

High-Level Round Table 1

Strengthening the three pillars of social development: poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social inclusion

Tuesday 4 November 2025, 3:00 pm- 6:00 pm

Questions assigned to panelists:

Panellist: H. E. Ms. Diana Pokie, Minister of Social Affairs and Public Housing, Suriname

- **Question 1:** What specific follow-up actions, commitments and partnerships can help strengthen the three pillars of social development in the decades ahead?

Answer:

- Firstly, it is of paramount importance to ensure strong political commitment to the implementation of the three pillars. No policy action can succeed without adequate government investment and the allocation of sufficient financial resources. Such commitment enables governments to implement the Doha Commitments in a coherent, integrated, and coordinated manner, within both existing and new policy frameworks.
- To effectively address poverty, a whole-of-government approach is required, with the Ministry responsible for social development taking the lead. This means that ministries overseeing health, agriculture, finance, land policy, education, youth development, and labour must work in close coordination. Institutions must be strengthened, and all ministries must have a clear understanding of their respective roles.
- Moreover, the private sector and civil society organizations must also play their part and work in close partnership with government institutions. Financial inclusion remains a critical area for improvement, ensuring that communities in both the hinterland and coastal regions have equitable access to financial services and opportunities.
- Secondly, national monitoring and evaluation institutions — such as planning and statistical bureaus — must be established and empowered with the mandate and capacity to collect, analyze, and interpret data to monitor and guide the sustainable implementation of the Doha Commitments.
- Thirdly, independent national monitoring mechanisms should also be in place to advise and support governments in implementing these commitments through a sustainable, human rights–based approach.
- Strong partnerships are essential. Platforms such as this provide valuable opportunities to identify and engage with new partners. It is not always financial

assistance that is needed; capacity building, knowledge exchange, internships, and technical cooperation can also be highly instrumental.

- Ultimately, the objective is to empower people to become financially independent. Through clear exit arrangements, vocational training, and education, individuals can be supported to transition from dependency towards self-reliance, thereby re-entering the workforce with dignity and opportunity.

- **Question 2.** How can the social development priorities of the Pact for the Future — including eradicating poverty, inclusive social policies, transparent institutions, social cohesion, and the inclusion and protection of children and youth — be advanced in ways that give momentum to the Copenhagen Commitments and the Doha Declaration?

Answer:

- The Pact for the Future presents a critical opportunity to breathe new life into the commitments of Copenhagen and the Doha Declaration. The key is to avoid creating a new, parallel set of promises and instead use the Pact as a vehicle to operationalize and accelerate these longstanding commitments with renewed tools, political energy, and a contemporary focus.
- The Pact can leverage modern tools to achieve the social integration Copenhagen called for, with a specific focus on the most marginalized.

For example: the Usage of digital tools and national registries to precisely identify and reach excluded groups, as highlighted in the Suriname example for "data-driven targeting as mentioned yesterday at the Global Alliance Meeting."

- Address Digital Exclusion: Make digital inclusion a core pillar of social policy, ensuring that the digital divide does not become the new face of the inequality Copenhagen sought to combat. This directly supports the "Pathways" recommendation to "Update the Social Contract." Empower these bodies, as suggested in the Copenhagen Declaration, to regularly review national social development progress, using Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and other tools to create peer pressure and share best practices.
- Strong national, regional and international commitment to the Doha Declaration should be made. Maybe the possibility of the installment of a Special UN Rapporteur should be explored. supporting countries in translating the Doha Declaration into specific, time-bound, coherent, sustainable and integral and measurable national policy actions.

- Debt Relief for Social Development: We should advocate for debt restructuring clauses that protect core social expenditures (health, education, social protection), directly addressing the "debt" and "reduced fiscal space" issues from the Copenhagen gaps.
- By advancing its social priorities in this way, the Pact for the Future can become the long-awaited catalyst that transforms the enduring vision of Copenhagen into tangible progress for people and the planet, finally giving momentum to commitments that have been waiting for a vehicle like this for nearly three decades.