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Social development: social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, persons with disabilities and the family

Promoting social integration through social inclusion

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/136 on promoting social integration through social inclusion. The report includes an analysis of the role of social inclusion and social integration in combating multidimensional poverty with a focus on specific groups, in particular children, women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and Indigenous Peoples. The report concludes with key recommendations for consideration by the Assembly.
I. Introduction

1. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development marked a turning point in global efforts to address development challenges and opportunities. With the defining principle of leaving no one behind, the 2030 Agenda put people at the centre of development and emphasized the importance of equity and the imperative of reducing inequalities as essential preconditions to advancing human well-being and promoting prosperity, peace and justice on a healthy planet. At the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, however, many targets of the Sustainable Development Goals have seen little or no progress, or progress that has been uneven across populations and over time, and some have even regressed below their 2015 baseline (A/78/80-E/2023/64, para. 4).

2. While a lack of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals is a global reality, it is especially pronounced in the least developed countries. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, multiple climate-related disasters, political and economic instability and other crises have eroded the ability of Member States to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda and to fulfil its promise that no one will be left behind. Vulnerable groups and the world’s poorest have been among the hardest hit, thus exacerbating existing inequalities.

3. A slowdown in the reduction of poverty rates since 2015, despite some signs of early progress around the time that the 2030 Agenda was adopted, was aggravated by the devastating economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data since the start of the pandemic show an increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty for the first time in a generation, reversing three decades of steady progress. On the basis of current trends, 7 per cent of the world’s population will be living in extreme poverty in 2030 (A/78/80-E/2023/64, para. 29).

4. It is increasingly recognized that many people live in multidimensional poverty across the world. Measures of multidimensional poverty account not only for insufficient income, but also for deprivation in areas such as health, education and living standards. The present report draws on data from the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, and from the Multidimensional Poverty Measure of the World Bank. Data from the Multidimensional Poverty Index for 2022 show that, even before the COVID-19 pandemic, 1.2 billion people in 111 developing countries lived in acute multidimensional poverty, nearly doubling the number of people considered to be living in poverty when it is defined exclusively in monetary terms. During the pandemic, progress in reducing multidimensional poverty fell back by about 3 to 10 years. Similarly, each indicator within the Multidimensional Poverty Measure showed significant declines at the global level before the pandemic, mirroring declines in global monetary poverty; from 2012 to 2018 the Multidimensional Poverty Measure decreased by 2.9 percentage points, from 17.4 to 14.5 per cent, while monetary poverty fell 1.9 percentage points, from 10.7 to 8.8 per cent. The crisis refocused attention on the need to develop a multidimensional perspective of poverty that is not limited to economic deprivation but also takes account of social inequities.

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and intersectionality, whereby a person’s disadvantage in a given area can exacerbate the detrimental and cumulative impacts of other disadvantages.

5. Social inclusion and social integration policies play a critical role in ensuring that efforts to eradicate poverty adequately address the situation and needs of marginalized groups, in particular children, women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and Indigenous Peoples, who may experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and therefore are at increased risk of living in multidimensional poverty. Addressing multidimensional poverty requires the implementation of policies for universal social protection that meet the basic needs of all in an inclusive manner and involve innovative financing and partnerships. Firmly grounded in principles of equality and non-discrimination and in the framework of universal human rights, social integration policies can reduce inequalities, promote equity and social inclusion and ultimately accelerate progress towards sustainable development and deliver on the promise of the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 76/136 on promoting social integration through social inclusion. In the resolution, the General Assembly recognized that a framework for social development that is people-centred and gender-sensitive, respects human rights and has a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind can promote social integration through social inclusion, and that the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals requires a global response and can benefit from international cooperation.

7. The report highlights the role of social inclusion and social integration in combating multidimensional poverty and promoting sustainable development, especially for specific groups, in particular children, women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and Indigenous Peoples. In preparing the report, the Secretariat gathered information from Member States on the implementation of resolution 76/136.

II. Poverty eradication through social inclusion and social integration

Putting people at the centre of poverty eradication and sustainable development

8. The 2030 Agenda identified poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions as the greatest global challenge faced by the world and recognized it as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. It sought to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 and ensure that all people enjoy a basic standard of living, including through social protection systems. In acknowledging that some groups are particularly vulnerable to poverty and deprivation, it urged Member States to pay particular attention to their voices and their needs.

9. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep inequalities, and its impacts were felt in all areas of sustainable development. While the response of some high-income countries to the pandemic led to a reduction in poverty rates due to the implementation of unprecedented measures that expanded social protection systems, that was not the case for most low- and middle-income countries. Many social programmes designed

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3 In response to the note verbale sent on 30 January 2023, input was received from the Governments of Argentina, Armenia, Belarus, Guyana, Mauritius, Mexico, Poland, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Togo and Türkiye.
to eradicate poverty were compromised or interrupted in low- and middle-income countries in response to the public health emergency and, coupled with loss of income and rising food and energy prices, resulted in the most significant increase in global inequality and poverty since the Second World War, reversing a positive trend of the previous two decades.⁴

10. Even countries that entered the pandemic with a relatively strong economy were shattered by a sharp increase in poverty that disproportionately impacted those in vulnerable situations, such as women, children, Indigenous Peoples and informal workers. Many within these groups also found their access to basic services limited, such as access to health, education, social security, housing, food, water and sanitation, thereby hindering the full exercise of their human rights.

11. The pandemic underlined the importance of further supporting existing efforts to develop holistic multidimensional frameworks on poverty that go beyond economic indicators to capture other social and economic metrics and monitor progress on the social inclusion of vulnerable groups in critical areas including education, access to clean water, sanitation and food. The use of such analytical tools lays bare inequalities, brings to light the extent to which people live in deprivation around the world and exposes the many challenges experienced by people in vulnerable situations, thus emphasizing the importance of implementing social integration policies that address such needs and inequalities.

12. The multidimensional poverty index is a widely used measure of poverty that has been applied to approximately 100 developing countries. It complements the traditional income poverty measures by capturing deprivations in education, sanitation and life conditions. According to the latest data from that index, 1.1 billion people around the world (18 per cent) live in acute multidimensional poverty. Of those, half (566 million) are children under the age of 18, nearly half (534 million) live in sub-Saharan Africa and around one-third (389 million) live in South Asia. Roughly 84 per cent live in rural areas. In South Asia, 87.5 per cent of poor people live in rural areas.⁵

13. While the multidimensional poverty index can potentially be disaggregated according to different social groups, most of the available data and analysis have been related to children and, more recently, women. There is a lack of disaggregated data for other groups in vulnerable situations such as older persons, persons with disabilities and Indigenous Peoples.

14. The multidimensional poverty measure developed by the World Bank captures the percentage of households in a country that are deprived in three dimensions of well-being: monetary poverty, education and basic infrastructure services. The data captured in the multidimensional poverty measure also showed that sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia had the highest percentage of people living in multidimensional poverty.⁶ Moreover, the data illustrated that about 39 per cent of those experiencing multidimensional poverty are not covered by measuring income poverty alone, which highlights the need for additional metrics on basic well-being and social deprivation.⁷

15. Social exclusion, as a result of existing barriers and obstacles, prevents groups of people from accessing resources, goods and services and enjoying their full human rights.

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⁷ World Bank, Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2022: Correcting Course.
rights, and limits their ability to participate in gainful employment and economic opportunities. It thus increases their likelihood of experiencing poverty and inequality. Over time, cultural, political, legal and social barriers to social integration and inclusion collectively exclude segments of the population from aspects that are fundamental to well-being.

16. For example, persons with disabilities face economic, social and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society, and they are often at increased risk of neglect, loss of support, abuse and poverty. Estimates show that approximately 16 per cent of the global population, or over 1.3 billion people worldwide, have some form of disability, and an additional 190 million (3.8 per cent of people over 15 years of age) experience serious difficulties in functioning on a daily basis.

17. Persons with disabilities of all ages face several barriers to inclusion, which include attitudinal barriers, institutional barriers (discriminatory policies and practices), as well as inadequate data and misunderstanding over the costs and difficulty of disability inclusion. Persons with disabilities routinely experience limited access to basic needs such as housing, nutrition and safe water. They are more likely to experience health inequities. Exclusion from education and employment coupled with poor living conditions add to the risk of poor health and unmet health-care needs.

18. Similarly, available data show that in 2021, 14.1 per cent of individuals aged 65 and over in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) lived in relative income poverty, defined as the share of people living on less than half the median disposable income in their country of residence, compared to 11.6 per cent of the population as a whole. The data also show that on average, those aged from 66 to 75 years of age are less likely to be in income poverty (12.2 per cent) than those aged over 75 (16.6 per cent). There are a number of explanations, but the primary reason is that individual pensions were indexed to less than earnings growth, which lowered the relative value of pensions over time. Gender inequality in pensions and the fact that women tend to live longer than men have also contributed to the disparity.

19. Available data reveal that the relative poverty rate for people aged 65 or over in 2021 was more than 40 per cent in the Republic of Korea, over 30 per cent in Estonia and Latvia, and more than 20 per cent in Australia, Lithuania, Mexico and the United States of America. By contrast, Czechia, Denmark, France, Iceland, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway and Slovakia presented the lowest relative poverty rates for this age group among OECD countries, with values below 5 per cent.

20. Women, who comprised 55.7 per cent of persons aged 65 or over globally in 2022, are more likely to experience poverty in old age. Longitudinal OECD data from 2006 to 2015 show that older women were at greater risk of poverty than older men.

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8 Ruth Levitas and others, The Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion (Bristol, University of Bristol, 2007). Available at [https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/6853/1/multidimensional.pdf](https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/6853/1/multidimensional.pdf).
11 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
men in almost all OECD countries that participated in the study. That result is consistent with a multidimensional poverty study among older persons conducted in five Latin American countries, which found that multidimensional poverty was higher for women than men in every country, with the gap increasing with age owing to higher coverage of men’s contributory pensions and gender bias in the division of work.

21. Given the demographic trends, the risk of older persons living in multidimensional poverty could become a growing concern for all countries. At the global level, the share of the population aged 65 and over is projected to rise from 10 per cent in 2022 to 16 per cent in 2050. Projections indicate that by 2050 the number of persons aged 65 and over will be more than twice the number of children under the age of 5 and around the same as the number of children under the age of 12 at the global level.

22. Younger people are also at increased risk of poverty in many countries. Recent data from the OECD reveal that the poverty rate for young people between ages 18 and 25 increased from 10 per cent to 16 per cent over the past three decades, reflecting the postponement of their entry into the labour market and a lack of social protection tools available to young people.

23. Poverty increased disproportionately for youth in 2020 in five European countries, and their economic situation is not likely to have improved since then. Young people or youth (defined as ages 15–24) were particularly vulnerable to disruptions caused by the pandemic, with many now at risk of being left behind during a crucial stage of the life course. Even before the pandemic, young people were more likely to be unemployed or in precarious working arrangements, and therefore more likely to lack adequate social protection. COVID-19 exacerbated the numerous challenges already faced by young people in the labour market and saw drastic increases in youth unemployment, poverty and food insecurity (A/76/210).

24. The percentage of children living in multidimensional poverty is estimated to have increased from around 47 per cent before the COVID-19 pandemic to around 52 per cent in 2021, which implies an increase of 100 million children globally. Children living in low- and middle-income countries have suffered at least one severe deprivation in the areas of education, health care, housing, nutrition, water or sanitation. In 2020, 23 million children missed at least one essential vaccination, an increase of nearly 4 million compared to 2019 and the highest number since 2009.

25. According to estimates by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 244 million of those aged from 6 to 18 worldwide were out of school in 2022, and 43 per cent had no Internet at home. Data show that disparities were particularly acute in low-income countries: in sub-Saharan Africa, 89 per cent of students do not have access to household computers, and 82 per cent lack Internet access. Disparities in education and information have deepened between rich and developing countries, driven in part by uneven access to the Internet. Only

18 Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results*.
19 OECD Forum Network, “The poverty risk has shifted from the elderly to young people”, 7 May 2021.
6 per cent of children and youth in low-income countries have Internet access at home, compared with 87 per cent in high-income countries.\footnote{UNICEF, Preventing a lost decade.}

26. In 2021, UNDP conducted an assessment of the Multidimensional Poverty Index data on health, education and living standards, which showed that disparities across ethnic and racial groups were greater than disparities across regions. \footnote{UNDP and OPHI, “Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021: Unmasking disparities by ethnicity, caste and gender” (New York, 2021).} While Indigenous Peoples comprise 6 per cent of the global population, they account for 19 per cent of those experiencing extreme income and multidimensional poverty.\footnote{The World Bank, “Indigenous Peoples”, 6 April 2023. Available at https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/indigenouspeoples.} For example, in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Indigenous Peoples account for about 44 per cent of the population but represent 75 per cent of multidimensionally poor people. In India, the scheduled tribes account for 9.4 per cent of the population and are the country’s poorest group, with 65 million of 129 million people in the tribes living in multidimensional poverty.\footnote{UNDP and OPHI, “Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021: Unmasking disparities”.} A legacy of inequality and exclusion has made Indigenous Peoples more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including with respect to access to water, sanitation systems and outbreaks of disease, such as COVID-19.\footnote{Fabio Teixeira, “Climate change threatens age-old indigenous food systems, says UN”, Reuters, 25 June 2021.} The existing lack of resources is compounded by prevalent social exclusion that results in limited access to public infrastructure and services.

27. Migrants also often face social and economic exclusion. Migrants face a range of challenging situations that may differ according to the socioeconomic situation and policies of the host country, and that are affected as well by migrants’ personal characteristics (such as age, gender, language skills or qualifications) and by the circumstances of their migration. Labour market inclusion of migrants is a key policy strategy for social inclusion, and contributes to poverty eradication. Migrant inclusion and social cohesion were identified as one of 23 objectives in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 73/195, in 2018. Access to employment, the protection of migrant workers and other forms of support are important dimensions of labour market inclusion.\footnote{International Organization for Migration, World Migration Report 2020 (Geneva, 2020).}
III. Policy implications

A. Promotion of social integration and social inclusion to accelerate efforts towards achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development

28. The 2030 Agenda reflects the cross-cutting nature and importance of social inclusion through the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets. In the 2030 Agenda, the international community acknowledges that the promotion of social inclusion is required to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions, and also recognizes that the dignity of the human person is fundamental.

29. Social inclusion is key to addressing multidimensional poverty. The effects of poverty on various groups in vulnerable situations need to be taken into account in the provision of integrated social support. Policies need to be inclusive in meeting basic needs; social protection needs to provide adequate coverage to those in need; partnerships need to be leveraged to expand coverage towards universal access to health, education, innovation, new technologies and basic social protection; and barriers to achieving full and equal participation for all must be removed by investing in social development to enable political and civic participation in decision-making at all levels.

30. An integrated, people-focused approach to poverty eradication must be pursued to reduce inequality and foster social inclusion. It would involve investing in human capital, social protection, job creation and decent work, tackling discrimination and adopting an intersectional, life-course approach to policy design and strategies.

31. In order to be effective, policies must include a recognition of the connection between barriers to social protection systems and social inclusion. For instance, an effective gender-sensitive policy makes the connection that child marriage and teenage pregnancies are gendered barriers to women being socially included in education and training initiatives. Such barriers will, in turn, affect their employment and access to social protection, such as insurance and pensions, and further affect their economic security when they grow older.

32. Universal social protection provides a solid basis for ensuring sustainable, adequate and comprehensive protection throughout the life course. Although countries have made efforts to close social protection gaps and to adapt social protection systems to changing demands, workers in informal employment are insufficiently covered by social protection, or not covered at all. Part-time workers, workers on temporary contracts, self-employed workers and workers on digital platforms also have limited access to such protection.

33. Meeting the high demand for social protection would require both contributory and non-contributory schemes and programmes with appropriate financing.

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30. The information in this section is drawn from the report of the Secretary-General on inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda (E/CN.5/2022/3); the conclusions of the high-level round table on fostering social integration by the Chair, and Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizen’s Welfare and Reform Institution (Mauritius), Samioullah Lauthan (11 February 2005); and Christina Behrendt and Quynh Anh Nguyen, “Innovative approaches for ensuring universal social protection for the future of work”, ILO Future of Work Research Paper Series (2018) (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2018).

mechanisms. Non-contributory social protection schemes are needed to close coverage gaps for those who are not covered or insufficiently covered by contributory schemes.

34. Women often make up a large portion of the workforce in self-employment and part-time or temporary work. Because they continue to bear most of the responsibility for unpaid care work, women also have lower rates of labour force participation and shorter formal working careers, and therefore are less likely to contribute to social security entitlements, thus making it all the more important to create a mechanism to build social protection over the life course.

35. Universal non-contributory social pension schemes for older persons can be a means to ensure at least a basic level of protection in old age, particularly for informal workers and individuals in non-standard forms of employment.

36. While private pensions schemes may complement public social protection systems, public provision, which is financed through a combination of taxes and contributions, remains essential for ensuring adequate social protection for all.

37. In order to promote social inclusion, Member States need to better support all people across the life course and implement policies that ensure their access to social protection, address individual needs and eliminate barriers to accessing information and social services. Improved data collection and analysis, with data disaggregated by age, disability and gender, would help with evidence-based policy development.

38. Civil society plays a critical role in promoting social inclusion. Non-governmental organizations represent, advocate for and work directly with people who are marginalized, and can support targeted service delivery by ensuring access to information and resources. It is important to continue creating space for civil society actors and to strengthen their contribution at the global, regional, country and local levels, within the United Nations and beyond.

B. Examples of good practices and country experiences

39. The provision of basic social services that address and meet basic human needs is critical to fighting poverty and exclusion and to promoting social integration through social inclusion. The following country experiences provide some examples of ways to address multidimensional poverty through inclusive policies for meeting basic needs, providing social protection and building partnerships. While some of these countries may have low acute multidimensional poverty, people close to the poverty line need support to reduce their exposure to shocks and disruptions.32

Addressing and meeting basic human needs as a measure to reduce poverty

40. In Argentina, a policy of the Ministry of Social Development, known as the national food security plan, incorporates a food card that enables the transfer of money to households as a supplement to household income to be used for the purchase of food, giving priority to parents of children up to 14 years of age, women who are beyond the first trimester of a pregnancy, and persons with disabilities in vulnerable situations.

41. In Poland, a multi-year government programme known as “Meals at school and at home, 2019–2023” provides funding for meals to older persons, persons with disabilities and children growing up in disadvantaged families. The Government also provided access to housing, food, medicines and treatment.

32 UNDP and OPHI, “Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023: Unstacking global poverty”.
42. A five-year plan in Thailand covering the period 2023–2027 promotes good nutrition with a focus on women of reproductive age, pregnant women and breastfeeding women/mothers by providing them with supplements of iron, folic acid, iodine and other complementary foods. In addition, the Government of Thailand provides loans and loan moratoriums for persons with disabilities and elderly persons to support their employment, entrepreneurship and home renovations.

43. In Togo, the Government disburses annual subsidies and assigns specialized teachers to specialized education centres to cater to the educational needs of children with disabilities. It has implemented a pilot project focusing on providing persons with disabilities and women with access to savings and micro-credit services so as to help expand their employment opportunities.

44. As part of an initiative to create employment for persons with intellectual disabilities, the Government of Türkiye has implemented sheltered workplaces. The sheltered workplaces are specially arranged to provide a work environment, with technical and financial support from the Government, in order to increase the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Providing universal age-, disability- and gender-sensitive social protection systems as a measure to reduce poverty

45. In Armenia, the country’s constitution guarantees the provision of dignified living conditions for older persons, and in this regard, the state budget allocates financial resources towards social protection programmes for older persons. Furthermore, in 2021, Armenia adopted legislation requiring functional assessments of disability based on a World Health Organization model. The model calls for a multifaceted assessment of a person’s needs and consideration of their disability in the context of social factors to properly determine the social services required to meet each person’s individual needs. Regarding gender-sensitive social protection systems, Armenia has implemented a gender-sensitive policy to prevent gender discrimination and enhance the participation of women in educational and economic opportunities. The plan is supported by a gender-sensitive budgeting component that finances a network of resource centres aimed at training women, including rural women, and upskilling their economic capacities as an approach to enable them to exercise their equal rights and prevent discrimination and gender-based violence.

46. In Belarus, under its state family policy, free comprehensive medical care is provided to women during pregnancy and childbirth, and a lump-sum birth allowance is given to mothers, on a sliding scale depending on the number of children (that is, higher allowances are given to larger families). Annual state budget expenditure on social protection measures for families with children exceeds 3 per cent of gross domestic product, and more than half of this is reported to constitute state benefits that enhance social inclusion. Citizens who are not entitled to a retirement pension are assigned a social pension (which does not require the prior payment of contributions). This is the case for women aged 60 and over, men aged 65 and over (without any additional conditions), adults and children with disabilities and children whose families have lost their breadwinner. Notably, pensions cover unpaid care for family members and domestic work undertaken by women.

47. In Mauritius, under the Marshall Plan against Poverty, a series of measures have been put in place to alleviate poverty and enhance social inclusion. One such measure includes registering households experiencing absolute poverty and vulnerability in a social register. Furthermore, the Government supports the payment of a monthly subsistence allowance to eligible households that have signed a Marshall Plan social contract to allow them to secure a minimum basic income based on absolute poverty thresholds established on a per capita basis. The Government of Mauritius also
provides free eyeglasses for children up to age of 21, a monthly cash grant to meet the cost of sanitary towels for female students in grades 6 to 13 and a monthly cash grant to meet the cost of diapers for infants up to the age of 1.

48. In Mexico, the Government established a welfare policy that provides non-contributory pensions to its citizens, including groups that have historically been discriminated against and excluded, particularly older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, Mexicans of African descent, children and young people. One inclusive programme aimed at reducing exclusion requires employers to pay contractors social security, pension and seniority benefits to prevent companies from avoiding making employer contributions to the social security system.

49. In the Russian Federation, the Government has implemented a state programme that adopts a targeted approach to providing social support to excluded groups that is based on family income levels and a comprehensive assessment of needs. For instance, based on consideration of the needs of excluded groups, the Government provides free transport to facilitate the movement of persons over the age of 65 and persons with disabilities living in rural areas to health-care facilities, and also to transport food, medicines and other basic needs to their homes. In addition, the Government reports that it pays social benefits to families for the birth or adoption of each child, and to women who register at the beginning of pregnancy.

**Mobilizing additional financing for necessary social expenditure**

50. The Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202) of the International Labour Organization sets legal standards that require Members States to consider using a variety of different methods to mobilize the necessary resources to ensure financial, fiscal and economic sustainability of national social protection floors, taking into account the contributory capacities of different population groups. The standards have been shown to be attainable, as good practices seen in various Member States demonstrate.

51. Governments could be encouraged to implement effective and sustainable financial mechanisms for funding social care services, such as considering arrangements with private sector players for loans, instalments, rebates, vouchers and subsidies to increase the affordability of health-care services and equipment required by excluded persons. Reducing tariffs and taxes, for example, on locally produced and procured assistive products can be instrumental to increasing the affordability of social care services. 33

52. In Armenia, the Government closely cooperates with civil society organizations in the provision of home care services, including food and care provision in day-care centres for older persons. For example, the Inter-Agency Commission on Fundamental Issues Related to Older Persons operates in the field of social protection and inclusion of the elderly. Half of its members are representatives of state bodies and the other half are representatives of international and non-governmental organizations.

53. In Saudi Arabia, the Government has partnered with the Social Development Bank to contribute social financing accessible by 2.8 million of its citizens, including divorced women, widows, family dependants and persons with disabilities under a product known as “Kanaf”, promoting financial inclusion for women and persons with disabilities. The funds are aimed at meeting the costs of humanitarian needs, training, rehabilitation programmes for beneficiaries and self-employment financing.

Special devices have also been issued and an accommodation card launched for persons with disabilities.

54. In Türkiye, to encourage the establishment and expansion of sheltered workplaces, the Government partnered with private sector employers by providing financial incentives covered by the Ministry of Treasury and Finance to employers who provide sheltered work to persons with disabilities. The Government not only pays a portion of the wages of persons with disabilities employed in sheltered workplaces, but also pays the employer’s share of insurance premiums and unemployment insurance for persons with disabilities employed by private sector employers.

55. Furthermore, a public-private partnership project called “Young women building their future”, financed by a private sector entity and implemented by UNDP in cooperation with the Government of Türkiye for the period 2021–2024, is focused on ensuring “invisible” women not in employment, education or training are reached so that they are involved in employment, training and education with respect to their needs. The project also seeks to raise awareness in national forums and relevant institutions, eliminate barriers for women, and design tools to improve the skills and employment opportunities of women.

56. In Guyana, the Government has partnered with foreign gas investors to fund development projects for the benefit of Indigenous communities and national priorities such as national health care, as part of the concession agreements extended to such foreign investors. The Government has also partnered with private sector and civil society players to finance technology that improves accessibility, such as screen readers for visually impaired persons.

IV. Recommendations

57. While Member States continue to make efforts in implementing social policies that focus on addressing the needs of those in vulnerable situations and contribute to poverty reduction, much remains to be done to reduce inequalities and foster social inclusion. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will require scaled-up ambition and accelerated action in key areas such as education, social protection, employment, food security, financing and partnerships.

58. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals and targets. Increased efforts are needed to accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals and to reverse the worsening trends in specific indicators observed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple ongoing crises.

59. The pandemic refocused attention on the need to develop a multidimensional perspective of poverty that addresses the root causes of social inequities and takes intersectionality into account, mindful of the cumulative and synergistic impact of experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage over the life course. Inclusive policies and systems for meeting basic needs and ensuring universal social protection, together with innovative financing and partnerships, could effectively address multidimensional poverty.

60. Although progress has been made in data collection and monitoring for the Goals, significant gaps remain regarding geographic coverage, timeliness and disaggregation. Continued improvements are needed to ensure that governments have a more granular view of the existing deprivations within and across groups (see A/78/80-E/2023/64).
61. Member States are encouraged to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Ensure that social inclusion and social integration policies and programmes are at the heart of efforts to eradicate poverty and address the situation and needs of marginalized groups;

(b) Consider additional metrics of basic well-being and social deprivation to capture the prevalence of multidimensional poverty, especially among marginalized groups and people in vulnerable situations;

(c) Develop strategies and policies, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, to advance gender equality and address barriers to social inclusion that affect disadvantaged groups in vulnerable situations, children, women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and Indigenous Peoples;

(d) Invest in universal social protection systems, including social protection floors, and adopt a life-course approach to social policies that addresses the impact of poverty, food insecurity and a lack of basic needs and services, including with respect to education and health care, on marginalized groups and people in vulnerable situations;

(e) Consider ways to mobilize public-private partnerships to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups;

(f) Increase opportunities for engagement by civil society and other stakeholders and continue sharing good practices and building partnerships aimed at facilitating greater social integration through social inclusion and that are focused on reaching the people who are furthest behind;

(g) Improve the collection and use of data disaggregated by age, sex and other relevant criteria for the formulation of policies and programmes aimed at achieving social inclusion.