4th Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

FORUM: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

TOPIC: Establishing Sustainable Economic Growth and Development for Poverty Reduction

STUDENT OFFICER: Andreas Koutroulis

POSITION: President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Andreas Koutroulis, and I'm privileged to serve as your Chair of this year's AMLMUN Economic and Social Council. I'm a 9th grade student at Ionios School, and I have a deep passion for international relations, diplomacy, and international affairs. I have been taking part in MUN for the last 2 years now, both as a delegate and in leadership roles, and it has been one of the most fulfilling parts of my school life.

MUN has also taught me the value of cooperation, critical thinking, and constructive argumentation, attributes I seek to impart on this committee. My aim is to present a committee where every delegate is made comfortable to express themselves, debate the problem, and work towards efficient solutions.

If you happen to have questions before the conference, feel free to email me on kouand20@gmail.com. I'm looking forward to seeing your ideas in action and to an inspiring and fruitful session to come.

Best regards,

Andreas Koutroulis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Poverty has been one of the most pervasive and difficult problems for humankind over the last fifty years. Although the United Nations and numerous organizations have reported tremendous advancements towards eradicating extreme poverty, recent world developments, including the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing wars, have reversed these gains, rendering the goal more elusive than ever.

It was on 8 September 2000 that the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), through Resolution A/RES/55/2, initiated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—eight goals designed to provide a broad outline for international development. Through the Millennium Declaration, the UN set out to make a better world for present and future generations by the year 2015. The first of these was to end extreme poverty and hunger, an issue that has plagued the world for centuries.

While poverty was not eliminated by the year 2015, there had been major progress. Momentum was maintained, and on 25 September 2015, the UNGA adopted a new resolution,Resolution A/RES/70/1,that launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The new agenda comprised 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and “No Poverty” was once more the first, reaffirming international commitment to putting an end to poverty in all its forms everywhere.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Sustainable Development

“Economic development in which natural resources are used in ways compatible with the long-term maintenance of these resources, and with the conservation of the environment.”[1]

Economic Growth

“Economic growth is defined as an increase in the production of goods and services in an economy over a specific period.”[2]

Poverty Reduction

“Poverty reduction, also known as poverty alleviation, encompasses a range of actions aimed at permanently lifting individuals and communities out of poverty and improving their living conditions. This involves not only increasing income levels but also addressing the various dimensions of poverty, including access to basic necessities like food, clean water, healthcare, and education.”[3]

GDP per capita

“GDP per capita is a measure of the total economic output of a country, divided by its population.”[4]

[1] “Sustainable Development, N. Meanings, Etymology and More.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, University of Oxford, www.oed.com/dictionary/sustainable-development_n. Accessed 26 June 2025.
[2] “Economic Growth: Explainer: Education.” *Reserve Bank of Australia*, scheme=AGLSTERMS.AglsAgent; corporateName=Reserve Bank of Australia, 4 May 2023, www.rba.gov.au/education/resources/explainers/economic-growth.html#:~:text=Economic%20growth%20refers%20to%20an,’%20or%20’real’%20terms. Accessed 26 June 2025.
[3] Barder, Owen Matthew. “What Is Poverty Reduction?” *SSRN*, 25 Apr. 2009, papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1394506. Accessed 26 June 2025.
[4] *Databank*,databank.worldbank.org/metadataglossary/statistical-capacity-indicators/series/5.51.01.10.gdp. Accessed 26 June 2025.

Microfinance

“Microfinance is the provision of financial services to low-income individuals or groups who are excluded from traditional banking systems. It typically involves small loans, but can also include savings accounts, insurance, and other services, aiming to promote financial inclusion and economic empowerment among marginalized populations.” [5]

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

“Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a controlling ownership in a business enterprise in one country by an entity based in another country.”[6]

Informal Economy

“The informal economy, also known as the shadow or grey economy, encompasses economic activities that are not officially registered, regulated, or taxed by the government. It includes a wide range of activities, both legal and illegal, that operate outside the formal structures of a country's economy.”[7]

Circular Economy

“The circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended.”[8]

Debt Relief

“The situation in which a bank or a government tells a person, a company, or a government that they do not have to pay back the money they owe”[9]

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[5] “Definition of Microfinance.” *ADA*, www.ada-microfinance.org/en/about-ada/definition-microfinance-0#:~:text=Microfinance%20is%20a%20tool%20to,Body. Accessed 26 June 2025.

[6] *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Statistics - House of Commons Library*, commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8534/. Accessed 26 June 2025.

[7] “Informal Economy.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 18 June 2025, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Informal_economy#:~:text=An%20informal%20economy%20(informal%20sector,stigmatized%20as%20troublesome%20and%20unmanageable. Accessed 26 June 2025.

[8] “Circular Economy: Definition, Importance and Benefits: Topics: European Parliament.” *Topics | European Parliament*, www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20151201STO05603/circular-economy-definition-importance-and-benefits. Accessed 26 June 2025.

[9] *Debt | English Meaning - Cambridge Dictionary*, dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/debt. Accessed 26 June 2025.

Millenium Development Goals(MDGs)

"The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were eight international development goals established in 2000 by the United Nations, with the aim of improving human well-being and reducing poverty by 2015."[10]

Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs)

"The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are a universal call to action adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030."[11]

Digital infrastructure

"Digital infrastructure refers to the physical and virtual components that enable digital services and operations."[12]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical Background

The global battle against poverty has, across centuries, been inseparable from the development of modern economic systems, industrialization, and global inequalities. Poverty was not seen as a religious or ethical issue, but rather an economic one, in pre-industrial societies. The 18th and 19th-century Industrial Revolution transformed wealth distribution in the world in a spectacular manner. As the industrialized nations became wealthy, the majority of colonized nations suffered economic exploitation, natural resource extraction, and exclusion. These patterns provided the foundation for structural poverty throughout much of the Global South.

Following World War II, poverty reduction was at the center of global cooperation. The establishment of institutions like the World Bank, IMF, and later the United Nations signaled the beginning of global development policy. The 1960s-70s saw a decolonization process, where new independent countries took over weak infrastructure and weak economies. The early years' development attempts attempted state-led growth and mass industrial undertakings, but by the 1980s, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) — spearheaded by the IMF and World Bank — introduced the neoliberal tools of privatization and trade liberalization. These had a tendency to widen inequalities and watered down social services across most of the world.

[10] "Delivering on Commitments." *MDG Fund*, www.mdgfund.org/node/922. Accessed 26 June 2025.
[11] "Sustainable Development Goals." *UNDP*, www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals#:~:text=What%20are%20the%20Sustainable%20Development,people%20enjoy%20peace%20and%20prosperity. Accessed 26 June 2025.
[12] Neos Networks. "What Is Digital Infrastructure?" *Neos Networks*, 25 Feb. 2025, neosnetworks.com/resources/blog/what-is-digital-infrastructure/#:~:text=Digital%20infrastructure%20is%20the%20physical,all%20levels%20of%20digital%20infrastructure. Accessed 26 June 2025.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, human development was at the forefront with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) succeeded by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which embraced a multidimensional understanding of poverty and sustainable development. The acceptance that growth per se is not sufficient for poverty alleviation has shaped current policy approaches toward equity, environmental sustainability, and participation.

Key causes and drivers of Poverty

Poverty is attributed by a complex set of economic, political, structural, and social determinants. Indigenous ethnic, colonial, or race-based exploitation imbalances have created pervasive economic cleavages. Denial of quality education and healthcare continues to deny individuals the prospect of economic advance in most of the globe. Poor-quality basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and sanitation continues to impose isolation and repression.

Economically, underemployment and unemployment continue to be the root causes of poverty, particularly in those that have enormous informal economies or frail industrial bases. Unequal wealth and landholding, particularly so in agricultural economies, makes households prisoners to intergenerational poverty. Corruption, governance problems, and political instability can drain development resources and kill institutionality.

Global forces are also part of the mix. Busts and commodity price cycles, debt crises, and trade deficits can annihilate national economies. Climate change and environmental degradation afflict disproportionately poor people, least responsible for emissions and most vulnerable to disaster. Throw in war and displacement, or economic collapse, guaranteed to push people into poverty with no institutional safety net.

Challenges to Achieving Sustainable Growth

Maintaining economic growth that reduces poverty is beset with challenges. The biggest challenge is between short-term and long-term and between growth and sustainability. Natural resource exploitation or dirty industries are what developing economies typically resort to in a bid to stimulate growth, and end up paying a colossal environmental and social cost later on.

Within and between countries, inequalities are also a grave concern. GDP growth in most economies does not translate into poverty reduction because the benefits flow to a small minority. Inclusive growth that makes the poor benefit directly from economic progress is difficult to obtain in most cases.

Another obstacle is the weak fiscal capacity of most developing countries. Inefficient tax systems and high levels of debt hold them back from allocating resources to education, health, and infrastructure, pillars of sustainable growth. Dependence on foreign aid or foreign borrowing can also erode national autonomy and result in a debt-underdevelopment trap.

In addition, technological change and automation, while raising productivity, can substitute traditional jobs, particularly in economies based on labor. Geopolitical conflicts, transnational pandemics (like COVID-19), and climate change-induced catastrophes complicate the process of long-term planning and implementation of sustainable policies.

Case Studies of Sustainable Growth towards Poverty Reduction

China

China has established one of the greatest poverty reductions in history, lifting over 800 million individuals out of poverty since the 1980s. This was made possible by rapid economic growth driven by market reform, foreign investment, and the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Growth was accompanied by targeted social policies, especially in rural China, where the development of infrastructure, improved education, and access to health were prioritized. China's "Targeted Poverty Alleviation" in the 2010s even more precisely targeted this process on poor households in achieving assistance in the form of financial subsidies, vocational training, and relocation. This combination of participatory development and governmental economic planning has enabled China not only to eradicate extreme poverty completely by 2020, according to official sources, but also to become a model of development policy for the rest of the world.

Rwanda

Rwanda, which emerged from the ashes of genocide in 1994, has developed a very stable and well-balanced governance, education, and health-based economic model. High economic growth is the average rate of about 7% and poverty reduction from over 60% to below 38% was achieved in 2000–2020. The secret to such success was the "Vision 2020" development strategy that concentrated on anti-corruption, infrastructure, and digital innovation. Rwanda also put a lot of investment in people, for example, nearly universal primary education and wide coverage of health care. Gender equality was also among the foundations, with women making up over half of members of parliament and playing a major role in economic life. Rwanda has also invested in environmental sustainable development through policies like its ban on plastic and investment in ecotourism. All of these collaborative efforts have made it one of Africa's finest examples of post-conflict development and sustainable recovery.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made huge strides in poverty reduction over the past decades, decreasing its poverty rate from over 40% in 1991 to about 18.7% in 2022. This is a result of a mix of export-led growth, social investment, and the growth of microfinance. It became a global champion of textile and apparel exports, generating millions of jobs,mostly for women,that helped to raise household incomes and social empowerment. At the same time, Bangladesh invested in rural development, education (girls' education), and health, including pioneering community programs that transformed child and maternal health outcomes. One of the strongest propellants was the extensive introduction of microcredit, spearheaded by Grameen Bank, which enabled poor individuals and particularly women to get money to start small businesses and become economically independent. The case of Bangladesh demonstrates how gender-sensitive development policy, focused development, and social entrepreneurship can complement economic growth in effectively reducing poverty.

Consequences of Poverty in Modern Times

The consequences of poverty today are extensive and impact not only individuals but also societies and global security. At the individual level, poverty encourages malnutrition, illiteracy, illness, and uncontrolled mortality among the poor and children. On the community level, it typically means bad hygiene, no infrastructure, low rates of school attendance, and limited employment.

At the societal level, it creates inequality, social tension, and political instability. It can degrade institutions and promote extremist ideologies, with resultant cycles of war and violence. A high percentage of poor citizens in nations has the effect of discouraging investments, thus leading to slow economies and underdevelopment.

At the world level, poverty undermines worldwide progress in achieving worldwide goals like the SDGs, and drives most of the main drivers of mass migration, climate risk, and global health crises. In an increasingly interconnected world, poverty in one region can ring the doorbells of others through pandemics, refugee movements, or economic shocks.

Alleviating poverty is therefore not only an ethical necessity, it is the key to world peace, security, and sustainability.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

China

China has also exerted a transformative influence on the world's war on poverty, both globally as well as domestically. Since economic reform began in the late 1970s, China has elevated more than 800 million people out of abject poverty, responsible for more than 70% of world poverty reduction over the period by calculation by the World Bank. That historic achievement was the result of a state-led approach where market liberalization was complemented by huge investment in rurally-focussed infrastructure as well as labour-intensive industrialisation. Perhaps China's largest success was the Targeted Poverty Alleviation scheme (launched in 2013), where granular data was utilised to map poor families as well as concentrate investment directly onto them. China has also transmitted the success formula for development abroad via the Belt as well as Road Initiative (BRI), providing infrastructure finance, trade partnerships, technical cooperation to Asia, Africa, as well as Latin American states. While hailed for increasing South-South cooperation as well as offering an option to

West-centric models of development, China's overseas role has also thrown up controversy over debt sustainability, green protection as well as openness of lending processes.

United States of America (USA)

One of the world's largest participants in global development as a leading donor bilaterally, leader in the international financial system, and sole architect of the world trade system is the USA. The American Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provide billions of dollars' foreign aid per year for public institution reform, democratic governance, and economic development. American development policy is premised upon a liberal economic framework promoting the private sector, openness, and good government. Its commercial approach to trade policy such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is concerned with the privileged US market access promotion for export-led development among donor poor countries. In multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), following the period when the United States had a monopoly of lending conditions as well as poverty reduction strategy. It is, however, in some instances blamed for favouring geopolitics over the needs of development, implementing austerity-driven economic reform, and for adopting the donor-led narrative of development. American philanthropy is, however, largely responsible for driving the advancement of poverty-tuned programs in failed states as well as conflict-states.

Germany

Germany is also generally considered a world leader in sustainable, inclusive development as a large donor as well as one for environmentally responsible economic approaches. It does it through both the official development agency, the GIZ or German Society for International Cooperation as well as funding for the KfW Development Bank. Germany is also one of the largest donors for international organizations like the UNDP, World Bank, as well as the Green Climate Fund. Climate-resilient development is also highly prioritized by Germany whose approach also very frequently pairs poverty reduction alongside protection for the environment. German reform partnerships with Africa in Africa south of the Sahara also prioritize reform partnerships as well as private investment for job creation for the youth. The German approach is one of social-market orientation by trying to balance economic efficiency alongside protection for the poor as well as for the environment. It is one approach described as making an effort to show how economic growth could achieve growth for development purposes in a manner which is both inclusive as well as human-rights focused.

India

Both as a poor domestic population nation and a rising donor, India's double contribution to global poverty reduction is unparalleled. Internationally, India has reduced poverty vastly within the country, particularly since the early 2000s, through sustained growth in the GDP, increased agricultural productivity, and selected welfare schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Direct Benefit Transfers.

However, challenges persist, most especially in rural and underprivileged communities. India promotes inclusive growth through the establishment of infrastructure, financial inclusion (such as the Jan Dhan Yojana bank account scheme), and entrepreneurship, especially through initiatives such as Startup India and Skill India. At the global level, India has stepped up its development cooperation initiatives, especially in the neighboring region and Africa, in the shape of lines of credit on concessional terms, technical capacity building, and training under the ITEC scheme. India supports South-South cooperation, development sovereignty, and a more representative international financial architecture that reflects the needs and voices of the Global South.

Brazil

Brazil has also been an important regional leader in development innovation, particularly during the 2000s, when it introduced innovative anti-poverty programs such as Bolsa Família, a conditional cash transfer scheme that was a global model for linking social protection to education and health outcomes. These programs reduced extreme poverty and inequality significantly, while causing Brazil to be recognized as a leader in economically inclusive social development. Brazil's development model emphasizes state involvement, agrarian reform, community development, and regional integration, particularly through its leadership role in Mercosur and the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP). Brazil has also been one of the most active advocates of South-South cooperation, offering technical cooperation and expertise in agriculture, social policy, and health (particularly in the fight against HIV/AIDS and Zika virus) to other developing nations. Although recent political and economic instability has dampened its international influence, Brazil's legacy of human-centered development remains influential.

Norway

Norway stands globally renowned for its strong commitment to human rights, peace, and sustainable development and ranks among the top per capita official development assistance (ODA) donors annually. Norway supports poverty reduction in education, gender, climate change resilience, and good governance particularly in sub-Saharan Africa through Norad (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation). Multilateralism, equality, and strengthening local communities are the core of Norway's strategy. It has also been leading the way in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and investing in significant global funds such as GAVI (the Vaccine Alliance) and Education Cannot Wait. Norway's policy model demonstrates how small but successful nations can be a pioneer in championing ethical and sustainable development and using their foreign power to push for global justice and fair economic growth.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The OECD is a prominent intergovernmental institution with the mandate to shape development cooperation policy and prepare world standards on aid effectiveness, tax reform, and economic governance. The OECD tracks and oversees the largest donors' development assistance flows via its Development Assistance Committee (DAC), reviews development strategies, and promotes policy coherence for development. It has been instrumental in advancing the aid effectiveness agenda, such as the Paris Declaration (2005) and Accra Agenda for Action (2008), that emphasize local ownership, alignment with the priorities of recipient countries, and mutual accountability. It also produces the OECD Development Pathways and Multidimensional Country Reviews to help countries formulate long-term, sustainable growth plans. As a thought leader, it shapes arguments on inclusive growth, digitalization, tax justice, and climate-resilient development to make donor interventions support global poverty reduction goals.

World Trade Organisation(WTO)

WTO has a major impact on the trade environment at the international level, which will have an indirect impact on economic growth and the alleviation of poverty, particularly in developing countries. It provides a rules-based framework for regulating international trade with the aim to ensure fair play and foresight. Through initiatives like the Aid for Trade program, the WTO is assisting developing nations to enhance their capacity to trade and be able to access value chains globally. But the WTO has also been accused of grossly biased trade regulations towards industrialized countries, and of failure of the Doha Development Round, a process to make the trading system fairer. Agricultural subsidies in developed countries, for example, still distort world markets against smallholder farmers in the South. Trade continues to be a main poverty-reduction catalyst, and WTO reforms could make it stronger in promoting fair economic growth.

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

The IMF has a key role in international economic stability and poverty reduction primarily through providing financial assistance, macroeconomic policy advice, and technical assistance to member countries. The IMF provides concessionary loans to low-income countries under facilities such as the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) to support economic reform and poverty reduction. The IMF had placed emphasis on macroeconomic stability, social prudence, and structural adjustment that has often been controversial since critics argue that austerity conditions on its loans have, at times,undermined social expenditure and widened inequality. The IMF has, in recent years, however, begun shifting towards a more human-oriented approach to growth by including social protection floors and climate considerations in its recommendations. The IMF's analytical work and global surveillance reports inform development strategies all around the world and make it a forceful, sometimes controversial player in global poverty reduction.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
May 19 1971	CGIAR (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research): Multilateral initiative to reduce poverty and hunger through sustainable agriculture research.
October 20 1987	Publication of the Brundtland Report (*Our Common Future*): Defined *sustainable development* and made it central to global economic and environmental discussions.
May 10 1990	First UN Human Development Report published: Introduced the Human Development Index (HDI) as a new way of measuring development beyond GDP.
December 17 1997	World Bank and IMF adopt Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach: Required low-income countries to create nationally driven plans for poverty reduction to access concessional funding.
September 8 2000	UN adopts the Millennium Declaration at the Millennium Summit: Launches the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) aimed at halving extreme poverty by 2015.
October 20 2003	Launch of Bolsa Família in Brazil: Pioneering conditional cash transfer (CCT) program that reached over 50 million Brazilians and became a model for many countries.
July 6-8 2005	G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland: Focus on “Make Poverty History”; agreement on debt relief for 18 poor countries and commitment to double aid to Africa.
September 7 2013	China formally announces the Belt and Road Initiative(BRI): Aims to promote infrastructure-led development in over 60 countries.
September 25 2015	UNGA adopts the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs): Replaces MDGs with 17 goals, including Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth),

	to be achieved by 2030.
March 11 2020	Covid 19 Pandemic declared by WHO: Triggers global economic crisis and poverty surge, especially in low-income countries. Over one decade of economic gains against poverty is reversed.
January 1 2022	Start of trading under African Continental Free Trade Area(AfCFTA): Largest free trade area in the world by number of countries, aimed at promoting industrialization, job creation, and inclusive growth across Africa.
April 17 2024	IMF Spring Meeting emphasizes Resilience and Inclusion: Shift in Development finance toward investing in social protection, green transition, and digital infrastructure for poverty reduction.

RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution A/RES/56/207: Implementation of the 1st United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

This Resolution, passed in 2002, reaffirmed the international community's commitment to poverty eradication on the basis of past initiatives by the First UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. It recognized that poverty is a complex problem which cannot be solved by economic growth alone, but needs to be tackled by an integrated approach covering education, health, employment, and social services. The resolution emphasized national leadership of development strategy and called on developed countries to enhance international cooperation, enhance Official Development Assistance (ODA), and provide highly indebted poor countries with debt relief. It emphasized the importance of long-term inclusive economic growth that could generate jobs and allow for equitable income distribution. This resolution served to be an interlude between the Millennium Summit (2000) and the development policies of the future, laying the groundwork for mainstreaming poverty reduction in international economic policy discussions.

Resolution A/RES/52/193: First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly.(1997-1998)

This earlier resolution formally launched the First UN Decade for Eradication of Poverty and advanced a wide vision of global anti-poverty action. It acknowledged that poverty was not only an economic issue, but a denial of basic human rights. It urged member states to devise people-oriented national policies with a view to empowering the poor, and particularly women and disadvantaged groups, and granting equal access to opportunities. It promoted the leadership of advanced countries in financing these activities by means of aid, just and fair trade practices, and technology transfer. Importantly, the resolution set the stage for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), opening the way for a more analytical architecture of international development. In its appeal for holistic strategies that would harmonize economic development with social conservation and environmental protection, the resolution managed to shift the debate into sustainable, people-oriented development.

Resolution E/2012/L.10: Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals

This ECOSOC resolution placed much value in the linkage of employment generation, decent work, and poverty elimination. It acknowledged that while economic growth had led to poverty decline in some regions, growth alone was inadequate if it did not lead to jobs with substance or reduce inequality. The resolution advocated policies that enhance productive capacities—e.g., investments in the infrastructure, vocational training, and rural development—and decent wages, workplace rights, and social protection measures. It complemented the MDGs by linking poverty reduction to measurable, employment-related development results. The resolution also encouraged global partnerships and policy coordination at every government level. Its launch welcomed an even stronger global consensus to place work and social inclusion at the forefront of development planning, a policy which was later summarized in SDG Goal 8.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Millenium Development Goals(MDGs)

In the year 2000, the UN's 189 member states endorsed the Millennium Development Goals as a global template for reducing extreme poverty, hunger, disease, and inequality. The eight objectives with 21 targets focused on human development, and Goal 1 dealt with the elimination of extreme poverty and hunger by reducing the population for less than $1.25 per day by half by the year 2015. The MDGs focused the attention and resources of the world upon primary education, the health of children, and maternal care as the key necessities. There was significant success with unified action in some areas. In the countries of China and India, for instance, the poverty rates fell considerably. But the MDGs were criticized for simplicity, for dependence upon donors too much, for narrowly focusing upon short-run outcomes and less upon the building institutions. African countries made limited progress and particularly the countries with conflict or lacking infrastructures. The MDGs did little within countries for addressing inequality, environmental sustainability, and the value added for the economy by resilience,components key for the longer-run poverty reduction.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) superseded the MDGs with an ambitious, inclusive, and expanded agenda. With 17 targets and 169 targets, the SDGs aim at combating poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and achieving peace and prosperity by 2030. Sustainable development and poverty elimination come under specific attention under Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), with specific calls for inclusive economic policies, universal coverage for decent work and advocacy for entrepreneurship. Diverging with the MDGs, the SDGs call for more attention for sustainability in the longer term, global partnerships, and interlinking environmental, social, and economic development. They call for the pursuit for addressing the root cause for poverty, including weak institutions, economic exclusion, and climatic vulnerability. Though most countries incorporated the SDG targets in national development agendas, the progress was spasmodic. Low income countries and fragile countries lack the financial and technological strength for implementation. Besides, the global challenges such as the pandemic of COVID-19, climatic shift, and geopolitical tensions distracted the progress and accentuated permanent weakness at the global level in collaboration and mobilization for resources.

World Bank and IMF Poverty Reduction Strategies

Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were begun in the late 1990s by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank as part of the condition for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. To be eligible for concessional loans and debt relief, countries were requested to design PRSPs detailing national strategies for poverty reduction based on economic growth, reform of governance, and investments in public service. In theory, PRSPs encouraged country-owned and broad-based consultations with the goal of aligned financial support with the country’s own development agendas. In practice, most observers criticize the strategies for embracing neoliberal economic norms, including austerity, privatization, and deregulation. These policies at times acted against the public provision of services and widened inequality, specifically for small and vulnerable economies. While PRSPs standardized and yet facilitated increased coordination between donors for development planning, the longer-run impact of PRSPs for the alleviation of poverty is contentious. The balancing act between economic stabilization and social investment proved challenging for countries, unable as they were between inclusive and sustainable development and the ambitious reform required at the macro level.

The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act(AGOA)

Enacted in 2000, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is a US trade law that seeks to enhance market access for sub-Saharan Africa through the duty-free entry of thousands of goods. AGOA saw itself as a tool of economic diversification, job creation, and private sector growth in the region, based on the assumption that trade, rather than aid, could best promote sustainable development. In recent years, AGOA has brought incremental growth to African exports to the U.S., especially in textiles, apparel, and agriculture. However, its overall impact has been limited by several factors. The majority of African economies continue to depend on raw material exports and lack an industrial base to maximize benefits from AGOA. Moreover, the one-way character of the agreement, constant reauthorizations, and political conditionality make it a shaky foundation for long-term planning. Without accompanying investment in infrastructure, education, and industrial upgrading, AGOA alone has not been able to trigger a transformative, inclusive growth.

EU's Everything But Arms(EBA)

Everything But Arms (EBA) is a 2001 initiative of the European Union that grants duty-free and quota-free access to the EU market for all products except arms, from the world's least developed countries (LDCs). The purpose of EBA is to promote economic growth and poverty alleviation through encouraging exports and integration in the world economy. EBA has allowed some LDCs to expand their agricultural and manufactured exports to Europe. However, most have been unable to take complete advantage of these benefits due to supply-side constraints, like poor infrastructure, weak governance, and underdeveloped private sectors. Furthermore, EBA's rules of origin, sanitary conditions, and stringent compliance standards have been intimidating to most producers. Although EBA is a more equitable trade agreement than the traditional ones, its effect in galvanizing structural economic transformation is truncated without supporting investments in capacity, technology, and value addition. Therefore, while access to trade is critical, it must be coupled with domestic development strategies to lead to sustainable, poverty-reducing growth.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Transition to a Green and Climate-Resilient Economy

A transition to the green as well as climate-resilient economy is an efficient means of achieving long-term, inclusive development as well as preventing environmental degradation. Investment for the green industries of the future, including renewable energy, climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forestry, as well as green tourism, can generate productive jobs that are good for the environment. Climate-resilient infrastructure, including flood controls, drought-resistant irrigation, as well as coastal protections, can save livelihoods as well as reduce economic loss from natural disasters, of which the poor are an enormous majority. Fossil fuel subsidy reforms, substituted by clean energy incentives, can mobilize resources to innovation as well as sustainable development. During the process, countries achieve economic resilience as well as environmental integrity, poverty reduction as well as preparedness for future challenges due to the effects of climate change.

Investment in Human Capital

Productive investment in human capital, for example, investment in spending on schooling, health, and skill development is necessary for achieving broad-based economic growth and raising people out of poverty for all. Investment in access to quality primary, secondary, and higher schooling enables development of an employable labor force better prepared for modern diversified economies. Investment in health facilities also enables people to have productive lives free of curable conditions that otherwise pull families into poverty traps. Investment in girls schools and women's equality of representation of women in the labor market also yields highest national productivity and enables more balanced growth. Governments can also upgrade human capital by investing in vocational training, IT literacy, and social security nets, including cash transfers and nutrition programs, enabling poor families to spend on their own development.

Expansion of Mobile Money Agent Networks in Rural Areas

Rollouts of mobile money agent networks to rural and underserved marketplaces can significantly boost rural economic development as well as increase access to finance. Formal bank branches are out of reach or very few throughout most impoverished neighborhoods where individuals have no access to secure forms of saving, investing, or sending money. Mobile money infrastructure, backed by large agent networks, offers an affordable, cheaper alternative by allowing users easy access to finance transactions, including money transfers, through mobile phones. Such services can avail small business owners as well as farm workers access to microcredit, receipt of remittance flows, as well as purchase of services and commodities, thereby allowing for household security as well as rural market development. Moreover, mobile money is also becoming central to reaching efficient social protection payments as well as emergency transfers, even including the most remote of communities into economic development programs.

Subsidy of Solar-Powered Irrigation food Smallholder Farmers

Subsidizing solar irrigation for smallholder agriculture offers the long-run solution to farm productivity, poverty, and environmental degradation. Smallholder agriculture is characterized by unreliable rains and limited access to irrigation on favorable terms, hindering the growth of crops throughout the year. Solar irrigation allows for the farmer to cultivate crops even in drought, crop diversification of growing, and increased productivity—all of which increase family food security directly and raise incomes. As these pumps are cheap to maintain and clean compared to diesel pumps, they also enable cheaper long-run prices for energy as well as greenhouse gas emission reductions. Subsidy or credit schemes of the government can make the technology affordable for poor- and landless farmers as well as create jobs on the ground across manufacture, installation, and servicing, aiding rural development even further.

Establishment of Local Garment Clusters with On-site Childcare

Creating garment clusters with on-site child care can foster inclusive industrialization, particularly for women. Such clusters, often composed of small and medium firms of garment production, generate jobs in skilled as well as semi-skilled categories. Integrating free or low-cost child care facilities within the factory removes most of the disincentives to women's labor market entry, allowing working mothers to find employment without having to sacrifice the care or education of their children. Apart from providing jobs, garment clusters also foster the development of local value chains in textiles, transport, and services, which enhance their economic impact. Training in the clusters is also able to further upgrade workers in areas such as design, sewing, and quality control, converting low-paid workers into skilled contributors to a prosperous, export-oriented sector.

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