2023

## **I. BACKGROUND**

In its resolution 72/233, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period 2018-2027 as the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and decided that the theme of the Third Decade would be “Accelerating global actions for a world without poverty” in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to develop an inter-agency, system-wide plan of action (SWAP) for poverty eradication to support global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda, accelerate global actions for a world without poverty and coordinate the efforts of the United Nations system.<sup>1</sup>

Five years into the implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the world is facing multiple and intersecting crises, the most important ones being the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; conflicts, including the one in Ukraine; and climate change. They impact all the SDGs, threatening their achievements.

In particular, the world had made year-after-year progress towards SDG1 – ending extreme poverty – until recently. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, causing unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction. It wiped out more than four years of progress on poverty eradication and pushed almost 100 million more people into extreme poverty in 2020. The negative consequences of the pandemic are further exacerbated by rising inflation, and the food, fertilizer and energy price spikes resulting from the conflict in Ukraine. It is estimated that these combined crises led to an additional

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/united-nations-decade-for-the-eradication-of-poverty/swap3rd.html>.

75 million to 95 million people living in extreme poverty in 2022, compared to pre-pandemic projections, making 2022 the second-worst year in terms of progress made in reducing extreme poverty this century, after 2020.<sup>2</sup>

So, progress has come to a halt and at the current rate, nearly 7 per cent of the world's population will still be living on less than \$2.15 a day, that is, in extreme poverty, in 2030.<sup>3</sup> Extreme poverty is concentrated in parts of the world where it is hardest to eradicate: sub-Saharan Africa, conflict-affected areas and rural areas. In particular, without an “SDG push”, at least 492 million people, will be left in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa in 2030, and at least 350 million by 2050.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, exploring innovative approaches and data to accelerate poverty eradication is particularly important during the next seven years left in this decade of action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The multiple crises have also heightened hunger, malnutrition and famines in the world. The number of people affected by hunger globally rose to 828 million in 2021, representing an increase of about 150 million since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Eight per cent of the world population is projected to still be facing hunger in 2030. Hunger continues to rise in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2021, 12 per cent of the world's population faced severe food insecurity. An estimated 45 million children under the age of five suffered from wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, which increases children's risk of death by up to 12 times. Rising commodity prices have worsened existing inflationary pressures and global food insecurity, undermining efforts to eradicate poverty.<sup>5</sup>

The conflict in Ukraine has exacerbated the situation faced by millions of acutely food-insecure people globally. Severe grain and fertilizer export shortfalls following the outbreak of the conflict are estimated to increase the number of undernourished people by up to 13 million in 2022 and by 19 million more in 2023. In Africa, increasing famines, hunger and malnutrition are driven by insufficient resources allocated by rich countries to research and development (R&D) for increasing agricultural yields, including on how to adapt agricultural production to deal with the future levels of heat that climate change has brought; insufficient income for buying food; and reliance on food and fertilizer imports that leaves the continent more vulnerable to shocks in the supply and prices of these goods. The recent increase in fertilizer prices, which have gone up three- or four-fold, have pushed farmers to cut back on fertilizer inputs, which will lead to sharp reductions in food production this year.

Finally, the multiple crises have increased inequality within and across countries. In particular, another area where progress has slipped is gender inequality. At the current rate of progress, it may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality.<sup>6</sup> In many countries, the COVID-19 crisis has disproportionately impacted women more than men, in terms of gender discrimination and health effects for instance.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/pandemic-prices-and-poverty>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://blogs.worldbank.org/developmenttalk/stepping-fight-against-extreme-poverty>.

<sup>4</sup> AUC, UNECA, AfDB and UNDP, 2022 Africa Sustainable Development Report. November 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027): Report of the Secretary-General, A77/176, 15 July 2022.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2022-en\\_0.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2022-en_0.pdf).

As countries cope with shocks and revive their economies, they need to mobilize domestic and external resources and build households' resilience against future shocks. Therefore, it is urgent to explore innovative approaches to poverty eradication.

There is no unique definition of poverty as there are many aspects and dimensions of poverty. Poverty is a complex societal issue that requires everyone's attention especially to ensure an inclusive, resilient and more equitable recovery from the multiple crises so as to fully implement the 2030 Agenda.

## **II. OBJECTIVES**

In its 2022 Action Plan, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) has decided to “address poverty and inequality and leave no one behind in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic” as a first area to act upon in 2022. Mainstreaming work on poverty eradication and addressing inequalities into UNDESA's work streams as appropriate are key areas to be considered. UNDESA plans to leverage the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027) to accelerate coordination action in these areas to support Member States in achieving the SDGs.

The Division for Inclusive Social Development of UNDESA, in collaboration with the Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division (GPSPD) of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is organizing an inter-agency expert group meeting on “Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)”, to be held in-person from 10 to 12 May 2023, as part of the preparations for the seventy-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly and to contribute to the above key action of UNDESA. The purpose of the meeting is to bring together experts from the United Nations system, government, academia, think tanks, as well as civil society organizations to discuss key questions related to the implementation of the United Nations system-wide plan of action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, including the role that United Nations system can play to accelerate global actions for a world without poverty. In particular, they will:

- i) review the negative impacts of the multiple crises on the achievement of the SDGs, in particular ending poverty and hunger, and reducing inequality;
- ii) discuss alternate measures or data for monitoring poverty as well as innovative approaches (including digital solutions) for eradicating poverty;
- iii) discuss financing poverty eradication efforts, especially those that should be applied to low- and middle-income countries;
- iv) review shocks and countries' response and resilience crises;
- v) propose inclusive social policies for a sustainable, inclusive and equitable recovery from the multiple crises and accelerating poverty eradication to effectively implement the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027); and
- vi) review the progress made by the UN system to accelerate the implementation of the SWAP.

The meeting will allow a robust exchange of ideas that contribute to achieving the objectives of the Third Decade. Invited experts will present global and regional recent trends in poverty and

inequality, progress, gaps and challenges as well as good practices at the country level and among UN entities. The interaction will foster the identification of actionable social and economic policies as well as encourage greater inter-agency convergence and collaboration within the United Nations system in sharing knowledge, promoting policy dialogue, facilitating synergies, mobilizing funds, providing technical assistance to Member States in the key policy and programmatic areas underlying the overarching objective of the 2030 Agenda of poverty eradication.

### **III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

The meeting is expected to provide substantive input for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on the “Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)” to be submitted to the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly. This includes assessing the gaps, challenges and progress made in the implementation of the Third Decade, including COVID-19-related aspects, effects and response. The meeting will also review and assess progress made implementing the inter-agency system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication.

The meeting will produce the following outputs:

- i. Substantive short papers on the theme of the meeting, with concrete policy recommendations, prepared by experts;
- ii. Enhanced and better-informed dialogue between policy makers, the United Nations system and researchers on best practices for evidence-based policies related to eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions; and
- iii. A report of the inter-agency expert group meeting, summarizing the key policy messages and recommendations to be included in the Secretary-General’s Report.

### **IV. ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

In addition to inviting UN system focal points for the Third Decade, the Division for Inclusive Social Development of UNDESA will also identify and invite about 15 outside experts, taking into consideration gender and geographical balances.

Invited speakers are requested to provide brief background papers (approximately 5-10 pages, in English) to the United Nations Secretariat by **Friday 5 May 2023** for distribution to other participants. Each background paper should address a specific agenda item and include a summary of the expert’s own research and evidence from other sources, as well as references to relevant parts of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. All sessions of the meeting will be in plenary and invited experts will lead-off discussions of each session by presenting papers which will then be followed by in-depth plenary discussions. During the wrap-up session of the meeting, participants will outline the major conclusions and recommendations of the meeting. The Division for Inclusive Social Development will prepare a final report summarizing the key policy messages and recommendations.

Presenters are encouraged to prepare PowerPoint presentations and share them in advance with the organizers. All papers and presentations should be sent to **Ms. Meron Sherif** ([sherif4@un.org](mailto:sherif4@un.org)) and

**Ms. Hantamalala Rafalimanana ([rafalimanana@un.org](mailto:rafalimanana@un.org))** with a copy to **Ms. Claudia Beatriz Altavas ([claudia.arcenasaltavas@un.org](mailto:claudia.arcenasaltavas@un.org))**.

## **V. DOCUMENTATION AND LANGUAGE**

The documentation of the meeting will be comprised of relevant publications, documents and materials related to the theme of the meeting. The background papers and presentations will be posted on the Division for Inclusive Social Development's website.

The working language of the meeting will be English. Documentation for the meeting will also be provided in English.