***How far are we from achieving a multidimensional poverty measure that can truly capture a country’s realization of social and economic rights? What is the key priority to achieve such a measure?***

Many thanks, Madam chairperson for your question

Apologies for not being able to be there in person.

I would like to address your question making four points

**FIRST: Measuring and eliminating poverty are very related but still different things**. Eliminating poverty in a given country starts with the political will to do so, and continues with a good evidence base to design good policies, securing financial resources, developing technical capacity and fostering coordination.

As a result, advancing on measurement is a really important step but we should recognize it does not lead AUTOMATICALLY OR INEVITABLY to eliminate poverty or reduce inequalities per se.

For example, the main policies used during covid have been

* + Consumption taxes
  + Semi cash (that is, vouchers, discounts)
  + Cash transfers
  + Price subsidies
  + Personal income tax
  + Price freezes

Producing a measure using real time data during covid is already difficult enough but that is able to connect easy and directly with those concrete policies even harder. No phone survey during COVID has been able to capture ethnicity, disability, or other vulnerabilities. Nor many of those benefits…..

**SECOND: the problem is more technical than conceptual**. We know that poverty is not a unidimensional phenomenon but a complex and multidimensional, which necessarily requires going beyond income or consumption. In addition, the current measures of Multidimensional poverty focus on access to services but are less able to capture access to markets (financial, land) or access to political, civic, cultural spaces, voice, or accountability.

But this challenge is more of a technical issue than a conceptual issue. For example, both Adam Smith and Amartya Sen closely relate poverty (and exclusion) to concepts of participation in society with dignity and freedom to choose.

So the monetary and multidimensional measures developed invoking Smith or Sen, including the Bank’s income or consumption based International Poverty Lines or Oxford’s Multidimensional Poverty Index based on Sen, respectively, are conceptually not contesting the notions of dignity, participation in society, freedom, or covering basic needs.

**THREE: WE CAN SEE THE GLASS HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY BUT THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS TOWARDS A MEASURE TO BETTER CAPTURE THE COMPLEXITY OF POVERTY**. In effect, there have been several advances in the right direction. Let me focus on the ones that have happened within my institution, the World Bank.

* + **…..Going from a single IPL to several IPLs**, ……….which are more in line with the different costs of satisfying the minimum needs in different contexts (that is, in low, lower-middle and upper-middle income economies).
  + **Creating the Societal Poverty Line**, which is a combination of absolute and relative poverty lines, so this measure can capture both a minimum level of consumption (to survive) and another that adjusts by the changing needs across countries and over time.
  + **Bank’s Multidimensional Poverty measure**, which combines income and access to several basic services simultaneously.

**FOURTH AND FINAL: THIS PROGRESS IS NOT ENOUGH BECAUSE WE NEED A DIFFERENT TYPE OF MEASURE BEYOND INCOME AND ACCESS TO SERVICE**: My final point is that no International Poverty Line will well and compellingly capture dignity and HR principles like accountability, participation, equity. Conceptually they are linked but in practice, the measure does not allow to capture it in detail.

To do that we need an extended multidimensional measure that focus eson inter group inequalities and intersection of deprivations and exclusions.

* I am working towards a measure of that nature, what we call the ***Multidimensional Exclusion Index*** 
  + The Multidimensional Exclusion Index builds from the Oxford’s Multidimensional Poverty Index but expands access services to also include access to markets and spaces
  + Spaces include political, civic, digital and physical dimensions
  + The index Includes empowerment, voice and accountability variables
  + Can be unpacked by gender, ethnicity, disability, migration and when data permits SOGI considerations
* My second suggestion is that we need to invest much more on **inclusive data, that is data that captures information on ethnicity, disability, SOGI considerations and other vulnerable groups that today remain invisible…. UNLESS WE ARE ABLE TO HAVE BETTER DATA AND DO IT SYSTEMATICALLY, BETTER MEASURES WILL NOT GIVE US THE INFORMATION WE NEED FOR THE GROUPS MOST AT NEED.**