

Consultation on 2021-2022 Human Development Report: South-South Cooperation in a Context of Uncertain Times and Unsettled Lives



Background: 2021/2022 Human Development Report

The 2021/22 Human Development Report will draw from and extend the discussions of the 2019 HDR (on inequalities) and of the 2020 HDR (on the structural risks of the Anthropoceneⁱ), highlighting the ways in which inequalities and uncertainty interact with one another, fanning exclusion and polarization. Together, inequalities and uncertainty undermine for many a sense of control over one's life, impeding their ability to do and be what they value and have reason to value – the expansion of which is central to human development. As we go deeper into the Anthropocene and as technology continues to race ahead, shocks (of which Covid-19 may be a harbinger of what might come) will persist and may even be heightened. The discussions around the climate/security nexus are another example.

The 2020 HDR argued for the importance of easing planetary pressures to mitigate these physical hazards, in a context of heightened uncertainty. This calls for transformational change, which also drives uncertainty: inherent in transformational change are multiple and overlaid dislocations, which give rise to a compounding set of transition uncertainties overlaid on physical uncertainties. Groups at higher risk to be left behind face particular challenges – first, as uncertainty diminishes individual choice for everyone and second, as social fault lines, themselves often exacerbated by shocks, reduce their agency further. But polarization is not driven only, or even primarily, by deprivation and marginalization, with support for extreme political views often associated not with being deprived, but by belonging to a group that has power or social standing that perceives being under threat.

The interaction of inequalities and uncertainty with new forms of technology will form a central part of the Report's examination of the erosion of institutions to respond to both transformational change and people's concerns about it. How people feel about the future, and how insecure they are about their prospects, has implications for economic, social, and political decisions.

Through a human development lens, the Report will examine the features of policies and institutions that can be responsive and nimble to advance transformational change while committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. The Report will look not only at the institutions and policies that help address immediate concerns but also the processes of institutional renewal geared towards empowering people to face uncertain times in ways that seize on the opportunities of change to expand human development.

Consultation for 2021/2022 Human Development Report (HDR)

The consultations on the 2021/2022 Human Development Report (HDR) intend to start a conversation on the themes of the report, with the purpose of seeking input and advice on report content from thematic and regional experts. Consultations inform the process of developing the report and ensure that it speaks to key human development issues for people and policymakers.

To complement the overall consultative process, the HDRO will be leveraging the South-South Global Thinkers Network, a global coalition of Think tank Networks on South-South Cooperation. This will allow to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and perspectives from the Global South, making the process inclusive and participatory. Given the diverse levels of economic, cultural, and social influence of the Global South, southern perspective will help inform policy debates and advocacy, giving a broad view of development challenges and their solutions that are representative and unequivocally reflect or match the reality in the Global South.

Recognizing the importance of South-South Cooperation, the consultation is expected to provide insights on how South-South Cooperation can play a role in addressing issues related to inequalities, and uncertainties which include technology, and prospects and implications of economic, social, and political decisions.

The South-South Cooperation Consultation will have a dual format, taking place online on the South-South Global Thinkers platform from November 8th to December 3rd, 2021, followed by online virtual consultation.

Guiding Questions for the e-Discussion:

This e-discussion is intended to encourage inputs and discussions which are able to contribute to the regional and thematic consultations that are being undertaken for the HDR 2021-2022. This e-discussion invites contributions and insights from Southern-based think tanks and academia on the issue of inequality and uncertainty that will feed into and shape the HDR.

The e-discussion will focus on the following guiding questions:

1. How can just and inclusive transformations be brought about for the global South? What kind of metrics are needed to guide just and inclusive transformations in the global South?
2. What are the spatial and socioeconomic implications of technology-driven transitions? and more specifically, in the context of the Global South?
3. How can novel technologies be leveraged to support the development of sound metrics in the context of Anthropocene uncertainty?
4. How can institutions (Governments? Civil societies? NGOs, Private sector etc.?) protect rights and empower people, especially groups at higher risk to be left behind, such as women? How South-South cooperation and solidarity be supported as a coping mechanism for uncertainty and inequality?
5. What good practices to motivating communities to act as a collective, for instance through social movements or community initiatives, exist in the global South? Are there good practices and/or lessons learnt of technology-driven transitions that could be leveraged?

Moderation: The e-discussion will be moderated by HDRO and facilitated by UNOSSC.

ⁱ Scientists propose that we are now entering a new geologic epoch—the Anthropocene—in which humans are a dominant force shaping the future of the planet. (For more information see the Human Development Report 2020 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report>)

