



UNITED NATIONS

Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development

and

Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Development and NEPAD Division

**Expert Group Meeting on
POVERTY ERADICATION**

15-17 September 2010

United Nations Conference Centre ▪ Addis Ababa ▪ Ethiopia

Aide-Mémoire

I. Purpose of the meeting

The Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Economic Development and NEPAD Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, is organizing an Expert Group Meeting on “**Poverty Eradication**” from 15-17 September 2010, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as part of the preparations for the 49th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD), which is scheduled to take place in New York from 2 to 11 February 2011.

The meeting is convened in the context of ECOSOC resolution 2010/L.5 in which the Economic and Social Council decided that the priority theme for the 2011-2012 review and policy cycle of the Commission should be “**Poverty Eradication**”, taking into account its relationship to social integration and full employment and decent work for all. The outcomes of the meeting will provide important inputs to the work of the Commission, in particular contributing to reviewing the status of progress regarding poverty eradication as well as examining continuing challenges and prospects for poverty eradication in developing countries.

II. Background

Progress on poverty reduction has been significant, but uneven and may now be threatened by the overlapping global crises of food and energy, financial and economic, and climate change. Recent World Bank estimates indicate that the target of reducing the income poverty rate by half by 2015 at the global level seems likely to be achieved. Prior to the economic crisis and based on 1990-2005 trends, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day was projected to fall from 41.7 percent in 1990 to 15.1 percent in 2015, with East Asia and the Pacific experiencing the greatest decrease, dropping from 54.7 to 5.1 percent between 1990-2015. However, the number of people living in extreme poverty has continued to increase.

The current global economic crisis has no doubt complicated the road ahead. Estimates by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs suggest that between 47 and 84 million people remained poor or were driven into poverty in developing countries and economies in transition than would have been the case had pre-crisis growth continued. In Africa, the World Bank estimates that the crisis drove 7 to 10 million more people into poverty and an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 children died before their first birthday as a result of the crisis.

Hunger also remains an important global challenge, with the proportion increasing from 14 percent in 2004-06 to 15 percent in 2009. In absolute terms, the number of hungry people rose from 873 million in 2004-06 to 1.02 billion people during 2009 - the highest level ever. This increase is largely a result of high food prices and the global financial and economic crisis. In addition, 129 and 195 million children under 5 years of age are respectively underweight or stunted and over 2 billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies, affecting their health, education, cognitive development and productivity. Therefore, national and global efforts to reduce the proportion of the undernourished have been severely undermined by these global crises. These crises will impact different parts of the developing world differently depending on their reliance on capital inflows, trade, commodity exports, remittances, and tourism.

The global economy is showing signs of recovery. Both international trade and industrial production stayed on their upward trends and most economies showed positive GDP growth in the first quarter of 2010. However, the recovery is still fragile and uneven in its pace across regions. Recovery will be weaker in developed economies and stronger in emerging economies. There will also be a transition from policy-stimulated growth to more autonomous private demand.

In addition, the human cost of the crisis is equally still far from over. The depth and severity of the human cost of the crisis varies across regions and countries. Developing countries have been innocent victims of the crisis, with countries that were more integrated into the global economic system getting impacted more. These countries have been affected through financial markets, trade, capital flows, aid and remittances.

The MDG High-Level Plenary Meeting that will be held in September provides a unique opportunity to review progress, recalibrate our efforts and rebuild our partnerships for a concerted push to 2015. To make the most of this opportunity, the General Assembly has asked the Secretary-General to highlight some clear examples of best practices, success stories, and initiatives that have delivered real improvements to the lives of people.

III. Objectives and Methodology

The primary objectives of the expert group meeting are to undertake a comprehensive review of successes, best practices and lessons learned, obstacles and gaps, as well as key challenges and opportunities that can lead to the implementation of concrete national, regional and international strategies for action. The deliberations of the meeting will contribute to the preparation of the Report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the 49th session of the Commission for Social Development on the priority theme of “**Poverty Eradication**”. The recommendations that will emerge from this meeting will be a key component of the Report of the Secretary-General that will inform the Commission for Social Development during its deliberations of the priority theme for the 2011-2012 review and policy cycle.

To accomplish these objectives, experts will be drawn from various parts of the world to provide poverty eradication experiences at the global and regional levels. In addition, the experts drawn from China, Ethiopia, and South Africa will make country specific presentations on poverty eradication. These national-level presentations as well as those by the other invited experts will focus on the following questions:

- i. What have we achieved so far?
- ii. What lessons have we learnt from our achievements and/or lack of progress?
- iii. What has been the impact of the recent global crises of food and energy, financial and economic, and climate change on efforts to eradicate poverty?
- iv. Which social groups have been most affected, and how are they coping?
- v. What role can, and should, social policy play in addressing the impact of these crises on social development, with particular emphasis on poverty eradication?
- vi. How do we accelerate progress in poverty reduction? In particular, how can we deliver on the financing, technical support, and partnerships that are necessary to eradicate poverty, as well as achieve the other MDGs?

The meeting will allow a robust exchange of ideas among independent experts, government officials, representatives from the United Nations system, regional development banks, and civil society. This interaction will contribute to the global debate on how countries and their development partners can speed up progress towards reducing extreme poverty and hunger, as well as attain the other MDGs by 2015, with a focus on shaping policies and strategies.

IV. Expected outputs

The meeting will produce the following outputs:

- i. Recommendations and proposals for action, including new initiatives;
- ii. Expert papers on the theme of the meeting;
- iii. A final report on the deliberations and outcome of the meeting.

V. Organizational and administrative matters

The Expert Group Meeting will be organized by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of UNDESA in partnership with the Economic Development and NEPAD Division of UNECA. The meeting will be held at United Nations Conference Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and is scheduled to take place from 15-17 September 2010.

A total of **15 experts** will be invited to participate at the meeting. The Division for Social Policy and Development of UNDESA will be responsible for identifying 10 experts from Asia, Latin America, North America, and Europe and Central Asia. The Economic Development and NEPAD Division of UNECA will be responsible for identifying 5 experts from within Africa. The Division for Social Policy and Development of UNDESA will meet the travel and per diem costs of all the invited experts. UNECA will provide the conference facilities and the necessary logistical needs for the meeting.

The invited experts will be required to submit their presentations and written papers (5-10 pages in length, in English) to the United Nations Secretariat by 15 August 2010. Participants are expected to arrive in Addis Ababa on 14 September 2010 and to stay throughout the duration of the meeting.

In addition to the invited experts, the following will participate:

- i. Staff members of the Division for Social Policy and Development as organizers of the meeting and to provide administrative/logistical support;
- ii. Staff members from the Economic Commission for Africa
- iii. Representatives from the African Union Commission;
- iv. Local participants from the government of Ethiopia, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations. UNECA will be responsible for inviting these participants;
- v. Representatives from the United Nations Regional Commissions;
- vi. One consultant/facilitator to be selected by the UNDESA;
- vii. Other participants invited as observers/discussants by the United Nations, including representatives from the United Nations systems, regional development banks and World Bank.

All sessions of the meeting will be in plenary. The invited experts will lead-off discussions in each session by presenting papers which will then be followed by in-depth plenary discussions. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants will outline the major conclusions and recommendations of the meeting. A final report will be produced after the meeting.

VI. Documentation and the Language of the meeting

The documentation of the meeting will comprise of relevant publications, documents and materials related to poverty eradication, taking into account its relationship to social integration and full employment and decent work for all. The national presentations as well as the papers from the independent experts will be made available on the web site to be created for the meeting.

The working language of the meeting will be English. Documentation for the meeting will be provided in English.