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Leaving No One Behind – Amina Mohammed to Address Inclusion and the SDGs

Ottawa, June 7 - As governments around the world prepare for the first global review of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed will deliver the 2019 Annual Pluralism Lecture on June 11 in Lisbon, Portugal. Ms. Mohammed will highlight how inaction on inequality and exclusion threatens to undermine achievement of the 17 Goals agreed to by 193 nations in 2015.



According to Ms. Mohammed, both action and investment are needed if nations are to meet their development targets: “Let’s be frank: inequality is growing both within and between countries. Youth unemployment is at alarming levels, and intolerance, extremism, nationalism and xenophobia are on the rise.”

Even as some progress is being made in tackling poverty and improving maternal health, growing inequalities are rolling back gains in other areas, and in the worst cases, fueling conflict and forced migration.

Africa alone has over 20 million forcibly displaced people, most of them victims of violent conflict. Children, who make up a huge portion of those displaced, are deprived of schooling, while their families face a loss of dignity, health, and livelihoods. In the Middle East, where conflict has driven millions from their home, one in four children experiences acute poverty, and one-quarter of those aged 5 to 17 are not enrolled in school or have fallen two grades behind.

According to John McNee, Secretary General of the Global Centre for Pluralism, which will host the 2019 Lecture, “Pluralism should be understood as an essential part of our global response to the differences that exist in every society. Diversity is a fact of modern life, and managed well, it can underpin dynamic, peaceful societies.”

The Goals are also at risk from other factors that drive exclusion and inequality. The effects of climate change are expected to increase rates of poverty in several regions and communities that are already among the most disadvantaged. Regions at greatest risk include the Arctic, dryland regions, small island states, and Least Developed Countries. Women, who make up half the world’s population, also continue to face gender-based inequities in all societies.

To help countries monitor their progress towards inclusion and address the underlying causes of widening inequities within and between nations, the Ottawa-based Centre is developing the Pluralism Index, a new assessment tool being pilot tested for use around the world.

The Annual Pluralism Lecture presents an opportunity to learn from extraordinary individuals whose work exemplifies pluralism in action. Past lecturers have included South African anti-apartheid campaigner Justice Albie Sachs; former Chief Justice of Canada Beverley McLachlin; and current UN Secretary-General António Guterres, among others.

This year's Lecture, on how pluralism can advance the Sustainable Development Agenda, will be broadcast live via web stream at 19h GMT+1 on June 11 from Lisbon. Check [here](#) for details on the livelink.

On 24 and 25 September 2019, Heads of State and Government will gather at UN Headquarters in New York for the first UN summit on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015.

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