

2018

Leaving no one behind*

Summary

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Recommendations

The Committee recommends that the United Nations System entities and Member states embed the concept of leaving no one behind in their strategic frameworks and translate that concept into action, not only by targeting specific groups that are excluded from decision making power and the benefits of development, but also by safeguarding the interests of those groups by not pushing them further behind through measures that deprive them of their rights and livelihoods, and by the following:

(a) Ensuring that macroeconomic and fiscal instruments work towards equitable, sustainable growth,

to actively ensure that they are accountable to all citizens both through formal processes — such as free and fair elections that are not captured by economic interests — and through other accountability mechanisms such as a

free press, access to information, meaningful multi stakeholder participation instances at all levels of policymaking and access to justice.

The need to consider trade offs, distributional effects and short and long term consequences

The pledge to leave no one behind is seldom disputed in principle, but the complexity of its practical implementation is often insufficiently acknowledged. While in the long run many goals and concepts contained in the 2030 Agenda converge, trade offs in the path towards their achievement must be understood and addressed.

The pledge to leave no one behind is grounded in strong philosophical and economic arguments. The policy choices most effective in leaving no one behind are not necessarily those routinely associated with that goal. The best results may come not from targeting specific groups but from

macroeconomic and fiscal policies and from the establishment of universal programmes that do not express any explicit priority towards any particular group, such as effectively universal (as opposed to stratified) social protection, public schools, public health care, universal childcare and elder care, with targeted policies playing only a subsidiary role. Policies for poverty eradication that focus on the poverty headcount

