OPHI & MPPN Briefing on the
Global Sustainable Development Report 2019

This document compiles references to multidimensional poverty measurement and indices, and the global MPI, in the *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development, (United Nations, New York, 2019).*

The Report is the first in a quadrennial series of reports commissioned by the UN and prepared by an independent group of scientists. It highlights six key 'entry points' and 20 corresponding Calls to Action to leverage interlinkages and accelerate progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) is distinct from, and complementary to, the annual Sustainable Development Goals progress report prepared by the Secretary-General, which tracks progress across goals and targets using indicators from the global indicator framework.

Below are key sections of the report, listed chronologically, relating to multidimensional poverty measurement. Key sections have been highlighted in yellow.

Key highlights are:

- The **recommended pathway to Call to Action 1 under Entry Point 1** 'Strengthening human well-being and capabilities' is that all stakeholders should:
  *"**Measure poverty in multiple dimensions based on a country-level understanding of poverty** (e.g., deprivations in education, health, food/nutrition, housing, social security and others); **and use those measures to shape the development planning process and promote coordination among ministries.**"* (Chapter IV: Call to Action, p127, 4.1. Strengthening human well-being and capabilities)

- **MPIs bring "Leave No One Behind Under One Coherent Logic"**
  "Multidimensional poverty measurements identify the prevalent vulnerability dimensions among the population and measure them accordingly. Those who are deprived in those dimensions, meaning that they don't have access to the rights, services or goods they refer to, can be characterized at a national level as being left behind. Countries can then coordinate social development efforts between dimensions and sectors to leave no one behind under one coherent logic: a multidimensional poverty measure. (p 48)

- The GSDR **notes the use of national MPIs by countries**: *"Countries such as Bhutan, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and others have all designed their own multidimensional poverty methodology from their specific country needs and priorities. For many of them, the support of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has been very important."* (Page 48, Box 2-12 (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.5.3 Integrated pathways to transformation)

- The GSDR notes who is poorest multidimensionally and **cites the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index**:
  - *"Of the [1.3 billion] multidimensionally poor, 1.1 billion live in rural areas and almost half are children. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 342 million of multidimensionally poor people, followed by South Asia with 546 million. Those regions are also home to*

a majority of extremely poor people and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of extremely poor is growing." Pages 39 (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.5.1. Impediments)

- o *"Households and individuals often suffer multiple forms of poverty. This can be illustrated using the global multidimensional poverty index (MPI) which captures the severe deprivations that each person faces with respect to education, health and living standards."* Pages 39 (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.5.1. Impediments)
- The GSDR calls for **integrated pathways to transformation** across all goals including SDG 1: *"Pathways to advance human well-being ultimately require cooperation, collaboration and dialogue between multiple actors and employing many levers of change. There is no single pathway, and different combinations of efforts are required across regions and for countries in special situations."* (p47, Chapter II: Transformations, 2.5.3 Integrated pathways to transformation)

- The GSDR reminds us of the **interlinkages between the SDGs**: Health and Education are both means and ends of development *"Good health, for example, contributes to reducing poverty, attaining quality education and reducing inequalities; likewise, quality education is a precondition for many areas of sustainable development, from reproductive health, mortality and poverty to social equity, social cohesion and environmental sustainability."* (Page 40, Chapter II: Transformations 2.5.1. Impediments)

References in greater depth (in chronological order)

Executive Summary: xxiii

"Income poverty, poor health, low levels of education, lack of access to water and sanitation and other deprivations tend to overlap. Households and individuals often suffer multiple forms of poverty. In 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty had fallen to 736 million. But the multidimensional poverty index calculated in 2018 for 105 countries presented a more sobering picture, indicating that 1.3 billion people live in households with overlapping deprivations. There is also clear evidence that multidimensional poverty has been falling more slowly than income poverty. National, regional and local authorities and communities should focus on reducing gaps in opportunities and basic rights among social groups that are most at risk of being left behind in their own territories."

Executive Summary: xxiii

"Eradicating poverty, advancing gender equality and reducing other forms of inequality are closely interrelated objectives and require expanding interventions and measures far beyond the monetary thresholds of extreme deprivations to address the multidimensional and overlapping nature of poverty. Economic growth alone cannot achieve that. Deprivations and inequalities exist in education, health care, access to clean water and energy, access to sanitation services, exposure to infectious diseases and many other critical dimensions of well-being."

Page 30 (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.1 Lever - Governance)

"To keep up with scientific advances, governments need to invest in knowledge systems – indicators, data, assessments and sharing platforms. Scientists and researchers can provide an invaluable service in measuring genuine progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and helping governments and other stakeholders to assess which governance arrangements are working, and where course correction is needed."

Page 37 (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.4 Lever 4 – Science and technology)

"Countries need more locally relevant content, local innovation centres and technology hubs, and support for open data initiatives."

"4. Eradicating world poverty and reducing inequality are closely interrelated goals that require expanding interventions and measures to address the multidimensional and overlapping nature of poverty in education, health care, access to safely managed drinking water and energy, access to sanitation services, exposure to infectious diseases and many other critical dimensions of well-being. Economic growth can contribute to absolute income poverty alleviation, but GDP growth will not address multidimensional poverty by itself. Measuring and directly tackling inequalities and deprivations are requirements for advancing well-being."

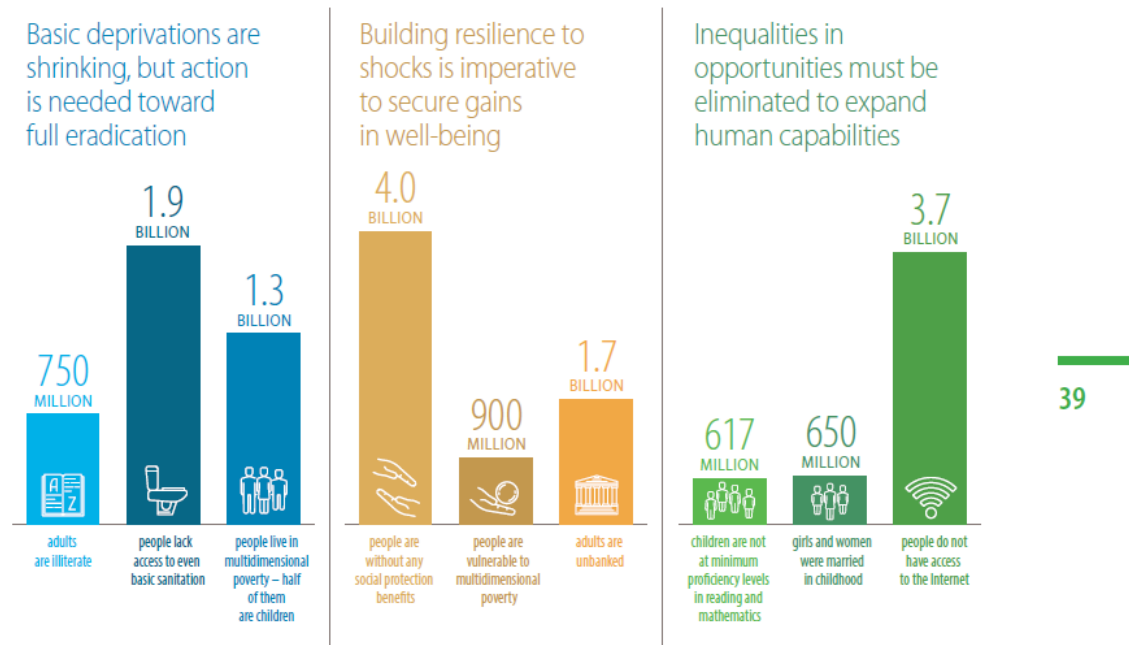*Pages 39-40, (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.5.1. Impediments)*

(Page 39)

"Income poverty, poor health, low levels of education, lack of access to water and sanitation, and other deprivations tend to overlap. Households and individuals often suffer multiple forms of poverty. This can be illustrated using the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) which captures the severe deprivations that each person faces with respect to education, health and living standards. In 2015, the number of people living in extreme poverty on less than $1.90 a day had dropped to 736 million. However, the 2018 multidimensional poverty index that covered 105 countries, presents a more sobering picture, indicating that 1.3 billion people live in households with overlapping deprivations. There is also clear evidence that multidimensional poverty has been decreasing more slowly than income poverty."

"Of the multidimensionally poor, 1.1 billion live in rural areas and almost half are children. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to 342 million of multidimensionally poor people, followed by South Asia with 546 million. Those regions are also home to a majority of extremely poor people and in Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of extremely poor is growing."

(Page 40)

"Reducing income poverty can be achieved through equitable economic growth. But addressing multidimensional poverty is more complex, and requires other interventions that need to be carried out simultaneously. Although health and education are often considered as outcomes of successful development in the Sustainable Development Agenda, they are also means to achieving other key elements of the Agenda. Good health, for example, contributes to reducing poverty, attaining quality education and reducing inequalities; likewise, quality education is a precondition for many areas of sustainable development, from reproductive health, mortality and poverty to social equity, social cohesion and environmental sustainability."

Figure 2-3
Human well-being and capabilities: where the world is falling short

Basic deprivations are shrinking, but action is needed toward full eradication

- **750 MILLION** — adults are illiterate
- **1.9 BILLION** — people lack access to even basic sanitation
- **1.3 BILLION** — people live in multidimensional poverty – half of them are children

Building resilience to shocks is imperative to secure gains in well-being

- **4.0 BILLION** — people are without any social protection benefits
- **900 MILLION** — people are vulnerable to multidimensional poverty
- **1.7 BILLION** — adults are unbanked

Inequalities in opportunities must be eliminated to expand human capabilities

- **617 MILLION** — children are not at minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics
- **650 MILLION** — girls and women were married in childhood
- **3.7 BILLION** — people do not have access to the Internet
- **39**

Page 47 (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.5.3 Integrated pathways to transformation)

"Pathways to advance human well-being ultimately require cooperation, collaboration and dialogue between multiple actors and employing many levers of change. There is no single pathway, and different combinations of efforts are required across regions and for countries in special situations.

Just as issues of sustainable development do not operate in silos, the levers of governance, economies, behaviour and technologies are intrinsically linked and changes in one area trigger changes in the others, links that need to be mapped and understood to inform actions for well-being.

A multidimensional approach – Countries should measure and address poverty in a multidimensional way, with special attention to those dimensions that are the most pertinent in their context and according to their own definitions. Multiple stakeholders usually led by the government, should agree to an understanding of multidimensional poverty that typically includes deprivations in education, health, food/nutrition, housing and social security, and other dimensions that seem important for each country, according to their internal agreements. On that basis they can rethink the country's development process to address multiple Sustainable Development Goals and increase communication and coordination among various actors and between ministries (see box 2-12)."

Page 48, Box 2-12 (Chapter II: Transformations, 2.5.3 Integrated pathways to transformation)

"Multidimensional poverty measurements identify the prevalent vulnerability dimensions among the population and measure them accordingly. Those who are deprived in those dimensions, meaning that they don't have access to the rights, services or goods they refer to, can be characterized at a national level as being left behind. Countries can then coordinate social development efforts between dimensions and sectors to leave no one behind under one coherent logic: a multidimensional poverty measure.

The selected dimensions vary between countries and may be selected based on the country's constitutional priorities, by identifying the basic conditions needed to guarantee better life outcomes. Countries such as Bhutan, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama and others have all designed their own multidimensional poverty methodology from their specific

country needs and priorities. For many of them, the support of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) has been very important. This has generated data that can be disaggregated by vulnerable sub-groups and provided indicators that can be monitored through time to track progress and help shape public policy.

In 2009, Mexico became the first country to officially implement a multidimensional poverty measurement. El Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL) developed a measure composed of six equally weighted social dimensions – education and health services, social security, quality and space in the dwelling, basic services in the dwelling and food insecurity. There were also two income thresholds: an income poverty line, and an extreme income poverty line. The social dimensions established in this indicator are part of the 2030 Agenda. Mexico is also simultaneously addressing Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10 and 11.

Based on CONEVAL data, federal, state and municipal governments work together to decrease social deprivations. Through working groups, government ministries coordinate and focus on poverty relief programmes with specific targets for each poverty dimension. Between 2014 and 2016, multidimensional extreme poverty fell from 10 to 8 per cent."

Page 144, No 38
"The 2018 Multidimensional Poverty Index, covering 105 countries, indicates that 1.3 billion people live in households with overlapping deprivations in health, education and living standards. The overlapping deprivations are also disproportionately concentrated among certain groups – 1.1 billion of the multidimensionally poor live in rural areas and almost half are children. Women, older people, ethnic and racial minorities, certain religious groups, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, children and other marginalized groups fall below the population average in many contexts across measures of well-being. (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, 2018.)

Page 148, No 333
"Today, half of all people suffering from overlapping deprivations in health, education and assets are below the age of 18, according to the global MPI; and in 35 countries, half of all children are poor. Further, some studies estimate that inequality rates are even greater among children today than among adults."

Pages 127-137 (Chapter IV: Call to Action)
(4.1 Strengthening human well-being and capabilities, Call to Action point 1)

'**A1.** All stakeholders should contribute to eliminate deprivations and build resilience across multiple dimensions through universal provision of, and access to quality basic services (health, education, water, sanitation, energy, disaster risk management, information and communications technology, adequate housing and social protection), that are universally accessible with targeted attention where poverty and vulnerability are concentrated and with special attention to individuals who are most likely to be left behind – women and girls, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and others.'

- Measure poverty in multiple dimensions based on a country-level understanding of poverty (e.g., deprivations in education, health, food/nutrition, housing, social security and others); and use those measures to shape the development planning process and promote coordination among ministries.

(4.7 Science and technology for sustainable development, Call to Action point 15)

"**A15.** Governments, research consortiums, universities, libraries and other stakeholders must work to enhance the current levels of access to knowledge and disaggregated data, as well as scientific capacity and good-quality higher education, in low- and middle-income countries and countries in

special development situations. They must also actively promote gender equality in science and engineering."

- Research funders should recognize and strongly support long-term North-South and South-South research partnerships as an effective means of tackling the acute social and ecological challenges faced by low- and middle-income countries.
- To the extent possible, low- and middle income countries should facilitate high-quality education in sustainable development in their schools and universities.

(4.7 Science and technology for sustainable development, Call to Action point 17)

"**A17.** All stakeholders should make deliberate efforts to facilitate multidirectional (North-South, South-North and South-South) transfers of technologies for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals."

- Both public and private sectors should collaborate to promote open-source innovations with types of licences for computer software and other products that allow the source code, blueprint or design that can be used, modified and/or shared under defined terms and conditions and is made mostly available free of charge.
- Accessibility and the principles of universal design should be part of curricula in design, computer science, user experience and other relevant subjects, as well as mainstreamed in industry settings. That will create environments where the goods and services developed are usable and accessible to the greatest number of people possible.

(4.8 Not incremental change but transformation, Call to Action point 18)

"**A18.** Multilateral organizations, governments and public authorities should explicitly adopt the Sustainable Development Goals as a guiding framework for their programming, planning and budgetary procedures. To accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, they should devote special attention to directing resources – including finances, official development assistance at levels that meet international commitments, and technologies – to the six entry points, applying knowledge of the interlinkages across Goals and targets, contributing to the co-benefits and resolving trade-offs. The United Nations and other international and regional organizations should facilitate exchange of information and disseminations of lessons learned on the use of the Sustainable Development Goals framework among countries.

- Stakeholders should recognize and leverage the interactions among the Goals in order to resolve the essential trade-offs hindering progress and to harness co-benefits among Goals.