# Social Inclusion on the UN Agenda

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## Social development triad

- The World Social Summit of 1995 identified three overarching goals for social development: poverty eradication, employment promotion and social integration
- Social integration is appealing yet complex and elusive concept;
- At the core of social integration is the notion of social inclusion and inclusive society, which is bound to override differences of race, gender, class, generation and geography

# Social inclusion is an antipode of social exclusion

- We need to understand what creates marginalization in society and what factors are contributing to its creation.
- Creating legal, regulatory and policy frameworks that promote social inclusion often reduces social exclusion and its impact on poverty.
- Social inclusion needs to be addressed in a holistic and comprehensive way and over the long-term.

# WSSD put social integration into the international policy arena

- Commitment to advance social integration through the fostering of inclusive societies that are stable, safe, just and tolerant, and that
- Respect diversity, equality of opportunity and participation of all people.
- Social integration is a key component of achieving "society for all" based on protection of human rights, non-discrimination and solidarity.

# Millennium Development Goals

UN through MDGs generated momentum and created favorable conditions to improve the well-being of millions of people; but

- Ultimate responsibility rests with national governments;
- MDGs should not be seen as a panacea that replace broader social goals such as participation, social justice, intergenerational solidarity, diversity and social cohesion.

# Inclusion and cohesion

Inclusion could be seen as vital element of social cohesion, representing an outcome of policies and programmes that promote equality.
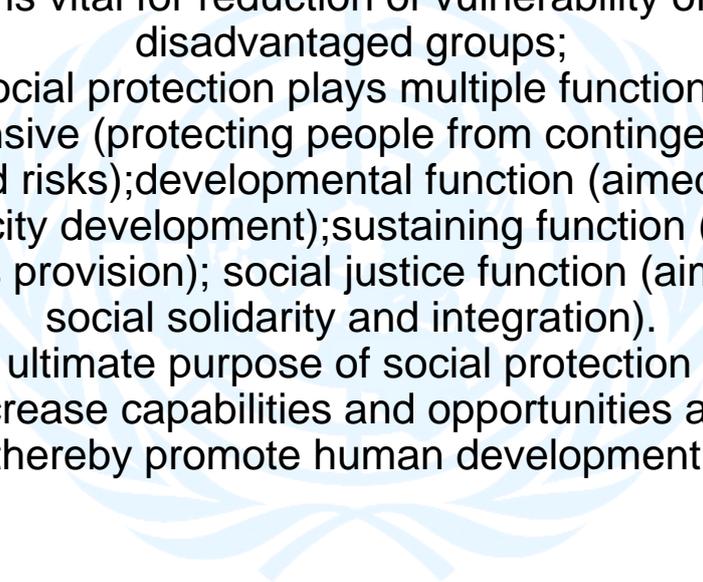
More acute social inequalities amid decreasing personal security require new approaches in addressing this challenge. Main reasons:

Inequality prevents the fruits of economic growth from being equally shared and the current global economic crisis has exacerbated the situation.

Social cohesion is challenged when economic growth and globalization produce asymmetrical outcomes.

Where globalization has resulted in social and cultural dislocations, tensions are created between communities, social groups and generations.
The growing phenomenon/threat of climate change is also creating new challenges and obstacles to securing social and environmental justice.
Natural disasters in Bangladesh, Haiti, Australia, New Zealand, Japan test everybody but most communities which are marginalized and less resilient to deal with these challenges.

SP is vital for reduction of vulnerability of the disadvantaged groups;
Social protection plays multiple functions-defensive (protecting people from contingencies and risks);developmental function (aimed at capacity development);sustaining function (basic needs provision); social justice function (aimed at social solidarity and integration).
The ultimate purpose of social protection is to increase capabilities and opportunities and thereby promote human development.

## Intergovernmental process recognized importance of social protection

- ECOSOC resolution 2010/12 "promoting social integration" emphasized 'the importance of providing effective social protection in achieving equity, equality, inclusion and society and in the labour market, social justice, including solidarity among generations, stability and cohesion in societies" (para.25)

## The social protection floor initiative launched by UN System CEB

The notion of social justice permeates the concept of an inclusive society.
Such society is geared at giving voice to all of its members;
Does not mean uniformity of people;
Provides space for diversity and cultural identity, engage people and provides them a stake in society;
encourages bottom-up feedback.

## Social inclusion vs. social integration

- Often "social inclusion" is more easily accepted as a policy goal compared to "social integration":
- Integration is perceived to imply the loss of some identity—be it a cultural identity, ethnic identity, class identity or any other social identity.
- Inclusion as a policy goal is accepted more easily– typically, nobody minds being included.
- If social inclusion is put forward as a defining feature, it makes social integration appealing

## Stakeholders

- Social integration requires not only lasting political commitment at the Government level but also target efforts of society at large.
- The role of Government is crucial in conceiving and promoting specific programmes to address the existing obstacles that prevent social inclusion. BUT:
- Partnership is essential, state alone cannot deliver without private sector and civil society

## Specific policies

- Addressing exclusion not only market –related or market-generated, but also group-specific vulnerabilities of such groups as
- Persons with disabilities, the indigenous peoples or older persons, or disadvantaged youth require appropriate and target policies initiated and promoted by Governments in cooperation with all stakeholders;
- Some forms of exclusion might cross cut across various groups (older women, for example, are doubly disadvantaged)
- Social integration is both a process and a goal

## The gap between policy goals and practice/implementation

The issue of effectiveness of public policy is linked to national **capacity** to implement policies and promote social inclusion;
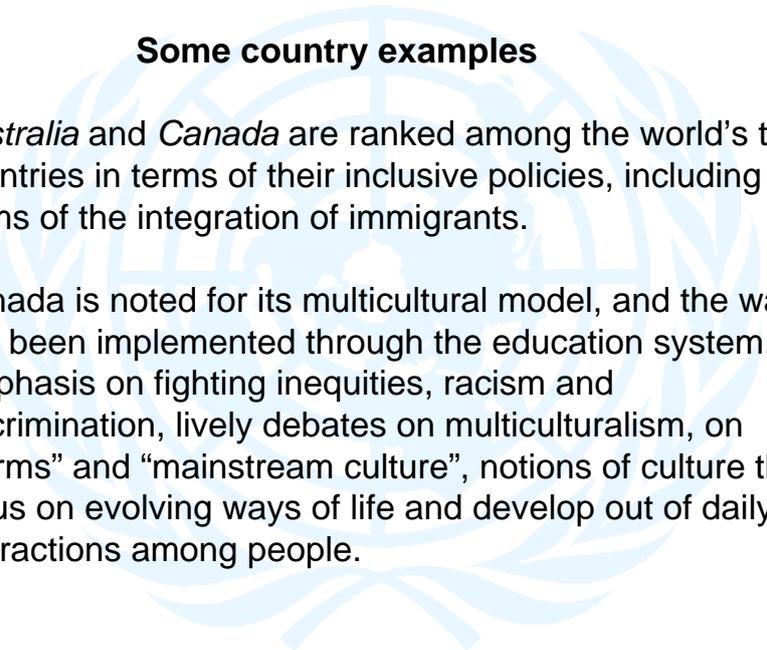
In its turn, national capacity includes capacity to identify objectives and carry through policies, and depends on availability of resources, trained cadres of specialists and existing institutional infrastructure.

Effective laws to prohibit discrimination—laws which are enforced and not only stay on the books

**Policies are most successful when they:**

- Emanate from shared political objectives, supported by society at large;
- Promoted by the specifically created Governmental structures with clearly identified roles and responsibilities;
- Are cross-sectoral and pursued coherently;
- "Win-win" situation of coherence and consistency.

**Some country examples**

*Australia* and *Canada* are ranked among the world's top countries in terms of their inclusive policies, including in terms of the integration of immigrants.

Canada is noted for its multicultural model, and the way it has been implemented through the education system. Emphasis on fighting inequities, racism and discrimination, lively debates on multiculturalism, on "norms" and "mainstream culture", notions of culture that focus on evolving ways of life and develop out of daily interactions among people.

"Aspirational principles" of Australia: reducing disadvantage; increasing social, civil and economic participation; a greater voice, combined with greater responsibility; building on individual and community strengths; building partnerships with key stakeholders; developing tailored services; giving a high priority to early intervention and prevention; building joined-up services and whole of government solutions; using evidence and integrated data to inform policies; using locational approaches; planning for sustainability

# Constant evolution and dynamism

- Social inclusion has numerous dimensions which cannot be reduced to one feature;
- Some previous gains may be reversible despite existence of good structures.
- Examples of European-wide backlash against immigration, discussion on values and loyalties, "the end of multiculturalism", "the integration failure of foreigners".

## Intergovernmental efforts to promote social inclusion

- December 2005—Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- September 2007—Declaration of the protection and Promotion of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Sometimes positive developments are hampered by the lack of national mechanisms to implement international commitments

## Who gains?

- Not only disadvantaged groups
- More inclusive society is beneficial for everyone in society, promoting individual development and empowerment.
- Inclusive participation enhances the quality, credibility and ownership of decisions, making them more effective

## Role of UNESCO

- Vital role of inclusive education;
- Promoting equal educational opportunities;
- Addressing diversity of learners;
- Values of compassion and tolerance;
- Capacity to accept and sustain cultural change.
- There is no "one-size-fits-all" options and ready-made solutions

# Thank you