

UNECE inputs for the SG report on Implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2017)

Structural Transformation, Productive Employment and Decent Work in the Context of a Changing Global Scenario

Innovation – or the systematic experimentation with new ideas – is essential for sustained economic growth and enhanced competitiveness in a dynamic global landscape, so decent jobs are created, and poverty reduced. The countries of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) have increasingly prioritised innovation to drive their transition to a knowledge-based economy and as a tool to meet national economic and societal challenges, including poverty alleviation and access to basic infrastructure and services. Policymakers of the SPECA countries have worked to develop and strengthen their respective national innovation ecosystems, reforming policies, institutions and processes in the areas of research, education and entrepreneurship while more generally strengthening public sector governance and the framework conditions within which innovation takes place. ECE has supported these efforts conducting Innovation Policy Reviews of these countries, which assess national innovation systems and provide recommendations to improve them. Follow-up knowledge-exchange and capacity-building activities, including in a subregional context, have sought to improve the effectiveness of public interventions on innovation and related areas.

The green transition will demand significant changes on the use of different types of energy. This transition will create serious challenges for particular geographic locations and population groups, whose livelihood was related to the exploitation of coal. ECE is working to promote a just transition, i.e. an integrated approach to sustainable development that brings together social progress, workers' protection, environmental consciousness, and economic success into a framework of democratic governance and institutional support. The work includes the identification of potentially affected areas and the proposal of pathways for the development of just transition strategies. A basic principle is that the transition towards the green economy cannot be delivered at the expense of the work force of legacy industries. Effective mechanisms for retraining and providing support in finding new economic opportunities, as well as providing social security in case of unemployment, should be put in place.

Human Capability Development: Addressing the Non-Income Forms of Poverty

ECE promotes exchange of experience and methodological work on measuring poverty and inequality, including the non-income dimension of poverty. Measuring progress towards SDGs on the reduction of poverty (Goal 1) and inequality (Goal 10) requires a comparable, multidimensional and coherent set of indicators. ECE is completing work on a set of subjective poverty indicators that could be used for international comparisons and providing related guidance to national statistical offices. Work is being conducted on how the concept of social cohesion is measured in different countries and to identify good practices. ECE will continue to promote the use of its harmonized survey module for measuring poverty. The work will follow the available methodological guidance, including the recently developed documents – Guide on Poverty Measurement (ECE, 2017), Poverty Measurement: Guide to Data Disaggregation (ECE, 2020), and Approaches to Measuring Social Exclusion (ECE, 2022).

The Future of Food and Sustainable Agriculture

ECE is member of the Issue-based Coalition on Sustainable Food Systems, which brings together several UN regional organizations in Europe and Central Asia to ensure a coordinated UN system response to cross-cutting issues related to sustainable food systems. Activities include advocacy, knowledge sharing and institutional capacity development, and emergency preparedness and

response-related information and guidance material. The work is organised around two pillars: strengthening multi-sectoral collaboration and programmatic support to countries and enhancing the focus on sustainable food systems for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. There has been progress in reducing the prevalence of undernourishment in Central Asia and the Caucasus over the last decades, but the rate of reduction slowed since 2014 and temporarily reversed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the region as a whole, the 2024 SDG Progress Report prepared by ECE shows that no target related to SDG 2 – Zero Hunger is on track to be achieved by 2030 and that acceleration is required.

In order to put agriculture on a sustainable footing and address food requirements, there is need to protect the natural environment, including water resources, prevent and restore biodiversity loss, mitigate climate change and improve the resilience of food systems to all shocks, develop economically viable and efficient value chains, support small holders and family farms, provide decent employment opportunities, prevent food loss and waste, address inequalities in food systems, and support the vulnerable and marginalized to be able to access affordable healthy diets.

Reducing Inequalities

Old age is often accompanied by increased vulnerability and risk of falling into poverty. ECE, through its work on ageing, is engaged in informing policy strategies which address areas related to income and housing, health and long-term care, prevention of violence, abuse and neglect, and social participation, while emphasising the importance of adequate data and research and the involvement of older persons in decision-making. The goal is to contribute to tackle age-related poverty and inequality, including through the mainstreaming of ageing into all policy areas.

Poor road safety conditions affect the world's poorest people the most. With more than 90% of road crash fatalities occurring in low- and middle-income countries, the devastation of road crashes disproportionately affects society's poorest and most vulnerable members. ECE manages a number of road safety legal instruments, related among others to road signs, traffic rules and road infrastructure and provides secretariat services to the UN SG Special Envoy for Road Safety.

Addressing Climate Change and the Intensification of Natural Hazards

In the pan-European region, about 19 million do not have access to improved water sources. Climate change is anticipated to increase water pressures and raise further challenges for the provision of water. The ECE/WHO Europe Protocol on Water and Health aims to attain a suitable supply of safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for everyone. Work on equitable access to water under the Protocol aims at enhancing access to water and sanitation for all, including poor, vulnerable and socially excluded people. This work has included the development of guidance documents and tools, support to projects in countries to assess the situation and exchange of experiences at the regional level. In addition, work is conducted on climate change that aims to increase resilience in the water, sanitation and health sectors. This work includes the development of technical guidelines and national capacity-building activities.