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Making eradication of poverty an integral objective of all policies: what will it take?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda introduced a holistic approach to governments, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders in addressing challenges relate to the development of our societies. This comprehensive agenda presented us an innovative perspective to work on each of the issues it brings, highlighting the value and necessity to address the different needs of humanity, environment and institutions in an integrated and interdependent manner.

While every goal of this agenda should be perceived as essential to the realization of them all, eradicating poverty as stated in Goal 1 is truly a basic requisite to making people's access available to all the other goals. Today, 12.8% of people in developing or emerging countries live in extreme poverty, compared with 44% thirty years ago. The rate of extreme poverty has thus been reduced threefold when we consider global population growth (4.5 to 7 billion). Yet, as positive as these numbers may sound, it means that for approximately 900 million people the access to basic food, services and rights is still compromised.

Similarly, despite enormous demographic pressure, extreme poverty has declined and living conditions have improved across the world over the past thirty years. Yet, these global data represent only a general trend that masks the persistent, widespread poverty. Moreover, the threshold of $1.90 is very low, and ignores the growing wealth in countries that only benefits a small minority.

Thus, while this threshold is instrumental to lifting up populations living under extremely inhumane conditions, in order to effectively achieve the full of the Agenda 2030 and its Goals governments and stakeholders should build their work in aiming for more. After all, in most countries – if not everywhere, living on $2.00 per day still means that one probably doesn't have access to decent work (Goal 8), won't have access to quality nutrition (Goal 2) and education (Goal 4), and will likely face extra layers of challenges to free her/himself from firm gender roles (Goal 5) in her/his family and community. At the same time, it possibly indicates that the country is struggling with ineffective institutions (Goal 16) and is immersed in high rates of inequality (Goal 10).

Mainstreaming Goal 1 (poverty) into all policies is, therefore, of utmost importance to address a much more comprehensive set of issues in the sustainable development agenda. In order to do so, it is imperative that governments and other stakeholders in so-called developed, developing and least developed countries identify what is the meaning of poverty in each of their specific contexts and in which ways it interferes with the interaction between the affected population in regard to each of the other SDGs.

In fact, discussing the relationship between poverty and internal inequality, for instance, is a useful exercise to make such identifications. While it is true that inequality between countries has fallen significantly, internal inequality has been growing expressively. The standard argument explaining this

phenomenon refers to globalization, technological advances and public policies – the latter being partially responsible for the enormous differences in the levels of inequality and poverty in different countries.

The population in developing and in least developed countries unarguably carries the heaviest burden of poverty and inequality. Yet, developed countries has often overlooked their role in their own territories. Most developed countries have established social safety nets and assistance schemes that still protect their citizens, and the majority of people has access to basic goods and public services. Nevertheless, we observe a growing level of inequality within these countries. Although we can not apply standards of absolute poverty to this contexts, poverty must be a strong element of their policies as a growing number of people loose access to services in housing, employment and training, education, health, illiteracy, access to leisure and culture, etc.

Likewise, in wealthy countries hundreds of thousands of people are homeless and face the dangers of the streets every day. Foreign undocumented workers are exploited in makeshift jobs and housed in slum dwellings paying excessive rents. Millions of people live in substandard housing and are unable to feed themselves properly. They cannot provide clothing or recreational opportunities to their children, or take time off from work. Thus, although they may not suffer the extreme poverty that afflicts people living in developing and under developed countries, they still live in destructive social and economic vulnerability.

Eradicating poverty, as well as addressing the whole of the SDGs, is needed in every country, in its own ways.

With this understanding, Dianova believes that it is essential to consider the extent of inequality across the world we all share. We also believe that all human beings, in every country, "have the right to life, liberty and personal safety". We believe that this principle is the most important one we uphold.

That is why we believe that improving the living conditions of the world's poorest people should be an ongoing concern of wealthy countries. Unfortunately, this is not the case today, as indifference to the plight of developing countries shows. We believe that our role as civil society stakeholders is to support the economic, democratic and social development of countries. We also believe we need to influence our governments to do the same.

Developing countries desperately need more attention. We also believe there is an urgent need help the growing number of people in socially vulnerable situations linked to growing inequality in developed countries.

Dianova finds such poverty and exclusion unjust, and unworthy of societies that have the means to address these problems. Moreover, we believe that providing support to vulnerable people to facilitate their inclusion could bring significant social, economic and public safety benefits.

This is why, for both ethical and practical reasons, we support efforts to find and implement solutions. Those solutions must promote the inclusion of people with high social vulnerability and to effectively address the causes of poverty and exclusion. This is a fundamental objective for achieving a peaceful society.

See examples of what Dianova is doing, saying and supporting on each SDG under review at the HLPF this year:

SDG1 Poverty: An integrated approach to the Sustainable Development Agenda through poverty eradication

SDG3 Health and Wellbeing: Dianova network supports the EU minimum quality standards in drug demand reduction

SDG4 Education: Schooling as a tool to foster Global Citizenship, Empathy and Tolerance

SDG5 Gender Equality: A call to address women-specific vulnerabilities in the current flow of forced migration

SDG9 Sustainable Infrastructures: Hotel Europeo in Nicaragua: Commitment to sustainable infrastructure, responsible tourism and social development

SDG17 Partnership: The third sector as major player in the construction of a more just society for the XXI century

NGO Major Groups: Dianova contributes to the Position Paper for the 2017 High-Level Political Forum