

**National Consultation on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10
“Reducing Inequalities”**

28th August 2017

Juniper, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Concept Note

Introduction

Equality of opportunities in all its forms – social, economic and political is arguably the most fundamental principle of any civilizational enterprise. Nevertheless, economic prosperity of nations has generally been associated with increasing income inequalities with deeper ramifications for long standing social inequities. Due to structural factors and historical specificities large emerging economies like India, have been particularly confronted with such challenges that have been true for many countries. The new global compact in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals therefore, places “equity” at its core. Reduction of inequalities is not only a moral obligation but an economic necessity for sustainable development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in line with the Indian development agenda to substantially improve all-round prosperity and well-being in the world by 2030. The SDG 10 aims to ‘reduce inequality within and among countries’, and draws the combat lines against inequality by putting forth a comprehensive range of targets addressing income growth, equality of development opportunities, socio-economic and political empowerment, social protection, responsible migration, etc. Illustrating the interconnectedness and strategic coherence of the SDGs, the SDG 10 complements and is complemented by several other SDGs, e.g. SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4 (Quality Education, and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and so on.

National Consultation on SDG 10

NITI Aayog, as a part of its role of overseeing the implementation of SDGs in the country, has been conducting a series of National Consultations on SDGs involving Central Ministries, State Governments, experts, academia, CSOs, multilateral organisations and other stakeholders. The proposed National Consultation on the SDG 10 is going to be held at the Juniper Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi on 28th August 2017 in partnership with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi and the United Nations in India.

The objectives of the Consultation are to:

- Facilitate deliberation on key thematic areas and issues around reducing inequality in the Indian context; both within and among countries
- Generate clarity about various targets of SDG 10 (placed as an Appendix to this note) , and related national indicators;

- Highlight best practices from States, critical gaps and important strategies to achieve the targets;
- Strengthen partnership among various stakeholders around interventions addressing inequality.

Sessions and Themes

The Consultation will have three technical sessions covering key issues dealt with in SDG 10 that are relevant for India and explore the structural dimensions for reducing inequalities in India. We briefly highlight the key issues and expectations from the sessions.

Session 1: Addressing Inequalities: Empowerment, Inclusion and Non-discrimination (Social, Economic and Political)

The related targets of SDG 10 (10.2, 10.3 and 10.4) foreground the objectives of empowerment, social justice and inclusion. This session is designed to address these objectives in terms of examining interventions and strategies for promoting social, economic and political empowerment and cohesion towards achieving social justice for all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, region or economic or other status. These would have deeper significance for ensuring equal opportunities and reducing inequalities of outcome by eliminating discriminations among socially and economically backward groups. The policy options and interventions through fiscal, wage and social protection measures continue to remain critical in addressing such challenges. The legal framework also has an important role by way of providing the much-needed enabling environment to achieve these goals. While evidence based policy making in this area is an important forward step, challenges of producing adequate and disaggregated information and data demand due attention. The session will seek to analyse emerging issues and concerns in practical and experiential terms insofar as they impinge on the realities of various socio-economically and otherwise marginalized and disadvantaged population groups, such as, women, children, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, differently-abled, migrant workers, etc.

Session 2: Promoting a worker-friendly migration support system

In this session, the issue of migration within and among countries would be explored. It is proposed to focus on ensuring orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people within and among countries; and on reducing transaction costs of migration remittances to less than 3 percent as well as eliminating high cost migration corridors. The session will also, *inter alia*, deal with the impact of migration on especially vulnerable groups like women and children in terms of access to basic services, protection against discrimination, abuse and violence. While examining the relevant legal framework, special attention will be paid to the implementation of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions

of Service) Act, 1979. India not only experiences huge mobility of labour force within the country but has one of the largest migrant diaspora around the world. India has also been facing challenges of unregulated migration, aggravated due to factors like underdevelopment and conflicts. Therefore, the session will also dwell upon issues that concern Indian citizens working abroad with respect to ensuring fair treatment, transparent and facilitating systems, justice and economic benefits. SDG 10 incorporates targets 10.7 and 10.c on migration issues.

Session 3: Connecting Structural Transformations with Features of Inequalities

The session will go into structural issues of inequality. As highlighted at the outset, growth in per capita incomes is unequal among individuals owing to variety of structural factors including uneven returns to factors of production, and differences in the levels of skills, assets and access to technology. While the relationship between economic growth and inequality *a la* Kuznets is that of an inverted U, recent evidence on trade liberalization and income inequalities through wage linkages is debated. Further, in the Indian context, existing dualisms in sectoral performances and the ‘missing middle’ in manufacturing and services has been indicated as a possible source of rising inequalities. Studies point towards the fact that the Indian growth in the last few decades has been led by the tertiary sector, wherein a large proportion has been in the ‘non-tradable’ category focused on the domestic market. That is why it is important to keep a close watch on what happens to income growth potentials of the economically disadvantaged sections of population, while charting a path of rapid economic growth, and carefully appraise the experience on the ground before preparing a credible roadmap for reducing income inequalities. On the other hand, the session will also deliberate on issues of equity in multilateral trading systems and regulatory framework for global financial flows and those relating to enhancing Official Development Assistance (ODA), which bear upon the causal dynamics of inequality at an inter-country and other levels. Finally, the session is expected to deliberate on establishing the indicator framework and resolving issues of data harmonization and data gaps in measurement of inequalities. The session will focus on issues related to several SDG 10 targets (10.1, 10.3, 10.5, 10.6, 10.a and 10.b).

Appendix I:

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
Targets
10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average
10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality
10.5 Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations
10.6 Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies
10.a Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements
10.b Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes
10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent