

Inter-regional Expert Group meeting “Public policies for equality and the Agenda 2030”

ECLAC Headquarters, Santiago, Chile

December 9-10, 2015, Sala Celso Furtado

Concept note

Background

In recent years, inequality has risen to the centre of the global development debate, and calls for action have been made for the adoption of more progressive social protection, labour and fiscal policies. Accordingly, the United Nations is increasingly promoting equality as a key driver of sustainable development, as it can be seen in the text of “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and in the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by Heads of State in September 2015.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in particular, has played an important role in advocating for greater socio-economic equality. ECLAC’s policy proposals for development in Latin America and the Caribbean –put forward in the institutional documents presented at the last three sessions of the Commission– are now referred to as the “trilogy of equality”¹. These three documents promote pro-equality public policies, such as universal social protection and decent work. Similarly, the other Regional Commissions of the United Nations –the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)– have taken the lead in promoting better measurement of inequalities and fostering pro-equality public policies within their broader mandate to contribute to socio-economic development.

While no goal or target on inequality was included in the Millennium Development Goals, the SDGs include goal 10, “Reduce inequality within and among countries”, and ten related targets. The first four of these targets deal with inequality within countries, namely: target 10.1 “By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average”, target 10.2 “By 2030, empower and

¹ “Time for Equality: Closing Gaps, Opening Trails” (2010), “Structural Change for Equality: An Integrated Approach to Development” (2012) and “Compacts for Equality: Towards a Sustainable Future” (2014).

promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”, target 10.3 “Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard” and target 10.4 “Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality”.

With respect to the indicators to be used to monitor the targets, general agreement has been found around the following: Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 percent of the population and the total population (to monitor target 10.1), Proportion of people living below 50% of median income disaggregated by age and sex (10.2), Percentage of population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed within the last 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law (10.3) and Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers (10.4). Additionally, agreement has been reached that SDG indicators should be disaggregated where relevant by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics².

Objective of the Inter-regional Expert Group Meeting

This Inter-regional Expert Group meeting is carried out in the framework of two United Nations Development Account projects aimed at promoting public policies oriented towards greater socio-economic equality and strengthening the capacities of countries to conceptualize, design and implement such policies: the 8th Tranche project “Time for Equality: Strengthening the Institutional Framework of Social Policies” and the 9th Tranche project “Promoting Equality: Strengthening the Capacity of Select Developing Countries to Design and Implement Equality-oriented Public Policies and Programmes”.

The objective of this Inter-regional Expert Group Meeting (EGM) is threefold:

- 1) Discussing and exchanging experiences on the contribution of public policies to greater socio-economic equality within countries, in the framework of the new Agenda 2030. Particular emphasis will be placed on social protection, labour and fiscal policies.
- 2) Discussing and exchanging experiences on the measurement of socio-economic inequalities.

² See Results of the list of indicators reviewed at the second meeting of the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG) held in Bangkok from 26-28 October 2015,

- 3) Presenting and discussing a new toolkit of policy and programme options for social protection systems, titled “Towards universal social protection. Latin American pathways and policy tools”.

In particular, the results of these discussions will inform the preparation of toolkits on the design and implementation of equality-oriented public policies and programmes and on the analysis and measurement of socio-economic inequalities, envisaged by the 9th Tranche United Nations Development Account project “Promoting Equality”. The purpose of this project is to promote the key role of equality in development and to foster the exchange of experiences in this respect among different regions of the world. Additionally, it is hoped that these discussions will contribute to promote and sustain a multisectoral approach to the United Nations’ analytical and policy work on inequality in the framework of the Agenda 2030.

How we will work

The focus of this inter-regional EGM will be on discussing issues and exchanging ideas related to public policies and measurement of inequalities and the Agenda 2030. The format of the EGM thus envisages very brief presentations (10 minutes) followed by discussion among participants. Participants are expected to be UN Staff from Regional Commissions (ECA, UNECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA) and DESA, as well as experts from academia and national governments.

The EGM will count with English/Spanish interpretation.

Agenda

Day 1 (Wednesday, December 9, 14.00-18.00)

14.00-14.30 Inauguration: Public policies for equality and the Agenda 2030

Laís Abramo, Director, Social Development Division, ECLAC

The Trilogy of Equality and the Agenda 2030, Antonio Prado, Deputy Executive Secretary, ECLAC

14.30-16.00 Session 1: Towards universal social protection: Latin American pathways and policy tools

The objective of this session is to present the new toolkit of policy and programme options for social protection systems and discuss key approaches, policies and programmes to expand coverage and reduce inequalities.

Moderator: Laís Abramo, Director, Social Development Division, ECLAC

- *The rights-based approach to social protection*, Simone Cecchini, Social Development Division, ECLAC
- *Models of development and the welfare State matrix*, Fernando Filgueira, Independent Consultant
- *Social protection along the life cycle*, Cecilia Rossel, Social and Political Science Department of the Catholic University, Uruguay
- *Financing and investment for social protection*, Rodrigo Martínez, Social Development Division, ECLAC
- *Building compacts for social protection*, Carlos Maldonado, Social Development Division, ECLAC

Discussion

16.00-16.20 Coffee break

16.20-18.00 Session 2: Public policies for greater equality: SDG Targets 10.1- 10.4

The objective of this session is to present and discuss what has been learned so far and the knowledge gaps existing on SDG target 10.4 “Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality”.

Moderator: Simone Cecchini, Social Development Division, ECLAC

- *Employment and decent work promotion*, Laís Abramo, Director, Social Development Division, ECLAC
- *Public policies for gender equality*, Nieves Rico, Director, Gender Affairs Division, ECLAC
- *Distributive impact of the 2014 tax reform in Chile*, Alberto Arenas, Economic Development Division, ECLAC
- *Methodological considerations on the redistributive impact of fiscal policies and social investment*, Varinia Tromben, Social Development Division, ECLAC

Discussion

Day 2 (Thursday, December 10: 9am-6pm)

9.00 – 10.50 Session 3: Public policies for greater equality: Latin American and Caribbean experiences

The objective of this session is to discuss the lessons learned in Latin America and the Caribbean with respect to social protection, labour and fiscal policies

Moderator: Laís Abramo, Director, Social Development Division, ECLAC

- *Structural change and development with equality*, Gabriel Porcile, Productive Development Division, ECLAC
- *Labour markets and structural heterogeneity: Public policies for inclusive development*, Ricardo Infante, ECLAC
- *Estimating the impact of monetary transfers for children and older persons*, Fernando Filgueira, independent consultant
- *Green fiscal policies*, Allan Beltran, Sustainable Development and Human Settlements Division, ECLAC
- *The contribution of the Progresando con Solidaridad programme to greater social equality*, Altagracia Suriel, Director General, Prosoli, Dominican Republic

Discussion

10.50 – 11.10 Coffee break

11.10-13.00 Session 4: Public policies for greater equality: Inter-regional experiences

The objective of this session is to discuss the lessons learned in the ECA, ESCAP and ESCWA regions with respect to social protection, labour, and fiscal policies

Moderator: Amr Nour, Director, Regional Commissions New York Office, United Nations

- *Public policies for greater equality: Lessons learned in the ECA region*, Saurabh Sinha, Chief, Employment and Social Protection Section, ECA
- *Social protection: Lessons learned in the ESCAP region*, Patrik Andersson, Chief, Social Integration Section, ESCAP
- *Public policies for greater equality: Lessons learned in the ESCWA region*, Oussama Safa, Chief, Participation and Social Justice, ESCWA
- *The welfare mix in Arab countries and its implications for equity and equality*, Gisela Nauk, Chief, Inclusive Social Development, ESCWA

Discussion

13.00-14.30 Lunch

14.30 – 16.40 Session 5: Measurement of socio-economic inequalities and the Agenda 2030

The objective of this session is to present and discuss the proposed indicators to monitor targets 10.1 – 10.4 as well as new and alternative ways of measuring inequalities, with experiences from the ECLAC and UNECE regions

Moderator: Cecilia Rossel, Social and Political Science Department of the Catholic University, Uruguay

- *Indicators to monitor income inequality*, Marco Galván, Statistics Division, ECLAC
- *Alternative measures of inequality*, Verónica Amarante, Director, ECLAC Office in Montevideo
- *Measuring top incomes*, Juan Pablo Jimenez, Economic Development Division, ECLAC
- *Measuring racial and ethnic inequalities through household surveys*, Vivian Milosavljevic, Social Development Division, ECLAC

Discussion

16.40-17.00 Coffee break

17.00-18.00 Session 6: Measurement of socio-economic inequalities: Lessons from the UNECE region

The objective of this session is to discuss the lessons learned in the UNECE region with respect to the measurement of socio-economic inequalities.

Moderator: Patrik Andersson, Chief, Social Integration Section, ESCAP

- *Poverty measurement in the UNECE region*, Andres Vikat, Chief of Social and Demographic Statistics, UNECE
- *The Moldovan experience in the measurement of inequalities*, Veronica Nica, National Bureau of Statistics, Republic of Moldova
- *The Armenian experience in the measurement of inequalities*, Diana Martirosova, Head, Household Surveys Division, National Statistical Service, Republic of Armenia

Discussion

Wrap-up and closing remarks