

HLPF Expert Group Meeting 18 -20 May 2021:

SDG 1 Intervention on behalf of the Women’s Major Group

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Introduction:

While there has been some decent progress toward achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030, it should be noted that prior to the pandemic there had been a decline in eradicating extreme poverty. Globally the number of people living in extreme poverty declined by 36% in 1990 to 10% in 2015. Unfortunately, the pace of change is decelerating and the COVID-19 crisis has shown the risk reversing decades of progress in the fight against poverty. Even before COVID-19, the baseline projections suggested that in 2030, 6% of the global population would still be living in extreme poverty. Missing the target of ending poverty.

The 2021 Secretary General’s ‘Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals’ report¹ noted that the triple threat of COVID-19, conflict and climate change makes the global goal of ending poverty by 2030 beyond reach unless immediate and substantial policy actions are implemented.

UN Women² has identified that poverty gaps between women and men (between the ages of 25 and 34) are particularly acute as women struggle to combine paid work with the unequal burden of care for children and other dependents. Globally, for every 100 men in this age group, there are 122 women and for all adults more women than men live on less than US \$1.90 (Women 104, Men 100).

The COVID-19 pandemic is not only a crisis in of itself but has exposed and deepened all of the inequalities and injustices we have been fighting to eliminate across the three pillars of sustainable development. Women and girls in all our diversity across the life course remain the most vulnerable and at risk of living in extreme poverty.

At the 2020 Social Forum of the Human Rights Council, Madame Batchlet pointed out that “COVID-19 has brought to the fore the inequality pandemic overlooked by many ... it’s time to stop looking the other way. We cannot wait - or accept - going back to a so-called normality that made our societies so vulnerable, so fragile, so unequal - and so unjust.”³

¹ Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Report, Secretary General (E/202/xxx)

² <https://www.unwomen.org/in-focus/women-and-the-sdgs/sdg-1-no-poverty>

³ OHCHR: <https://www.OHCHR.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/SocialForum2020.aspx>

The ‘New’ Poor:

Newly published research by the UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research⁴, warns that the economic fallout from the global pandemic could increase global poverty by as much as a half billion people or 8% of the total human population. This would be the first time that poverty has increased globally in thirty years, since 1990.

The term ‘new’ poor has gained world-wide use during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis as the world went into lock down, businesses closed, people lost their income, their homes and faced for the first time extreme poverty. However, we must continue to be vigilant and leave no one behind including those already living in chronic and intergenerational poverty.

“ - in the context of the global pandemic aftermath, international organizations are focusing on the concept of the ‘new’ poor (those who lost their jobs during the pandemic or with limited social protection coverage). Yet it is equally important to ensure that recovery efforts also include individuals and families living in chronic poverty and intergenerational poverty. To do that, it is essential to consider all aspects and dimensions of poverty, including social and institutional maltreatment. Designing recovery policies should be more holistic and go beyond economic/income related interventions.⁵”

While developing countries remain the most at risk, eight out of ten ‘new poor’ will be in middle-income countries. According to UNDP⁶ income losses are expected to exceed \$220 billion in developing countries, and an estimated 55% of the global population have no access to social protection. These losses will reverberate across societies; impacting education, human rights and, in the most severe cases, basic food security and nutrition.

The World Bank’s report⁷ calls for collective action to ensure years of progress in poverty reduction are not erased, and that efforts to confront poverty caused by COVID-19 also face threats that disproportionately impact the world’s poor at the same time, particularly conflict and climate change. By 2030, the global poverty rate could be 7%.

⁴ UNDP – Development Challenges and Solutions: <https://w.w.w.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/>

⁵ In consultation with Monica Jahangir-Chowdhury, ATD Fourth World - NY

⁶ UNDP – Development Challenges and Solutions: <https://w.w.w.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty/>

⁷ World Bank Press release – October 7, 2020:

<https://w.w.w.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/07/COVID-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021>

As Madame Bachelet stated on the impact of COVID-19, “People who have been pushed behind, and rendered powerless, by generations of discrimination, have systematically unequal access to services and opportunities – including in education, shelter, sanitation, access to employment and justice and participation in decisions that affect them. They are placed at a structural disadvantage when it comes to any threat.”⁸

It is therefore essential to acknowledge that systematic discrimination and ill-designed policies are at the roots of the many injustices and inequalities that were exposed during this pandemic. Poverty is man-made, and the result of deliberate policy choices, similar to the gender gap in salary and living conditions.

As Dr. Richard Kozul-Wright, Director of the Globalization and Development Strategies Division, UNCTAD, shared in his statement at the 2020 Social Forum of the UN Human Rights Council: “This is not a world where people are being left behind. No one is left behind in this hyper-globalized world. Everybody is inter-connected in one way or another to this system. Lots of people are thrown under the bus in a hyper-globalized world, but being thrown under the bus is a very different experience from being left behind.”⁹

In this context, only multidimensional policies that will include tackling stigma, discrimination and interrupt the cycles of intergenerational poverty that currently violate the social, economic, and cultural rights of people living in poverty, can help the global community to come back on track to achieve SDG 1.

We often hear at the UN or on the news about the lack of ‘political will’ but that is not the cause of world poverty rather chronic and intergenerational poverty exists as a direct result of deliberate and bad political choices, policies and laws.

United States of America:

In the United States, the term *’Shcession’ is being widely used especially after the release of the April job numbers. When asked if you are worse off than one year ago 18% of men stated they were compared to 25% of women. Between February 2020 and February 2021, 2.4 million have dropped out of the workforce. Many women, especially women of color, have been forced out of the workforce due to care responsibilities.

⁸ Statement by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 24 november 2020

⁹ R. Kozul-Wright, UNCTAD, at the 2020 Social Forum of the UN Human Rights Council, Geneva, 9 October 2020.

*Shcession – an economic downturn where job and income losses are affecting more women than men. The term was coined by C. Nicole Mason, president and chief executive of the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR).

One of four women are stepping back or out and one in three are working mothers. 70% of fathers have a positive outcome as opposed to 40% of mothers. 13.6% of men are unemployed compared to 16.1% of women. When we compare those not in the labor force in September 2019 to September 2020:

9/2019 - Fathers 6% - Mothers 26%

9/2020 – Fathers 8% - Mothers 29% (*each percentage point = 1 million).

ATD Fourth World has released a report from the Poverty Myths project which set out to dispel common myths about poverty in America (1 in 6 Americans lives below the poverty line). The report focuses on four commonly held myths about poverty and shares information to push back.

“Poverty isn’t \$24,300 a year for a family of four. Poverty isn’t 14.5% of Americans. Poverty is the constant stress of not having enough to eat, of not knowing where you’re going to sleep tonight, of knowing you are one emergency away from sleeping on the streets¹⁰”.

“Myths:

- 1) **Poor people don’t want to work** -yet almost 60% of adults living in poverty who are able to work do so. If we are serious about tackling poverty, we need to recognize that the issue is not willingness to work, but lack of well-paying jobs.
- 2) **The US doesn’t have much poverty** – in spite of the US being seen as the ‘richest country in the world’, the US regularly ranks near the bottom on rankings of developed countries for both adult and child poverty. Inequality is even worse.
- 3) **Drug use is higher in poor communities** - this myth has been the driving force by law enforcement in the war on drugs. The truth is that people living in poverty do not use drugs at a higher rate than the rest of society and on the contrary, many studies have shown that higher income correlates to more drug use.
- 4) **Poverty doesn’t concern me – I will never be poor** – Officially pre-COVID-19 pandemic 13% of Americans live in poverty, approximately 40% will experience at least one year of poverty in their lifetimes”¹¹.

Poverty needs to be seen as personal as the pandemic has shown us and so many have had their lives upended.

¹⁰ ATD Fourth World – Poverty Myths:

https://4thworldmovement.org/overcoming-poverty/poverty-myt...8sJ98g_y0_Oob0mpoP2_75H-adc_EGC7mrocB_oC5aAQAvD_BwE

¹¹ ATD Fourth World – Poverty Myths:

https://4thworldmovement.org/overcoming-poverty/poverty-myt...8sJ98g_y0_Oob0mpoP2_75H-adc_EGC7mrocB_oC5aAQAvD_BwE

The United States is in the middle of a care crisis with both child-care and other dependents, unless this is addressed the economic recovery for individuals, families and the country will be greatly hampered. Wages have not increased in a decade making it difficult for people to have savings and even as people are coming back to low-paid work, they do so without a 'nest egg' to fall back on.

Key Data on Poverty:

- Around the world, approximately 700 million people (10% of world's population) live in extreme poverty on less than US \$1.90 per person per day, struggling to fulfil the most basic needs like nutrition, health, education, and access to water and sanitation.
- 80% of the world population lives on less than US \$10 per day and increasingly, more live in middle-income countries.
- World-wide, the poverty rate in rural areas is 17.2% more than three times higher than urban areas
- One in three children in low- and middle- income countries suffer from chronic undernutrition; +17 million children suffer from severe acute malnutrition and is the direct cause of death for 2 million children annually.
- In 2016, the World Bank estimated that 104 million children under age 5 are living in extreme poverty and went up to 328 million for children under 18.
- As a result of the COVID-19 crises, 88 million to 115 million people were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021.
- UN Women estimates that an additional 47 million women and girls will fall into extreme poverty in 2021.
- As of March 2021, only 11% of social protection and labor market measures responding to COVID-19 addressed unpaid care.
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 105 countries had no social protection programs to protect people who are unemployed covering only 22% of the global workforce. These incomplete social protection systems were designed based on advice from international financial institutions (IFIs) that pushed countries to focus on smaller scale programs.

The measures of poverty currently available for analysis obscure the reality of women's and girls' in all their diversity across their life course. For example, the use of household data surveys to measure poverty hides the reality of inequalities within the family. Moreover, aggregate measures of poverty conceal the differentials within countries and communities. With sufficient investment and political will, new measures, such as the individual deprivation measure, can show these important differences to enable targeted actions and policies¹².

¹² WMG HLPF 2020 Position Paper pg. 10

There is a need to look at poverty beyond income deprivation since income deprivation alone is not poverty. In fact, poverty is multidimensional and can be measured from health, education, and standard of living aspects in addition to monetary aspects¹³.

The UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (HRC 2012) concluded that “persons experiencing extreme poverty live in a vicious cycle of powerlessness, stigmatization, discrimination, exclusion and material deprivation, which all mutually reinforce one another.”¹⁴

It’s been over one year since the onset of the pandemic, and women and girls in all our diversity and their organizations continue to be at the frontlines of the response.

Through our paid and unpaid labor, women and girls keep homes, communities, and economies afloat. And yet national and international funders do not prioritize our organizations for support. Moreover, governments, corporations, and non-State actors continue to undermine our ability to effectively and meaningfully participate in policymaking, including through threats, harassment, and violence against women environmental and human rights defenders¹⁵.

Failure of States to heed the call of feminist and women’s rights advocates and address the need for systemic change, these structural inequalities will continue to shape our pandemic responses and further decrease the opportunity to achieve gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals. There is a need to place economic, racial, climate, and gender justice at the center of pandemic recovery and SDGs implementation.

UNDP’s Signature Solutions¹⁶ are cross-cutting approaches to development – for example, a gender approach or resilience approach can be applied to any area of development, or to any of the SDGs.

“Women’s participation in all areas of society is essential to make big and lasting change not only for themselves, but for all people. Women and girls make up a disproportionate share of people in poverty, and are more likely to face hunger, violence, and the impacts of disaster and climate change. They are also more likely to be denied access to legal rights and basic services.

¹³ Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/multidimensional-poverty-index-mpi>

¹⁴ OHCHR, Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Pg. 4

¹⁵ WMG HLPF 2021 Position Paper Executive Summary pg. 1

¹⁶ UNDP – Development Challenges and Solutions: <https://w.w.w.undp.org/development-challenges-and-solutions>

UNDP has the ability and responsibility to integrate equality into every aspect of our work. Gender equality and Women's empowerment is a guiding principle that applies to everything we do, collaborating with our partner countries to end gender-based violence, tackle climate change with women farmers, and advance female leadership in business and politics".

Structural Challenges to progress and Gendered Dimensions of Poverty:

If we do not address the need for systemic change and remain on this same path then more women than men will continue to live in poverty. Years of discriminatory policy choices and the structural factors have dictated the terms of our economies and societies, including and especially market-based approaches to poverty alleviation.

Patriarchal societies do not value women or women's work, which results in work that is unpaid or underpaid, especially in the case of care and domestic work. This is also the case in professions that women dominate, such as teaching or nursing. The same is true regarding education for girls, boys are more frequently the only ones in a family to receive formal education. Even when given the opportunity to receive formal education, girls' education is more likely to be curtailed and/or limited to "appropriate" areas of study discouraging them from careers in higher paying fields.

Patriarchal systems undermine women's independence and independent access to resources, formal and customary legal systems often deny women and girls in all our diversity across the life course equal access to land, property, or inheritance rights, as well as financial services.

Feminist, women's, and girl-led movements understand the intersecting nature of identities and structural barriers, the interconnectedness of issues and sectors. In building cross-movement solidarity and actions, our movements live up to the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

If governments at all levels, hope to achieve the 2030 Agenda, they need to adopt the inclusive, transformative thinking of justice-oriented movements and organizing, including that of feminist, women's, and girl-led movements. They must move out of siloed policy making processes. The 2030 Agenda specifies that the individual goals are interrelated and interconnected and must also be considered alongside other human rights and development obligations.

Social Protection:

Worldwide, women and girls in all our diversity across the life course have suffered a lifetime of discrimination, many remain illiterate with no opportunity to attend school, which limits

employment opportunities. Without a job, they are often excluded from social protection systems where they exist meaning they struggle to accumulate savings, receive a pension, or afford healthcare. A lifetime with no access to economic resources, including credit, work opportunities, land ownership and inheritance.

Even when women work there's a gender pay gap, which when combined with the number of women that never enter the formal workforce, results in a pension gap. Women often have lower statutory retirement ages, making it harder for women to retire at a time of their own choosing.

Central to combating persistence of poverty for women and girls in all our diversity is the developing and resourcing gender-responsive social protection systems. As countries continue to navigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the health and economic crises associated with it, this has become even more urgent and important.

Countries have a variety of obligations for creating and resourcing adequate social protection programs, including and beyond the 2030 Agenda. Multiple legally binding human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, require States to act progressively to realize the right to social protection without discrimination or retrogression. All new initiatives must comply with the responsibilities of governments to secure the rights and governance of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including to their land and marine territories, and value and recognize the important role of women providing conditions for them to have decent work and social protection.

Comprehensive social protection systems must also include those who are in informal sectors of the economy as well as those in unpaid care work, who are disproportionately women and girls, and help populations adapt to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, other pandemics and health emergencies, economic crises, humanitarian emergencies, and the climate crisis.

Including informal and migrant workers into national social protection systems has taken on new urgency given the disproportionate impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on workers in the informal economy in terms of their health, safety, and employment. "The migrants who send back a good part of their wages to the family back home make an important contribution to a country's GDP. It is the largest source of external financing in many low- and middle - income countries.¹⁷"

¹⁷ World Bank, [Money sent home by workers now largest source of external financing in many low- and middle - income countries.](#)

Moreover, it is imperative that health schemes under social protection systems consider the comprehensive needs of women and girls in all our diversity across the life course, including universal access to affordable sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services and safe abortion care.

In a joint effort civil society partners have released a call to develop a **Global Fund for Social Protection**: “We, civil society and faith-based organizations, trade unions and members of the Global Coalition for SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS, In view of the global harm from the COVID-19 pandemic, call on governments worldwide to ensure – through national and global solidarity – that national social protection floors are made available to all people with the help of a **Global Fund for Social Protection**. National floors of social protection are vital to leave no one behind. They ensure universal access to essential healthcare as well as basic income security across the life course. We therefore call on all governments to establish a Global Fund for Social Protection that will help bring an end to avoidable human suffering, poverty, extreme inequality, ill-health and avoidable deaths associated with the current and future crises, and for them to invest in the development of national social protection floors in all countries through the principle of national and global solidarity¹⁸”

In many parts of the world children’s births are still not being registered. UNICEF reported¹⁹ in 2019 that on average one in four children under age 5 is not registered at birth. These children, from the poorest households, fail- even over time - to obtain a birth certificate, as do hundreds of millions of adults, and therefore remain without any legal existence. This has lifetime implications especially for women and girls in all our diversity. Having no legal existence keeps them from being able to attend school, to get healthcare, makes them vulnerable for discrimination and for being exploited, to be sold into modern slavery or forced into an early or child marriage. Once married, they have no proof of their status, the girls/women have no control over their bodies, their finances or even if they get to eat ... they become ghost citizens.

The lack of rights and education condemn them to a life in the informal work sector and no ability to improve their life or move out of chronic, intergenerational and persistent poverty. It continues the cycle condemning each proceeding generation.

Birth registration, marriage certificates and divorce papers must be seen as social protection floors especially for those living in the persistence of poverty if they are ever to break the cycle.

¹⁸ Global Coalition for SOCIAL PROTECTION FLOORS: Civil Society call [for a Global Fund for Social Protection to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and build a better future](#).

¹⁹ UNICEF, 2019, Birth Registration for Every Child by 2030: Are we on track?

However, for women and girls in all our diversity across the life course besides being their human right to be counted it is the only way to achieve gender equality.

It is the responsibility of governments to set up reliable and fully functioning registration systems and to ensure all births are registered.

Austerity and Financing:

Women are at the frontlines because government systems - care, health, including sexual and reproductive health care services, economic and tax, environmental management, and global governance - have been inadequate in responding to the pandemic, especially since these systems were built on inequality, subjugation, and oppression. Patriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, militarism, neoliberal capitalism, ethno-nationalism, religious discrimination (especially anti-Semitism and Islamophobia) and authoritarianism built the systems that brought us to this moment of intersecting crises. Austerity and privatization pushed by neoliberal capitalism hollowed our public health systems. Militarism, illicit financial flows, tax abuse, corruption, bribery and unsustainable debt burdens, emptied public coffers of valuable resources that could, among other things, fund the public care systems women and girls in all our diversity across the life course desperately need. Extractive industries and industrial farming driven by colonialism and capitalism have destroyed biodiversity, habitats, territories, and homes.

Public financing and resources must be guaranteed and allocated for social protection systems and public social infrastructure, including affordable or low-cost sexual and reproductive health information and services. Austerity measures continue to threaten any gains that can be made in reducing poverty among women and girls in all our diversity across the life course and present a direct violation of the principle of non-retrogression. Yet, few governments seek to understand the gendered impacts of austerity. With the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic slowing economic growth globally, we may be entering another period of increased austerity. Globally, this would be catastrophic for women and girls in all our diversity across the life course.

In the Secretary-General's report for the 2020 Commission on the Status of Women, he clearly stated: "Fiscal austerity has consistently produced regressive outcomes, especially for low-income women, given their greater reliance on public services and transfers, their role as default care providers when services are eroded, and their strong presence as front-line public

sector workers that have been subjected to cuts.²⁰ This warning has become even more critical in light of the impacts of COVID-19 on women front-line workers and increased rates of poverty for women and girls in all our diversity across the life course.

As women make up a large share of workers in the industries hit hardest by the COVID-19 crisis²¹, hold less wealth than men²², and often have more difficulty finding re-employment after layoffs, they are particularly vulnerable to austerity measures. Governments and international financial institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, should learn the lesson of previous waves of austerity measures and pursue alternative processes that will not place the burden directly on the shoulders of women and girls in all our diversity across the life course. Instead, governments and IFIs must develop and resource COVID-19 response and recovery plans that center care and equality and remake our economic systems to facilitate just transitions to sustainable economies with decent work for all²³.

Illustrative Interlinkages:

Armed conflict and militarized political economies (SDG 16) contribute to poverty by shifting money towards weapons and military expenditure, forcibly displacing communities (SDG 10), creating structural damage to vital infrastructure (SDG 9) and social protection systems, and harming people's health and wellbeing (SDG 3).

Post-conflict economic reconstruction programs often exacerbate these problems by promoting growth-centric economic recovery models (SDG 8), imposing austerity measures, and prioritizing recouping investor confidence over strengthening social safety nets. As a result, these programs widen endemic structural inequalities, including gendered inequalities.

²⁰ United Nations. Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly – Report of the Secretary-General (2019). (E/CN.6/2020/3. Paragraph 5.

²¹ OECD calculations based on data from ILO ILOSTAT.

<https://voxeu.org/article/COVID-19-employment-and-women-oced-countries>.

²² OECD. "Women at the core of the fight against COVID-19 crisis."

https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=127_127000-awfnqi80me&title=Women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-COVID-19-crisis.

²³ WMG HLPF 2021 Position Paper Austerity and Financing pg. 4

Recommendations²⁴

We recommend that governments at the national and sub-national levels:

Social Protection

- Adequately finance and, where they do not already exist, create gender transformative social protection systems that include protections for those working in the informal sector, migrant workers, off-grid households, and landless farmers, and are targeted to the most vulnerable.
- Avoid reductions in spending on non-contributory social protection mechanisms, such as unconditional cash transfers.
- Remove discrimination against gender non-binary people in accessing social protection programs.

Austerity Measures and Debt

- Do not enact austerity measures, including cuts to social protection programs and public services. Attention should be paid particularly to education, health, and care services, which disproportionately impact women and girls.
- IFIs and donor countries should cancel, restructure, suspend, and lower rates on existing debt, and any new debt issued should not include austerity conditionalities. Otherwise, countries may be required to spend limited financial resources on debt servicing rather than social protection and other programs to achieve the SDGs.

Economic Empowerment

- Create an enabling environment for women's economic rights, including through removal of laws and policies inhibiting women's land ownership, inheritance, and access to financial services, such as credit. Financial institutions demand collateral which many women do not have because many do not control productive resources, such as land.
- Recognising the relationship between economic empowerment, food security, environmental protection and indigenous peoples' rights, the Voluntary Guidelines for the sustainability of small scale fishers must be implemented, and with them the important requirements for the improvement of life conditions of millions of fisherwomen that depend on the ocean resources for their survival.

²⁴ WMG HLPF 2021 Position Paper Recommendations pg. 5-6

Expert Group Session Outline from UNDP

Parallel sessions on in-focus SDGs (1, 2, 3, 8,10,12,13 &16)

What is the current status of the Goal or target, in terms of actual measured progress and trends?

- Even before the pandemic struck we have seen a decline in the reduction of extreme poverty. Between 1990 and 2015 we saw much progress but since 2015 this progress has slowed down. Global extreme poverty fell from 10.1% in 2015 to 9.2% in 2017. The rate of reduction has slowed to less than ½% point annually between 2015 and 2017, compared to 1% point between 1990 and 2015.
- Since the pandemic we have seen an increase in the number of poor causing a rise for the first time in a generation. From 8.4% in 2019 to 9.5% in 2020. from 14% in 2010 to 7.8%
- The share of the world's workers living in extreme poverty fell by half over the last decade: from 14% in 2010 to 7.8% in 2015, then to 6.6% in 2019. The progress was less for young workers. The crisis has had a disproportionate impact on young workers and women workers already living in poverty.

What has changed since the last time this Goal was reviewed at the HLPF?

- The COVID-19 pandemic has affected every country and has set back achieving the SDGs by 2030, in general but for poverty we have seen an increase of people living in poverty for the first time in over 20 years.
- The pandemic has revealed state level barriers to poverty reduction and the need to free up state funds to deal with that such as eradicating debt.
- The experience of extreme poverty comes with suffering, shame, silence and invisibility ... being marginalized, excluded and stigmatized, having obstacles and structural factors as well as outdated policies that make it impossible to claim their rights (a homeless person can not get military benefits or receive their own social security checks .. must have an address), they cannot function independently but need to rely on active support from the State or other relevant stakeholders... but the pandemic has forced us to begin to look differently at people living in poverty, to not be as judgmental or so fast to blame, to work together to showcase the resiliency and persistent hope to break the cycle if not for themselves then for their children.
- The pandemic has shown a spotlight on and has even exacerbated social inequalities ... all factors that disempower people have been exposed including social and institutional abuse.

- There has been a concerted effort by NGOs working with people living in poverty to change the negative narrative, to use more positive and less accusatory language. Preferred language: Instead of Poor People - say People living in poverty, it describes their economic status not who they are. Instead of extreme poverty to say persistence of poverty, which implies many levels of responsibility not just the individual. When talking about chronic and intergenerational poverty it is important not to point fingers that it is the fault of the parent passing poverty onto their children.

Any deviations in progress from what was expected (including due to COVID-19)?

- Prior to the pandemic, the baseline projections suggested that in 2030, 6% of the global population would still be living in extreme poverty. Missing the target of ending poverty.

Additional obstacles or opportunities in implementation including through interlinkages with other Goals, and connections to related processes?

- The interlinkage between SDG 1 and SDG 10 could be served by eliminating the debt payment for low and middle income countries as a way to allow those countries to invest in development to alleviate the increase in poverty as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.
- In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must act on the calls to reassess the way in which humans have been living, which has been to the detriment of nature, animals, and human society. The COVID-19 crisis has shown us that we can no longer ignore the degradation of the environment, loss of biodiversity, including animal extinctions, and glaring social inequalities and marginalization, which endanger human existence²⁵.
- SDG1 is inextricably linked to SDG8, 12 and 13, all under review this year. In this context it is vital to protect and conserve the environment and the ocean as key ecosystems for our survival. All new initiatives must comply with governmental responsibilities recognising these interlinkages. Securing and protecting the rights and governance of Indigenous Peoples and local communities is critical to preserve these environments and territories, including marine territories. It is vital that we recognize the important role of women along the value chains of fisheries providing conditions for them to have decent work and social protection. We strongly call for the implementation of the Voluntary guidelines for the sustainability of small scale fishers in the context of food security and poverty eradication and with it the important requirements for the improvement of life conditions of millions of fisherwomen that depend on the ocean resources for their survival.

²⁵ WMG HLPF 2020 Position Paper pg.3

New/promising openings for tracking progress, including from additional data sources?

- The pandemic has shown us that Now more than ever we need to accelerate action based on bottom-up, rights-based, and community-driven approaches to development that are carried out through multilateral and multi-stakeholder partnerships.
- The feminist, womens', and girls' rights movements have the practices and analytical tools to point the way to transformative pathways and have continuously challenged "business as usual" and have pushed for more just and egalitarian visions of the world.
- Governments need to set up registration systems (birth, marriage, divorce) that do not exclude the poorest. The process must be straightforward and easy for even those without education, must have planned for capacity building and ensuring that data is secure, private and that it is safe for all women & girls.

What are promising strategies to accelerate action (by UN and partners) and to mobilize other stakeholders to advance implementation?

- Women and girls in all our diversity can lead the way out of these crises for the simple reason that feminist, womens', and girl-led movements are action oriented and are at the forefront of structural and systematic changes in solidarity with other justice movements. Demand States to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights.
- Drawing upon our tools of analysis - such as intersectionality - policy makers will be able to design and implement policies in new ways that respond to the needs and the rights of those most left behind.
- We can no longer remain stagnant but must take action ... policies that ignore the gender impact can no longer be tolerated, equal participation at the table is needed ..
- We need to bring to the table people with lived experience, to ensure a more meaningful, effective and inclusive dialogue. Those with lived experience with poverty bring expert knowledge and can help broaden our comprehension of what it feels like, what they need to break the cycle.

How would one monitor action for implementing these?

Monitoring can not be done in silos or by government alone rather it requires a joint effort by all relevant stakeholders including those with lived experience. Only then will we actually be able to determine what practices are successful, what does not work, be able to measure short-term and long-term gains or progress. Allowing self monitoring does not lead to ensuring that no one is being left behind especially the most vulnerable.

1. Cross-cutting session 1 - How do we get on track to end poverty and hunger, and transform towards inclusive and sustainable economies? (SDGs 1, 2, 8, 17 and interlinkages among those goals and with other SDGs)

Poverty and hunger are on the rise after years of decline, a trend exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and past progress in many areas of eliminating poverty in all its dimensions is facing headwinds. It is projected that as many as 163 million additional people could be pushed into extreme poverty through 2021, and as many as 132 million additional people went hungry in 2020 because of the COVID-19 crisis. Economic growth can help to lift people out of poverty, but COVID-19 recoveries cannot mark a return to business-as-usual approaches to growth. Rather actions can be taken to transform economies and food systems to deliver on the SDGs in an integrated manner, through the generation of decent jobs in green sectors and service provision, and with investments in low-carbon infrastructures and climate-friendly agriculture. The pandemic has also renewed focus on social protection. Scaling up successful initiatives and investments for systemic transformations can help eradicate poverty and hunger while building resilience for the future. Addressing the issues of social and institutional maltreatment (stigma, discrimination) are also crucial to tackle intergenerational and chronic poverty.

How can increasing poverty and hunger be tackled while transforming economies and food systems towards increased resilience and lowered climate/environmental impacts?

- Relieving economies of unnecessary pressures will be vital to supporting their transformation and addressing poverty and hunger. To transform economic systems we will need to rid ourselves of the parts of the current system which hold back sustainable development. Cancelling debt for lower and middle income countries will help with this, as will ensuring all economic activities are people and environment centered.
- We know that the world produces enough food for everyone, yet many go hungry every day. There must be improved food distribution and trade to make sure that everyone is able to access the food they need. Crucially, this should not include unsustainable food aid which can constitute 'food dumping' which undercuts local food producers, reduces local food production, reduces local incomes and can drive poverty. Local economies and small-scale producers, many of whom are women, must be respected and supported.
- Forms of tied aid can be incredibly damaging to local environments and food producers. Requiring countries to hand-over or grant access to their natural resources in return to aid often disempowers local producers, particularly small-scale and indigenous producers who do not have the same industrial equipment as those who are granted access. This form of aid is exploitative, and drives local communities into poverty and food security, and makes them face environmental degradation, climate change and their effects. Lower and middle income countries in need of financial support, often are

given little choice. Multilateral and bilateral aid and trade systems should be reformed to prevent this.

How can economic recoveries be shaped to ensure more inclusive and sustainable patterns of growth that generate decent jobs and support carbon-neutrality and a better balance with nature?

- It is critical that technologies are shared between countries without there being barriers to lower income countries. This is particularly important in supporting countries to find forms of economic growth that does not rely on traditional industrialisation which is known to be unsustainable and which drives climate change. Barriers to such technology include prohibitive costs and excessive intellectual property laws. Additionally, sharing knowledge of these technologies will support sustainable forms of employment and carbon-neutrality.
- Economic recoveries need to use feminist economic approaches to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.

How can food systems be transformed to deliver better nutrition for all, while improving their balance with nature?

- Food production systems should be reformed, including addressing the industrial farming complex which is known to systematically degrade the environment, produce less nourishing food, and damage the decent employment of food producers.

What are the opportunities to be realized (and pitfalls to be avoided) in the immediate and medium terms towards these ends? How can international cooperation support?

- Need to develop political will. Rise of populist politics and policies is regressing global progress towards sustainable development. States must be willing to recognize now is the time to look beyond self interest, and look to the interest of the planet. So far, national self-interest has created the global existential challenge of climate change and has not demonstrated its capacity to solve that crisis. International cooperation is critical.

What are some ways to create fiscal space to combat poverty and hunger and respond to the COVID-19 crisis in ways that enable more inclusive, equitable, resilient and sustainable development?

- Debt cancellation.
- Reforming taxation systems to ensure those who can best afford it, including companies, pay their fair share.

- Increasing militarisation does not serve sustainability, address hunger or reduce poverty. Governments must redirect funds towards those ends, rather than towards increasing already excessive military might.
- PPP's are not the solution for sustainable development, given that these tend to enhance and/or shift the risks to the public domain. It is crucial to strengthen the public sector by means of expanding the fiscal space, and especially to ensure all services related to basic human rights are guaranteed by the public sector, avoiding privatization. PPP's should be conducted only when an ex-ante evaluation is conducted on their specific human rights, gender equality, environmental integrity, collective rights and overall community and intragenerational wellbeing.

***Respectfully Submitted by Bette Levy, Soroptimist International in collaboration with diverse members of the Women's Major Group and other civil society representatives.**