

Leaving no one behind

Friedrich Soltau

Division for Sustainable Development, UN Department of
Economic and Social Affairs



Introduction

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: “As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.” (para. 4)
- Driven by the realization that is not enough to consider average improvements – may lead to focus on easiest to reach communities, not those in greatest need
- Address the needs of the vulnerable and marginalized
- A commitment to equality, empowerment, and to combating social exclusion

Key points of departure

- **Identification:** Who is being left behind?
- **Diagnostic:** Why are they being left behind?
- **Action:** What can be done to reach those who are left behind?



Who is being left behind?

- Depends on context and circumstances
- Disadvantaged groups, including people living in poverty, women, indigenous peoples, youth, older people, people living with disabilities, migrants, and people in conflict and post-conflict situations
- Gender disparities in education – rapid increase in primary school enrolment, but disparities persist at secondary level, among poorest families, in rural areas, and among minority groups
- Countries – those traditionally identified in United Nations intergovernmental outcomes, including least developed countries (LDCs), land-locked developing countries, and small island developing states (SIDS)

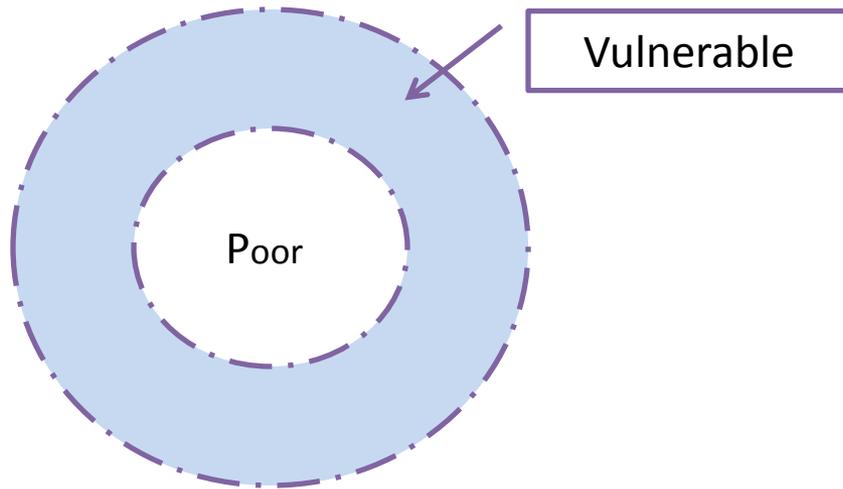
Why are they being left behind?

- Lack of access to opportunity – education, health services, infrastructure
- Lack of access to resources, especially employment and income
- Barriers to participation in political, civic and cultural life
- Key message: “Ensuring that no one is left behind” is a multi-dimensional problem - requires combating poverty AND addressing other drivers of social exclusion

The poor

- Poverty – remarkable progress, decline from nearly half of world population living in poverty in 1990 (absolute number 1.9 billion) to 14 per cent in 2015 (absolute number 836 million)
- Multi-dimensional poverty
- But poverty is less a fixed state, but rather a condition that may affect a group of persons – i.e. risk of falling back due to various shocks
- Moving out of poverty, but remaining vulnerable – lack of affordable health services or social protection

Poverty



- Those at risk of poverty always higher than those counted as poor at any one time
- Estimated that in South Asia 730 million persons live above the \$1.25 poverty line but below \$2.50

Reaching those left behind

- Strategies and policies need to be context specific – who is being left behind varies → identify groups being left furthest behind by progress on different goals and targets → monitor their rate of progress
- Economic growth – debate around pro-poor (closing the gap) and economy-wide growth (“rising tide lifts all boats”)
- Social protection systems – only 27 per cent of the global population have access to comprehensive social security systems (ILO)
- Expanding safety nets to reach the income security needs of children and families in low and middle-income countries
- Accessible healthcare

Conclusion

- **Universal agenda** – coupled with policies to identify and address the needs of those in poverty and subject to social exclusion
- **Inclusive institutions** – enabling participation development processes
- **Internalizing** the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, accounting for trade-offs and synergies across sectors
- **Respecting** key principles of the Agenda, especially leave no one behind
- **Follow-up and review** – define actions and institutions and monitor progress