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International Expert Workshop on Inequalities “Bridging the Gap: Approaches and Policies for Reducing Inequalities” Berlin | 5-6 September 2016

Expert Key Findings on Reducing Inequalities

Background

We, policymakers, scholars and practitioners from all over the world, convened in Berlin for an exchange of ideas and experience on how to reduce inequalities worldwide. In view of the growing negative consequences of inequalities and the importance that is given to reducing inequalities in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 10 as a stand-alone goal, we call upon governments to take stronger actions to tackle inequalities worldwide. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of inequality, which relates to the distribution of opportunities and outcomes and includes a social, an ecological and an economic dimension, we call upon governments to contribute to a world with equal opportunities for all. This includes the opportunity to political representation and participation. In many cases, those at the bottom have no voice.

Those women, children and men who have not yet benefitted from rising living standards should gain the opportunity to do so immediately. Therefore, all countries, wherever they may be, need to increase their efforts to mainstream inequality reduction in their policies. International cooperation resources should be used to make a valuable contribution.

These key findings identify central areas for action and appropriate policy responses. Based on the outcomes of the 2016 Berlin International Expert Workshop “Bridging the Gap: Approaches and Policies for Reducing Inequalities”, these key findings highlight four areas of central importance for the reduction of inequalities, and outline the action needed. This document summarizes the main points discussed. Not all points are necessarily shared by all participants, nor do they reflect the official positions of their countries of origin.

Key messages/academia

- ❖ Horizontal inequality threatens peace and stability. There is a strong correlation between inequality and conflict.
- ❖ Different distributional outcomes in different countries show: Policy matters! Political will of governments is the driving force for change and policies need to be implemented. Poor governance is usually enhancing inequality.
- ❖ Development cooperation should aim at improving international framework conditions that cause in-country and between-country inequality, i.e. in the areas of trade, taxation and migration.

Key findings – Workshop I: Sustainable economic and rural development

- ❖ More collaborative, multi-sectoral and multi-level country specific research should be carried out including territorial inequality analysis and analysing the effects of public policies on inequality such as land reforms.
- ❖ Supporting national government statistical systems, i.e. through local level data collection and data analysis.
- ❖ Make sure that policy making is participative.
- ❖ Global rules and policies should be assessed in terms of their effects on inequality.

Key findings – Workshop II: Human development and basic services

- ❖ Political barriers. (1) Lack of political will: Inequality is not always a priority for politicians. (2) Science-politics interface: How can we improve the dialogue between scientists and policy makers? (3) Inter-sectoral approaches are necessary but political constraints exist in the implementation. How can we ensure a constructive dialogue between ministries (such as education, health social welfare)?
- ❖ Education and health are key to reducing overall inequalities. To make these two sectors more effective in reducing inequality we should first of all identify barriers and begin there (excluded from access to education, unequal access to health services, poor quality services).

Key findings – Workshop III: Good financial governance

- ❖ Put the revenue side on a legal, just and fair basis, for example by targeted taxes. Focus the expenditure side on minimising inequality.
- ❖ Increase the policy dialogue regarding inequality reduction on multi- and bilateral level for example by a stronger involvement by the German government and giving a stronger mandate to implementation agencies to mainstream inequality issues.

Key findings – Workshop IV: Horizontal inequalities

- ❖ No group should be left behind and no group should be too far ahead.
- ❖ We need to listen to marginalised groups and facilitate their participation in the decision making processes that affect them so that they can be empowered.
- ❖ Horizontal inequality is a multidimensional issue that needs multi-dimensional diagnostics based on reliable disaggregated context specific data and multi-sectoral policies and strategies.

Final remarks

We confirm our shared commitment to continue our dialogue on the issues at stake in an informal network. We will continue to exchange best practices and innovative approaches for tackling inequalities in order to contribute to a world with equal opportunities for all people, everywhere.