



TÉLÉCOPIE • FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

DATE: 13 May 2020

A/TO: To all Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

DE/FROM: Beatriz Balbin  
Chief  
Special Procedures Branch

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Beatriz Balbin".

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PAGES: 5 (Y COMPRIS CETTE PAGE/INCLUDING THIS PAGE)

OBJET/SUBJECT: **Letter from the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights**

Please find attached a letter and a call for contributions from the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

**Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights**

13 May 2020

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 35/19.

I am writing to invite your Excellency's Government to provide me with contributions for the preparation of my thematic report for the 75<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2020, which will focus on the **"just transition": people in poverty and sustainable development**. The attached questionnaire is already available on my webpage at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Poverty/Pages/SRExtremePovertyIndex.aspx>.

I would be grateful if this letter and the annexed call for contributions could be transmitted to relevant authorities, inviting them to kindly provide submissions or documents no later than 10 June 2020.

Please, accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Olivier De Schutter  
Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

To all Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva

## **MANDATE OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON EXTREME POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Call for submissions: Thematic report to the UN General Assembly on the "just transition": people in poverty and sustainable development**

The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Mr. Olivier De Schutter, intends to dedicate his report to the 75th session of the General Assembly, to be presented in October 2020, to the question of how the human rights of people in poverty can be incorporated in the national plans aimed at putting the economy on a "greener" path, mitigating climate change and preserving and enhancing biodiversity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be read as an integrated whole, and SDGs 1 (to end poverty in all its forms everywhere) and 10 (to reduce inequalities) should be guiding actions towards the fulfilment of the other SDGs, including SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action) and 15 (sustainable management of life on land). This report shall aim to identify both the challenges associated with such an integrated approach and the good practices, both in public policies and in private initiatives, that move beyond the usual trade-offs, and can ensure that these Goals are addressed in combination, allowing synergies and complementarities between social justice and environmental sustainability.

### **Call for submissions**

The Special Rapporteur invites all interested governments, civil society organizations, academics, international organizations, activists, corporations and others, to provide written input for his thematic report.

Respondents are requested to limit their comments to a maximum of 2,500 words. Additional supporting materials, such as reports, academic studies, and other types of background materials may be annexed to the submission.

The Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights would be particularly grateful for comments, observations and examples of good practices in the following areas:

#### **1. Energy: the switch to renewable energy sources and improved energy efficiency**

1.1. Which policies (such as relocation grants, job-search assistance and re-skilling programs) have proven to be the most effective to support workers who are affected by the transition to renewable energy and to overcome barriers that low-skilled workers may face in entering the renewable energy sector?

1.2. Which innovative fiscal and financial incentives can be relied on to reduce cost gaps between renewables and fossil fuel technologies, in order to make clean energy affordable to all?

1.3. Evidence suggests that in rural areas in particular, large-scale on-grid energy production is not cost-effective, whereas mini-grid and off-grid renewable energy systems, deployed in a decentralized manner in collaboration with local communities, are more promising and economically viable. Which obstacles does the establishment of such decentralized renewable energy systems face? Which experiences could provide a source of inspiration in this regard?

## **2. Housing: encouraging energy performance of buildings**

2.1. Which tools have proven successful to ensure that the imposition of higher standards related to the energy performance of buildings do not lead to an increased level of rents, making housing less affordable for low-income households?

## **3. Planned obsolescence and life cycle of products**

3.1. What have proven to be the most effective ways to combat planned or “built in” obsolescence of products, i.e., to prohibit or to discourage manufacturers’ practice of deliberately designing products to fail prematurely or become out-of-date? What are the obstacles in implementing regulations banning such practices?

3.2. Consumers of long-life products incur greater purchase costs upfront, but lower total costs per annum, compared to consumers of short-life products (excluding repair costs). What policies should governments consider implementing, in order to encourage consumers to choose long-life products, whose environmental impacts are much less significant? In particular, for persons in poverty, their limited disposable income at the time of the purchase may discourage buying long-life and thus more sustainable products. Which policies could help overcome this obstacle?

3.4. Functional economy and sharing economy (collaborative consumption) initiatives, such as the sharing of tools, cars, or tractors, encourage and facilitate the exchange or sharing of underutilized assets, and enlarge access to goods and services whilst reducing environmental impact. Which regulatory or policy measures have been most successful in encouraging such forms of consumption? Which are the most important factors limiting the growth of the repair sector (for example, availability of spare parts, skilled labour, time constraints facing consumers, costs)? And how might such obstacles be overcome?

## **4. The impacts of the transition on employment**

4.1. Payments for ecosystem services (PES) schemes, when carefully designed, can both help maintain healthy ecosystems and provide additional revenue for individuals and communities in poverty. This requires the careful and complex integration of economic, ecological and social criteria into the design and implementation of PES to promote economic resilience, environmental integrity and social development. How could PES be designed to ensure that people in poverty (landless poor and smallholders) are not excluded from them, which could occur by requiring formal land title, minimal land size or expensive application processes?

4.2. For green restructuring, new skills will be needed by workers in many existing occupations and industries. Governments, worker representatives and employers should work together to: (1) identify early potential job losses in emitting industries and (2) propose

skills upgrading and training to the workers of those industries either to adapt their skills to a new green technology or to move to green industries. What labour market policies or measures can ensure that the most vulnerable workers in the labour market receive targeted assistance and preferential treatment to identify their skills' deficiencies and ensure their access to green jobs through tailor-made training, directly linked to specific job openings?

The Special Rapporteur greatly appreciates the efforts that go into making such contributions and looks forward to reading the submissions.

### **How to send your written submission to the Special Rapporteur?**

Submissions can be sent to **srextremepoverty@ohchr.org** until **10 June 2020 (6pm Geneva time)**. Kindly send your submission as an attachment to an email.

**By default, all submissions will be treated as confidential and the issues raised will not be attributed to specific individuals or organizations.** However, if you would like your submission to be published on the website of the Special Rapporteur, please explicitly indicate your consent to publication in your submission.

### **Media inquiries**

The Special Rapporteur's report will be presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2020 and will be made public around the same time.

Media inquiries, including requests to attend the presentation of the thematic report at the General Assembly in New York, may be directed to Junko Tadaki ([jtadaki@ohchr.org](mailto:jtadaki@ohchr.org)) and Patricia Varela ([pvarela@ohchr.org](mailto:pvarela@ohchr.org)).

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