Using a Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) to Coordinate Policies and Achieve SDGs

Side-Event at the 51st Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

5 March 2020, 1:15pm-2:30pm

UN Headquarters, New York, Conference Room D

On 5 March, 2020 at 1:15pm, the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN) will host a Side Event at the 51st session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) in New York at the UN Headquarters, Conference Room D. The Commission is the key UN statistical entity, with participation from national and international statistical leaders from across the world.

Multidimensional Poverty Indices (MPIs) are widely used to measure and fight poverty in all its dimensions. This side event will bring together leading statisticians at the forefront of innovations in poverty measurement to discuss and share experiences with tailoring measures to their national context, improving existing MPIs, and, especially, how MPIs are being used to coordinate policies and track progress towards the SDGs. In keeping with the 2020 UNSC theme of "Better Data, Better Lives", this event will stress the importance of multidimensional poverty measurement to establish policies that improve the lives of the poor and leave no one behind.

According to Target 1.2 of SDGs, all countries should reduce poverty in half in all dimensions, according to national definitions. This means that by 2030 all countries should have a way to measure poverty in many dimensions. MPI could be the tool to address Target 1.2 of the 2030 Agenda. This Side Event will encourage the international community to engage in innovative ways to measure poverty in various dimensions, and then to use this tool to reduce poverty in a more effective way.

The event will be chaired by the Statistician General of South Africa, Mr. Risenga Maluleke, an MPPN Steering Committee member. Other speakers will be confirmed shortly.

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About National and Global MPIs:

Governments such as Mexico, Colombia, Bhutan, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Honduras, Pakistan, Armenia, Mozambique, Panama, Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Philippines, Nepal, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, and Vietnam use National Multidimensional Poverty Indices (MPIs) as an official statistic of poverty. Each National MPI is tailor-made to the national context. For example, its design may reflect the constitution, or national development plan, or a participatory exploration of what poverty means. The National MPI is an official poverty statistic, but an effort is made so that it is used to inform and energise policy.

Yet not all governments have National MPIs. Even when they do, National MPIs cannot be compared. So, there is a value-added to having a comparable global MPI across developing countries and/or universally, with extensive and disaggregated information on the composition of poverty for different groups. A global MPI for more than 100 developing countries has been estimated by OPHI and the UNDP's Human Development Report Office since 2010 and is also disaggregated for subnational regions, as well as by variables like age and rural-urban areas. This Side Event will be the place where we can exchange ideas about measuring multidimensional poverty locally and globally and translate both into policy.

About the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN):

Due to the increase interest on measuring poverty in a multidimensional way, there was the need to have an space where countries and institutions could learn from each other and exchange ideas about methodologies and, more importantly, about using these indicators to address policy issues to reduce poverty. The Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN) is a South-South network of policymakers from countries and institutions interested in measuring and tackling multidimensional poverty. It was launched in June 2013 at a distinguished event at the University of Oxford, at which former President of Colombia and Nobel Laureate Juan Manuel Santos and Professor Amartya Sen gave keynote addresses. The MPPN has been growing over the past seven years and keeps engaging countries and international institutions on implementing multidimensional measures through technical and institutional support. The Network Steering Committee includes Ministers and senior government officials from China, South Africa, and Colombia as well as from OPHI.