

Review of SDG implementation and interrelations among goals

Discussion on SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities

Thursday, 11 July 2019, 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM, Conference Room 4

Remarks by Mr. Matthew Martin, Director, Development Finance International (check against delivery)

Thank you moderator

Let me begin by saying that I agree very strongly with the various remarks made highlighting the major problems with the timeliness and reliability of data on income and wealth inequality outcomes .

That is why, pending major data improvements, in 2016 my organisation, development finance international - in partnership with Oxfam international, new rules for global finance, the ITUC, The Friedrich Ebert stiftung and the open society foundation- decided to monitor instead the POLICIES which have been proven to reduce inequality across the world.

In response to rep of el Salvador, we all know what these are in principle - progressive taxation, social spending, labour rights and minimum wages, and fairer distribution of assets such as finance and land. Of course all of these policies must have at their heart the rights and needs of all groups suffering from discrimination and marginalization. The urgent issue now is how to design their details, adapting them to country circumstances and citizens priorities, and to get them implemented against the political opposition of wealthy elites.

What have we found ? Thorough a commitment to reducing inequality.index which measures progress by 156 countries, we have found a very mixed picture with many governments such as Korea and Indonesia making major progress, but others making policy changes which are undoubtedly exacerbating inequality. Overall there is only very marginal progress. Most vital, many countries are unclear on what policies to use or how to cost or fund them, resulting in a tendency by many countries to virtually ignore SDG10 in their national development plans.

Our other analysis in a global financial institutions impact report assesses how well the institutions including the UN are doing in helping countries to introduce these policies. Overall we find remarkably that in spite of good intentions and analysis the institutions are having remarkably little impact. There was, however, one piece of good news last week in the decision by the addis tax initiative to monitor henceforth whether countries are making their tax systems more progressive.

Since this whole HLPF is focussing on how UN efforts can be improved, let me end with three suggestions for what more the UN in particular could do:

First sdg10 is an orphan SDG without a lead agency. The un must establish a clear top level focal point to lead global efforts on sdg 10.

Second countries need much more practical support through online access to analysis and exchange of experiences on best practices, and training and toolkits on how to improve policies, estimate costs and mobilise financing at national level. The UN could play a key role in coordinating this type of knowledge provision.

Thirdly, SDG10 needs to strengthen its friends group of powerful member states as sponsors of progress into an international group of champions to fight inequality. I therefore welcome the launch next week of the Grand challenge initiative which aims to achieve this in the next few years. This HLPF and the september summit must be where we collectively make sure that SDG10 is no longer the marginalised SDG.

Thank you

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