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# **Economic and Social Council High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Global Development**

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**Eradicating Poverty in All its Forms and Dimensions through Promoting Sustainable Development, Expanding Opportunities for Society's most Vulnerable, while Addressing Related Challenges.**

## **Report of the UA-MUNC Secretary-General**

### **Introduction**

1. One in every ten human beings lives in extreme poverty (GA RES 70/1, 2015), earning under USD 1.90 a day (The World Bank, 2015). Nevertheless, poverty's complex landscape goes beyond economics and does not only affect low-income populations but society as a whole. As a result of limited employment opportunities, the extremely poor suffer worse health, happiness, and productivity. Additionally, they endure hunger, malnutrition, social exclusion, and limited access to essential services. Unsurprisingly, they are the most affected by climate change and economic disaster (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2017). Beyond having their human dignity violated, situations arise where their most fundamental human right to life is at risk (GA RES 47/134, 1992). Often with little hope for relief or socioeconomic mobility, the poor cannot contribute to their fullest to society, hampering social and economic progress for all. Although the International Community elevated almost a billion lives from poverty between 1999 and 2013 –a 60% reduction (ECOSOC RES 2017/66, 2017)- 750 million remain in deprivation. Many more risk slipping back into extreme poverty if robust resilience methods are not urgently implemented.
2. Therefore, ending poverty in all its forms, everywhere, is the first and foremost goal of the ambitious Sustainable Development Agenda, whose deadline is in 2030 (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2017c). This is because the relationship between Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number one –ending poverty- and the sixteen other SDGs is reciprocal. By empowering individuals to live meaningful and productive lives, the International Community will accelerate global development and reduce disenfranchisement, which incentivizes conflict. Breaking the vicious cycle of violence and poverty must be among the highest priorities for all Member States. Thus, it is of critical importance that humanity exercise the full force of its collective resources and conscience, combined with the most recent policy analysis, to eradicate poverty permanently. Extensive action remains to be done and requires an understanding of poverty's multiple dimensions. Therefore, this report examines institutional failures impeding progress, the role of education in combating extreme poverty, the enduring effects of colonialism, the implications of varying levels of dependency on geographic factors and natural resources, and the results of increasing globalization. It is vital that the Economic and Social Council address these.



## **Introduction to the Committee, its Jurisdiction, and Mandate**

3. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Global Development of the United Nations is the primary platform overseeing the Sustainable Development Agenda. It is also a global forum that supervises and makes recommendations on the development, implementation, and review of strategies to achieve the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda holistically and inclusively. In doing so, the HLPF seeks to fulfill all three dimensions of Sustainable Development -economic, social, and environmental- in harmony (GA RES 67/290, 2013).
4. Therefore, nations must report on their implementation plans, and related frameworks and budgets regarding their commitments towards the eradication of poverty, including budgets and national frameworks (ECOSOC RES 2017/2, 2017).
5. The HLPF hosts an eight-day annual meeting, three days of which represent a ministerial component. The purpose of the ministerial component of the forum is to convene high-level government officials to review the implementation, coordination, and outcomes of all key UN conferences and summits. They share best practices and guidance. Additionally, every four years, the General Assembly oversees a two-day meeting for Heads of State as part of the HLPF (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2017b).
6. The HLPF has four central themes of discussion: “a) poverty eradication that leaves no one behind; b) prosperity shared in a people-centered economy; c) a planet that is protected; and d) institutions at all levels that are participatory, transparent, and accountable” (GA RES 67/290, 2013). It must be emphasized that it is not within the Forum’s jurisdiction to impose moral, economic or political sanctions, nor to order the deployment of military or peacekeeping operations.
7. Over its course, the HLPF produces an outcome document known as a Ministerial Declaration. Because Ministerial Declarations are a comprehensive set of non-compulsory recommendations regarding the accomplishment of the SDGs, the HLPF has a strong inclination towards adopting them by consensus – i.e., without a vote (GA RES 67/290, 2013). This ensures that every Member State agrees to them and will be committed to implementing them. Nevertheless, this is not always the case: two amendments were put to the vote in the 2017 Ministerial Declaration regarding the eradication of poverty through sustainable development (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2017a). To avoid disagreement and disregard over this body’s recommendations, the members of the High-Level Political Forum must carefully consider the policies of other nations and bridge differences through negotiation.

## Topic Background

### Poverty as a Multi-Dimensional Problem:

8. Recent action taken by the UN and its Member States has been effective in reducing extreme poverty, uplifting nearly a billion lives from it (ECOSOC RES 2017/66, 2017). However, the present rate is insufficient to affect the magnitude of change, which the Sustainable Development Goals call for. Should current trends persist with regards to both economic growth and poverty eradication, approximately 6 percent of the world's population will continue to suffer from extreme poverty in 2030 (Dugarova and Gulasan, 2017, p. 14). This would mean that more than five hundred million people will remain extremely poor and that humanity would have failed to accomplish SDG one. Therefore, the International Community cannot rely on economic progress alone to eradicate poverty; instead, it must focus on the multiple facets that result in deprivation.
9. Poverty arises from a plethora of factors, which commonly overlap and go beyond economic decline or stagnation. Intense inequalities of opportunity, armed conflict, health complications, unjust social protection policies, and misguided government interventions contribute to the genesis of poverty. The systematic disadvantages faced by certain classes of individuals, including women, minorities, indigenous populations, refugees, immigrants, children, and single-parent families result in the disproportionate distribution of poverty (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 39, 68, 72-74, 81). It is imperative to examine these causes individually.

### Geographical Causes of Poverty:

10. From a broad perspective, the lack of natural resources, as well as rainfall and other challenging climatic conditions, plays a fundamental role in the poverty of individual nations (Haughton and Khandker, 2009, p. 125). For example, in Bangladesh, annual floods are instrumental to destroying infrastructure and slowing development. Similarly, regular damage from typhoons in the Nghe An province of Vietnam results in the frequent destruction of capital. Often, geographical isolation is a contributing factor to national poverty, resulting in high transport costs and amplifying food insecurity among the poor (Haughton and Khandker, 2009, p. 126).

### Hunger and Malnutrition:

11. For example, climate change poses a global threat to the wellbeing of all, while also disproportionately affecting Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and developing nations. Without mitigation measures, climate change is already affecting global temperature, precipitation, and extreme weather patterns, which will have a dire effect on water availability, and, as a result, degrade the arable land. Uncontaminated food and water supplies will become scarcer, affecting nations lacking resources to supply their population.
12. The above nations are suffering from the highest levels of malnutrition and undernourishment and will be more severely affected by these in the future if current trends persist. Despite this, even if the availability of natural resources is unaffected, poverty will remain as the primary cause of hunger in regions not suffering from extreme famine. Hunger, in turn, affects the livelihoods and productivity of its victims, for which it is a prime target for relief and development efforts.
13. As a result of both climate change and deprivation, food security has reached emergency levels for 108 million people (ECOSOC RES 2017/L.29, 2017), plunging them into a vicious poverty cycle that is difficult to escape. This is because, by focusing most of their efforts in attempting to secure adequate food, citizens must sacrifice economic opportunities that might allow them



to escape poverty. Therefore, undernutrition results in the loss of working years and productivity, as well as death. As a result, The World Food Programme estimates that, in 2012, the losses associated with undernourishment were equivalent to 10.3 percent of affected countries' Gross Domestic Product (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the World Food Programme, 2015, p. 41).

### **The Significance of Institutions in Eradicating Poverty:**

14. Institutions are the basic building blocks of society and a state. Hence, the 2030 Agenda calls explicitly for the “effective rule of law and good governance at all levels, and on transparent, effective, and accountable institutions” to achieve Sustainable Development and eradicate poverty (GA RES 70/1, 2015, p. 9). When institutions fail, however, prosperity is threatened.
15. By affecting institutions directly related to economics, political governance, and community norms, it is possible to create inclusivity or to destroy it, as these organizations are closely linked to development outcomes.

### **Institutional Injustices:**

16. For instance, the failure of economic institutions often occurs due to the distortion of regulatory frameworks, increased corruption, and rent-seeking behaviors, as well as ineffective property and labor laws. These factors discourage and prevent specific demographics from participating in the economy. Consequently, inclusivity decreases and the prevalence of poverty increases (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p.63).
17. On the other hand, sustaining political institutions and ensuring inclusive governance rely on numerous factors. These include the promotion of gender balance, political parties whose platforms are defined by pertinent issues instead of greed, and merit-based recruitment. In turn, quality governance determines development outcomes, such as literacy, health, child mortality, and poverty (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p.63). Consequently, natural resources, public services, communications, and infrastructure must be sustainably managed if nations are to thrive. Unfortunately, Member States with high levels of extreme poverty lack numerous of these measures.
18. Nevertheless, the High-Level Political Forum must bear in mind that institutions extend beyond a state's organizational structure: informal institutions include traditions and social customs that may not be strictly codified, but affect behavior within societies (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 62). Social norms remain among the most challenging institutions to discuss quantitatively. However, evidence suggests that discriminatory customs result in the exploitation of vulnerable parties, including women and ethnic, religious, and class-based groups. In particular, limited citizenship, the absence of political representation, and spatial remoteness increase the likelihood of socioeconomic discrimination.
19. Moreover, it is crucial to consider this pillar considering that in areas where the rule of law is not implemented, social norms mandate societal behavior. This is the case in numerous conflict-affected and fragile states, which often have the highest poverty rates (Haughton and Khandker, 2009, p. 126).
20. Thus, poverty ensues as a result of poor economic prospects and little hope for advocacy to affect change in relevant institutions (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p.63).



### **The Significance of Education:**

21. Education plays a vital role in the fight to end poverty and achieve SDG four: ‘ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.’ This highlights the interrelationship between poverty and the 2030 Agenda’s other goals (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2017d).

### **The Educational Dilemma:**

22. However, in low-income families, education often requires the sacrifice of both human resources –i.e., work done by children and adolescents- and time. For households below or near the international poverty line of USD 1.90, child labor may appear to better satisfy families’ immediate survival needs than the long-term investment of education. As education does not generate the immediate income families desperately require and constitutes an additional expense for families, many cannot afford to send their children to school. It is important to consider that, while public education may be free of cost, families must expend in school resources and transportation – a potentially unpayable expense. Additionally, children attending school for part of the day and working for the other cannot entirely focus on their education. Moreover, those living in remote locations cannot spend otherwise “productive” hours walking to educational facilities. (Young Lives, 2018). These facts evidence that awareness on the economic returns of education is lacking.
23. All of the above factors pose a challenge to the universality of education, which fuels poverty throughout generations. Although primary school enrolment rates increased from 84 percent to 93 percent from 1999 to 2015, enrolment in secondary and tertiary education is unattainable for society’s most vulnerable. As of 2017, an estimated 264 million children were out of school (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2017), up from 121 million in 2012, representing sparse progress (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015, p. 5). Additionally, over two-thirds of developing nations in the World Bank’s Global Partnership for Education had less than one trained teacher for every 40 students, on average (Global Partnership for Education, 2015).
24. The failure to ensure the quality education of children, youth, and adults will create long-term barriers to poverty eradication. It is estimated that achieving secondary education for all adults who did not receive it would result in the elimination of poverty for 420 million, more than half of the global poor and nearly two-thirds of those in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations News Centre, 2017). Opportunities of this magnitude are incredibly rare and thus deserve considerable attention.

### **The Legacy of Colonialism:**

25. International relations must also be considered when accounting for Member States’ prosperity. Colonialism was a global reality at the birth of the United Nations in 1946. Since then, over 80 former colonies have gained independence (United Nations, 2017). This phenomenon, and the subsequent process of decolonization led to the existence of widespread poverty in post-colonial regions, whose impact continues today. In South Africa, for instance, the Apartheid management of property resulted in ninety percent of arable land being possessed by the white minority in 1913. Not only has this inequity fundamentally undermined the success of the native population, but the process of restoring justice after colonialism has created a turmoil of its own, resulting in further economic disruption and impoverishment (Molepo, 2018). The socioeconomic inequalities left by colonization are yet to be wholly addressed.

### **Consequences of Globalization:**

26. While colonialism mainly represents the situation of the past, globalization is the reality of the present and future. Thus, it is essential to understand how globalization has impacted, and will continue to affect, development and poverty eradication. Developing nations including China, India, and Nigeria, among others, have been at the center of recent global growth. As these nations have an intensifying effect on the global markets, so do global markets impact the development of such countries. While the shift in global economic trends has been responsible for lifting millions out of extreme poverty in these nations, labor exploitation within their population continues. Conversely, developing countries that have not benefited from this process suffer; particularly in Member States where climate change and diseases such as HIV counteract the effects of global growth and increased trade. As such, income disparities continue to widen in numerous states as a small minority of individuals disproportionately reap the profits associated with increased globalization (United Nations Development Programme, 2007, p. 2).

### **Demographics Affected:**

27. Tragically, poverty is most common among the most vulnerable individuals and groups in our societies (GA RES 47/134, 1992). Contrary to common belief, poverty is not exclusive to low-income nations (The World Bank, 2017a). In fact, almost 60% of the world's extreme poor lived in Middle-Income Nations by 2010, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia (Olinto et al., 2013, p. 2).
28. Among the most vulnerable individuals, youth suffer disproportionately in periods of economic strife, even when they are employed. In 2013, for instance, 17.7 percent of employed youth (152 million) lived in extreme poverty (Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, 2015). Additionally, 225 million youth, or twenty percent of the global population aged 15 to 24, were not in education, employment, or training. Similarly, children are vulnerable not only to poverty but also to resulting exploitation. In 2012, one in every ten children (168 million) aged 5 to 17 globally were involved in child labour (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organizations and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013). Those reaching the national working age are most likely to abandon schooling to search for jobs – and remain in poverty. Failing to uplift these individuals risks extending the burden of impoverishment to the next generation, well beyond the 2030 deadline. Therefore, breaking the intergenerational poverty cycle is crucial.
29. Another vulnerable group is mass rural populations, as they are disempowered to overcome barriers to national prosperity. Social characteristics such as nutritional and disease status render rural participants at a disadvantage compared to urban dwellers due to the lower availability of health-care centers and food. However, fast urbanization -mass migration from rural to urban areas- similarly results in poor health outcomes in urban slums (Haughton and Khandker, 2009, p. 129-130).
30. Furthermore, different types of households are affected by poverty. For example, the structure of low-income households is different to that of higher-income families. In Cambodia, the poor tend to form larger families –with an average of 6.6 vs. 4.9 members per household, respectively- with double the children under 15 compared to high-income ones. Additionally, due to wartime casualties in recent years, women assumed significant roles in the labor market, but faced discrimination and low literacy rates, and are were paid lower wages. However, households headed by women were not more likely to be in poverty in Cambodia. Thus, it is critical to understand that although populations may be vulnerable, they are not necessarily victims (Haughton and Khandker, 2009, p. 128).

31. Finally, despite representing 5 percent of the global population, indigenous peoples constitute a disproportionate 15 percent of those in extreme poverty (The World Bank, 2017b). These worrying statistics are due to the inaccessibility to political participation for native populations, added to failures in resource governance (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016, p. 67). Fortunately, some evidence suggests that these peoples are experiencing above average poverty reduction rates, particularly in China, India, and Vietnam (The World Bank, 2011, p. 3). Similar trends must be encouraged globally.

## **Past International Action**

### **The Millennium Development Goals:**

32. The SDGs are not the UN's first attempt to eradicate poverty. In fact, the goal to end extreme poverty (and hunger) comprised a significant component of 2000-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While the above objective has been taken up by the 2015-2030 SDGs, its predecessor was responsible for much of the progress made towards reducing deprivation in the modern era (United Nations, 2015, p. 14).
33. MDG one encompassed the aims of SDGs one and two: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, respectively. The targets of MDG one were to achieve were to: firstly, halve the proportion of people whose income was less than USD 1.25 per day (later revised to USD 1.90 per day); secondly, to achieve full, productive employment for all; and thirdly, to halve the proportion of those who suffer from hunger, in the period between 1990 and 2015 (United Nations Department of Public Information, 2013).
34. The first target was achieved and in fact, exceeded during the defined timeframe. All developing regions were able to meet it, except for sub-Saharan Africa, where extreme poverty was reduced by 28 percent, 22 percentage points below its objective. Conversely, progress in Southern Asia, like in India and China, resulted in a 66 and 94 percent reduction in extreme poverty, respectively. This is a colossal achievement (United Nations, 2015, p. 14).
35. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done with regards to the second target, as increases in the labor force (i.e., the number of people of working age) have outpaced the generation of new jobs in both developed and developing regions. Furthermore, youth have been adversely affected, as their employment has fallen by ten percentage points, from fifty percent in 1991 to forty percent in 2015 (United Nations, 2015, p. 17).
36. On the other hand, the third target was almost reached, falling from 23.3 percent to 12.9 percent. However, this represents a gap of 90 million people who were left unfed, despite the commitment of the international community. Obstacles to this progress included rising prices of food and energy, population growth leading to unemployment, and economic downturns. Furthermore, recent natural catastrophes and armed conflict have damaged communities and their infrastructure, reducing food security (United Nations, 2015, p. 20).

### **Direct Interventions:**

37. Beyond the pursuit of overall economic growth, Member States and UN bodies have employed alternative means of alleviating poverty. The widespread attempts to reduce the burdens associated with cyclical cash-flow deficits among the poor were clear examples of these.



### **Micro-Financing:**

38. Numerous initiatives consisted of micro-financing to provide non-predatory loans to low-income individuals and increase their capacity for short-term investment. By facilitating the purchase of necessary medications, as well as education and business expenses, micro-financing is an appealing measure to bolster the poor's ability to support themselves.
39. However, not all of these initiatives are successful: evidence shows that microloans may only prove beneficial to those who are not classified as extremely poor. Otherwise, these generate minor benefits and can cause the indebtedness of the most vulnerable, as the yearly interest rates of lenders vary between 20 to 40 percent (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 136-7).

### **Conditional Cash Transfers:**

40. Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) are another attempted poverty reduction strategy whereby grants are allocated to poor or disadvantaged individuals in exchange for commitments, such as ensuring the education of their children or regular health care engagement. Often, the services tied to these grants are provided free of charge, creating a useful mechanism for poverty reduction (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 137-8). For example, in Brazil, the Bolsa Família program consists of cash transfers provided by the government in exchange for school attendance. This initiative was successful in promoting education and reducing extreme poverty. Nevertheless, despite CCTs' effectiveness, contention remains over whether they should be tied to a condition (Satryo, 2016, p. 2), as it is unlikely that poverty is more the result of individual mismanagement than of structural impediments to prosperity. Therefore, respecting the capacity of the poor to choose how best to assist themselves with cash transfers may be a more reasonable approach, which maintains their dignity and increases the likelihood of cooperation (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 140-1). Furthermore, eliminating the need to monitor recipients' actions reduces the costs and logistical burdens of implementing these programs, simultaneously removing opportunities for corruption. Consequently, cash assistance can be more freely utilized; in Ethiopia, it was used for debt reduction and investment in land productivity, as well as for consumption (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 142).
41. Nevertheless, CCTs have their drawbacks. Critics of such programs claim that grants may reduce the available supply of labor by decreasing the willingness of households to work for wages lower than the grants they are given. Beyond this, the question of universality remains. What threshold of income, if any, should be necessary to receive grants? Is making CCTs universal viable and will it reduce stigma and taxpayer opposition to these programs? (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 142-3)

### **Employment Guarantee Programs:**

42. On the other hand, nations have attempted to reduce the burden of extreme poverty through employment guarantee programs, particularly in times of economic crisis. Although such programs are temporary, they have been widely implemented in nations including, but not limited to Argentina, China, Indonesia, and the Republic of Korea (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 143). In India, these quadrupled the income of participants compared to their alternative options for employment.
43. Despite progress, these programs do not solve underemployment nor efficiently target the most impoverished individuals or regions. Therefore, suggestions arose that these initiatives should set wages below the market rate to limit participation to those with the most intense



need. However, such practices may just provide the creation of a new class of working poor and are often unsustainable due to collective bargaining among participants (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009, p. 143-4).

## **Political Groups**

44. National representatives must take full consideration of each other's perspectives to achieve consensus towards the eradication of poverty. This is because even though all nations have an interest in ending poverty, their philosophies vary regarding the distribution and implementation of anti-poverty initiatives.
45. Ultimately, the material wealth of nations is the most distinct boundary between groups of Member States with regards to prosperity, besides perhaps geographical proximity and governmental systems. Although countries' wealth does not necessarily determine their rate of extreme poverty, the strategies that Member States wish to prioritize are inevitably influenced by their economic realities.
46. The World Bank divides nations into five categories Low Income (with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of less than USD 1,005), Lower Middle Income (with a GNI per capita between USD 1,006 to 3,955), Upper Middle Income (between USD 3,956 and 12,235), and High Income (above USD 12,235) (The World Bank, 2017a). Nations in each group face unique challenges in the eradication of poverty. In fact, membership in the wealthier groups does not guarantee an absence of poverty; stark inequalities exist in each category. Nonetheless, countries within them endure common situations, causing them to advocate for similar measures.
47. While higher-income nations possess more resources to dedicate to the eradication of poverty, they may lack immediately available economic opportunities to reduce global poverty. Simultaneously, political will may be absent regarding international interventions that do not directly or immediately benefit a nation's population. Thus, higher-income countries must seek more effective incentives to combat poverty.
48. Conversely, Member States with lower GNIs are directly impaired by the inhibitory nature of extreme poverty. Although there may be ample opportunities for beneficial intervention, their resources, infrastructure, and logistical awareness may be insufficient for optimal execution, for which they seek to explore more practical methods to expend their resources and support international cooperation while avoiding high levels of dependency on foreign aid.

## **Possible Solutions**

49. The universal eradication of poverty and the promotion of prosperity can only be accomplished through a cross-sectoral approach including the elimination of hunger, the amelioration of health and well-being, gender equality, commerce and infrastructure, the sustainable management of the natural resources, and the accountability of institutions. These pursuits constitute Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3, 5, 9, 14, and 16, respectively. , Due to the fundamentally interconnected nature of the SDGs, these priorities cannot be separated from the broader mechanisms of global development and must include multiple levels of intervention and monitoring (GA RES 67/290, 2013).
50. As part of this approach and as a means of generating prosperity, the HLPF may wish to increase institutional effectiveness. Without effective, inclusive, and representative institutions, justice, economics, social norms, and humanitarian interventions are all at high risk (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016, p. 63). Despite nations'



unique constitutional characteristics, it is critical to strengthen their transparency and role in combatting poverty globally. Additionally, it is essential that they provide a predictable and inclusive foundation for the prosperity of all peoples (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016, p. 63).

51. Additionally, the Forum may take careful action at the macro- and micro-level. When macro-level initiatives are neglected, for instance, the organization and infrastructure required to implement large-scale action are absent. In cases where States lack accountability and commitment, large-scale initiatives tend to fail (United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office, 2003, p. V). Therefore, political will and large-scale ambition are necessary for universal and transformational action within a nation. Promoting the above policies will require the close engagement and awareness of civil society organizations.
52. On the other hand, without individual-focused actions, the priorities of those in need are easily neglected. Development is most successful when based on grassroots action and local ownership. The opposite occurred with foreign aid to Zanzibar, Tanzania between 2005 and 2010, where an absence of local involvement was an impactful factor in the failure of poverty reduction efforts (Salum and Ariffin, 2016, p. 277). Therefore, it is essential to listen to vulnerable populations and empower them to improve their livelihoods and communities.
53. Although it is essential to balance both macro- and micro-level initiatives, it is even more critical to maximize linkages between them in comprehensive action plans against deprivation. These initiatives must avoid the duplication of efforts between state- and NGO-led anti-poverty measures to make them viable in the long term. Hence, it is crucial to establish close cooperation, transparency, and trust between Member Nations' institutions and grassroots movements (United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office, 2003, p. VIII). For this purpose, large-scale agencies like the UN Development Programme and the World Bank are well positioned to fund micro-level initiatives while remaining aware of macro-level needs and capacities. Nevertheless, despite their efforts, the eradication of global poverty cannot be limited to the two above stakeholders. Moreover, Member States must carefully select the grassroots movements they will prioritize, enabling limited funds to last longer and impact the lives of more people (United Nations Development Programme Evaluation Office, 2003, p. VIII).

## **Current Status - Points for Delegates to Consider**

### **Effects of Conflict and Crises:**

54. Poverty, hunger, and death are inevitable consequences of crises like the 2017 famine and armed conflict in Yemen, South Sudan, and Somalia. Recent droughts and military confrontations have created a situation where already poor and vulnerable communities can no longer provide for their basic needs, resulting in the food insecurity of millions. According to Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, two-thirds of the population in Yemen was in need of immediate humanitarian assistance, and 7 million were hungry. Rampant diseases including cholera, as well as damaged infrastructure and schools, displacement, and armed conflict all create a long-term threat to the sustainable development in the region. Therefore, political solutions are essential to resolve the crisis in areas where the eradication of poverty seems far-fetched (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2017). Although the ECOSOC HLPF does not take direct measures to solve military conflict, indirect means, such as building more resilient societies and influencing global opinions, are viable.
55. Additionally, the forum can take risk-mitigating measures against natural catastrophes. It is imperative that the underlying issues present in the most vulnerable regions –the Sahel and



tropical regions in Africa such as Madagascar, the Central African Republic, Mozambique, Burundi, and Liberia- are addressed at once (United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, 2016, p. 47).

### **The Role of Youth**

56. Youth –those aged between 15 and 24- play a crucial role in the eradication of poverty. They are responsible both for the implementation of the SDGs and for holding their respective nations accountable for their commitments. Youth advisory councils and self-employment programs are promising contemporary avenues for youth engagement. Despite the availability of current empowerment initiatives such as the ECOSOC Youth Forum, the above demographic must be further involved in UN action, both at the national and global scale (United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, 2017a). It is due time that the International Community fully involves them to push forward with reforms and initiatives to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. (United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, 2017b).

### **Key Questions to Consider when Researching and Negotiating**

- How will the further implementation of the 2030 Agenda affect the eradication of poverty and the pursuit of prosperity? How is poverty eradication crucial to the achievement of the SDGs?
- Understanding the urgency of addressing poverty, how can the recommendations of the High-Level Political Forum accelerate the progress of the Sustainable Development Agenda with regards to this topic?
- Why should delegates and their represented Member States be motivated to eradicate global poverty, both within and beyond their borders? What challenges does this Member State face at the national, regional, and international scale? What are its priorities? Where does the World Bank classify it regarding income?
- What past efforts have proven ineffective? How can they be revitalized and reinforced?
- What recommendations might Member States prioritize? How can the Forum promote a more holistic Sustainable Development?
- What incentives would revitalize attempts to promote prosperity?
- What are the most practical means to ensure quality and universal education?
- How can monitoring and reporting mechanisms be strengthened?
- What measures should be implemented to deter the effects of natural disaster and conflict, in line with the Forum's jurisdiction?
- How can civil society be further involved in poverty eradication? What awareness and empowerment efforts should delegates make?
- What anti-poverty strategies would be best implemented universally? Which should be tailored-based for specific countries/regions? Would a one-size-fits-all solution be practical? How can national sovereignty be upheld when dealing with this international challenge?



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