

## **Contribution of Poverty-Environment Action to Implementation of the United Nations System-wide Plan of Action for the United Nation Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027)**

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The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bring together development, environment, and climate concerns in a comprehensive and integrated agenda for change. As the poorest segment of the population are bearing the burden of the adverse impact of climate change, the case for poverty-environment mainstreaming is as strong as ever. There is need for scaled-up efforts to integrate environmental sustainability and climate change in broader economic growth and traditional development work.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) promotes integrated actions that exploit potential synergies in its existing programmes to accelerate progress towards the eradication of poverty through restoration and enhancement of ecosystems services, upon which the poorest rely for most of their livelihood. Its Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 commits UNEP to work to 'leave no one behind' while increasing its focus on the special needs of disaster- and conflict-affected States. It addresses the special needs of least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing States, facilitating access to finance, technology and innovative solutions to help them build more resilient and inclusive economies and societies in a post-COVID-19 world".<sup>1</sup>

Building country capacity to meet both environmental sustainability and poverty eradication commitments is a vital element in transforming current growth paths to achieve the SDGs. This will require uptake of lessons on integrated policy approach from joint UN programmes such as the UNDP–UNEP Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals (2018-2023), the successor project of Poverty-Environment Initiative (2005-2018), and the Partnership for Action on Green economy (PAGE) have helped to catalyse.

PAGE's approach to addressing poverty and inequality is based on "Multidimensional Poverty Indicators and Measurement Framework" and it's results are clustered around different "poverty inequality" related SDGs. For instance, on SDG 1, in Mauritius, PAGE has directly supported the development of the Marshall Plan Against Poverty and Exclusion, launched with the 2016-17 national budget, and the drafting of targeted policy measures to prevent extreme poverty. Its most important proposal – the Marshall Plan Social Contract – provides financial assistance to households found eligible under the Social Register of Mauritius for families in poverty. Under SDG 2, PAGE has supported the development of processes and tools in Brazil for the implementation of the State Government Integrated Family Farming System (SEIAF) and its subsystems in Mato Grosso, which serve to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication in rural areas under the State Agricultural Policy. Full results of PAGE's activities to support countries in eradicating poverty will be available in a forthcoming Annual Report which will be made available on the PAGE [website](#).

The UNDP–UNEP project on Poverty-Environment Action for Sustainable Development Goals, or PEA, received financial support from Austria, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, and the European Union. It implemented country projects in eight countries: Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Malawi,

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP (2021). For People and the Planet: the UNEP Strategy for 2022-2025, para. 40.

Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, and Rwanda; and technical assistance projects on Green Bonds, Blue Economy, Gender, and Capacity Building Platform, and in Indonesia and Tanzania.

The joint PEA project was designed to uniquely ensure that the environmental dimension is not left behind when addressing poverty. By building on the legacy of its predecessor, the Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI), the PEA project aimed at mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication into development planning, budgeting, and monitoring systems; public and private finance; and investment. An additional component of the Poverty-Environment Action project was the Technical Assistance Intervention which aimed at catalysing and broadening the use of poverty-environment mainstreaming tools and approaches through wider UNDP and UNEP programmes that contribute to the overall PEA outcomes and outputs.

PEA operated at country, regional and global levels through a two-pronged strategy of deepening and broadening support to countries on poverty-environment and climate mainstreaming. These two complementary tracks aimed to:

- Deepen mainstreaming efforts to integrate environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication into development planning, budgeting, and monitoring systems and into public and private finance and investment.
- Broaden the dissemination and use of the programme's substantial body of country level experience in the application of integrated poverty-environment mainstreaming approaches and tools through stepped-up efforts in knowledge management and sharing – including through targeted technical assistance to selected countries, South-South knowledge transfer and cooperation, and proactive engagement with key global and regional actors supporting national SDG implementation and acceleration processes.

Since UNEP's last input on progress made in implementing the inter-agency, system-wide plan of action for eradicating poverty, the following workstreams have been implemented:

- i. Inclusive Green Economy* – PAGE has initiated a workstream on Uniting UN's Economic Expertise for Green and Inclusive Transformation of Economies and Finance. This includes cooperation with the Development Coordination Office and training of Resident Coordinator Office Economists. One of the modules is on Multidimensional Poverty and Inequality.
- ii. Strong inclusion of poverty-environment and climate change objectives in national development plans* - Through PEA's support to targeted countries, there has been strong inclusion of poverty-environment and climate change objectives in national development plans and partial inclusion in sector and sub-national plans. This includes in Tanzania's Third Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III) and related strategies and Rwanda's annual sector and district development plans.
- iii. Localization of SDGs* - Countries have continued to demonstrate a coordinated approach in addressing poverty-environment through support to SDG implementation monitoring committees and ENR management (ENRM) sector working groups. For example, Mozambique worked towards coordinating linking of NDCs to government national plans and in Nepal, PEA has taken steps to assess the level of achievement of the SDGs at the country

level through preparation of the Leave No One Behind Framework and the SDG Localization Source Book. In Malawi, PEA supported the creation and coordination of the Agriculture Sector Working Group.

- iv. *Development and application of poverty-environment mainstreaming tools* - The support to countries and Technical Assistance projects has been achieved through development and application of Poverty-environment mainstreaming tools where environmental / social / economic data are collected, analysed to provide concrete evidence to government partners. Over 50 key tools have been developed.
- v. *Building blocks for shifting finance and investment towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication* - PEA accelerated its support to governments to enhance shifting finance and investment towards environmental sustainability and climate objectives for poverty eradication and improving the environmental sustainability of current investments. Rwanda and Indonesia have demonstrated an increased annual and medium-term sector budget allocations (including national and subnational levels) that reflect environmental sustainability and climate for poverty eradication. Through the Green Bonds Technical Assistance Project in South Africa, PEA supported development of the Technical Handbook on Issuing Municipal Sustainable Bonds followed by capacity building activities on the handbook.

Moving forward, following the Independent Review of SIDA on UNEP's Contributions to Poverty Reduction, UNEP is working to strengthen the integration of the social and economic pillars of sustainable development into the work of UNEP. This will be done by supporting the implementation of the environmental pillar with a particular focus on the 2030 Agenda principle of Leaving No One Behind (LNOB).

The proposed work will entail poverty to be approached from a multi-dimensional perspective. This will include incorporating a people-oriented, social, and economic development approach into relevant strategic documents and project design and implementation. The work will guide UNEP on how to further internalize development to ensure that the environmental goals of UNEP projects and initiatives are at the same level of relevance and importance as LNOB objectives. The work will also ensure broader UN system integrates environmental outcomes into their programming based on the strong interdependence between people and healthy ecosystems.

The work will take a poverty-environment nexus approach on integrating the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development into the environment pillar, specifically accounting for poverty in UNEP's work, and a Technical Guidance Specialist on environmental mainstreaming/integration of UNEP's work into the work of the UN development system.