



COMMISSION for SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

United Nations Headquarters, New York



United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Inclusive Social Development



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62nd Session of the Commission for Social Development

High-level panel on the priority theme

How can social policies become more effective in achieving inclusive, resilient and equitable societies that leave no one behind?

Monday, 5 February 2024, 3-6 p.m., Conference room 4, UNHQ

Concept Note



1. Background

Effective and inclusive social policies promote access to fundamental services, such as quality education, health care, children's nutrition, clean water, sanitation and electricity. In so doing, they advance upward mobility and well-being for all, promote resilience, increase labour productivity, and support behavioural shifts towards healthier lives and long-term planning. This, in turn, supports inclusive economic growth and efforts to reduce inequality, poverty and hunger. It also strengthens bonds of trust and solidarity within society. Through a virtuous cycle, often across generations, effective and inclusive social policies improve well-being, break poverty traps, encourage aspirations, and boost employment and income prospects.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes the pledge that no one will be left behind. The landmark agreement envisions "A just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met". However, even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were signs of slowing progress in poverty eradication and of increasing inequality, with billions of people being left behind, trapped in cycles of poverty, exclusion and uncertainty.

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, including its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the world has undergone dramatic changes. It has experienced an unprecedented pandemic and is facing the highest number of violent conflicts since World War II, along with other overlapping crises. At the same time, inequalities are on the rise, and many countries are ill-prepared to tackle the imminent challenges presented by climate change, population ageing and digitalization.

Urgent action is needed to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda by promoting a trajectory of inclusive, equitable growth and building resilient societies. Comprehensive reforms are needed. A business-as-usual approach risks widening existing gaps and leaving a growing share of people behind. A prerequisite for such reform is to stop treating investment in the social sector as an afterthought. Development strategies and policy frameworks need to be centred on people, treating their well-being as the principal objective of sustainable development and promoting policy integration and coordination to reach that goal. For long-term financial sustainability, investments in people need to come primarily from domestic resources.

The Commission for Social Development will convene its sixty-second session from 5 to 14 February 2024, with a priority theme of “Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication”. On 5 February 2024 from 3 to 6 p.m., a high-level panel discussion will focus on *How social policies can become more effective in achieving inclusive, resilient and equitable societies that leave no one behind*.

2. Objective and structure

The panel’s main objective is to identify opportunities and to share experiences and lessons learned about how social policies can best support social progress and promote inclusive, resilient and equitable societies. Panellists will discuss questions such as: What social policies are needed to promote social progress? How can national policies be better designed and implemented to achieve their objectives? Are governments sufficiently prioritizing social progress? Why is spending in the social sector often viewed as a cost, rather than an investment? Are people’s needs and expectations sufficiently reflected in current policies?

Panellists are invited to structure their 12-minute presentations around solutions and strategies for countries to design and implement effective and inclusive social policies, build capable and accountable institutions, and mobilize resources to ensure the fiscal and economic sustainability of essential social services. The outcome of the discussion will be reflected in the Chair’s summary as part of the inputs from the Commission for Social Development to ECOSOC’s high-level segment and the 2024 High-Level Political Forum.

Proposed time allocation for the panel discussion

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
Chair: Opening remarks	3 minutes
Keynote speaker	20 minutes
Moderator: Remarks and introduction	5 minutes
Panellists: Presentations	12 minutes per panellist
Q & A: From the floor	60 minutes
Panellists: Concluding remarks	3 minutes per panellist
Moderator: Summary and conclusion	7 minutes