



UNDP 2023/2024 Human Development Report "Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world," highlights Urgent Need for Global Cooperation to Address Human Development Gridlock.

New York , 13 March 2024 – The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has released its 2023/24 Human Development Report (HDR), titled "Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a polarized world," revealing concerning trends in global human development. The global launch event was chaired by António Guterres, UN Secretary-General; Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of Singapore and Laura Chinchilla, former President of Costa Rica.

The report indicates a stark disparity in progress, with rich countries achieving record-high levels of human development while half of the world's poorest nations are regressing, exacerbating global inequality. This uneven development, coupled with rising political polarization and distrust, is creating a dangerous gridlock that demands immediate collective action.

Key findings from the report include:

- The Human Development Index (HDI) is projected to reach record highs in 2023, but progress is uneven, leaving half of the world's poorest countries below pre-crisis levels.
- Global inequalities are intensified by economic concentration, with almost 40 percent of global trade in goods concentrated in three or fewer countries.
- A 'democracy paradox' is hindering international collective action, as support for democratic principles coexists with backing for leaders undermining democratic processes.
- Political polarization and a sense of powerlessness hinder global cooperation on urgent issues such as climate change and digital regulation.

Achim Steiner, head of the UN Development Programme, emphasizes the urgency of addressing this gridlock, stating, "The failure of collective action not only hinder human development but also worsens polarization and further erodes trust in people and institutions worldwide." The report proposes immediate actions, including the creation of new global public goods in areas such as climate stability and digital equity. It underscores the importance of multilateralism, as bilateral engagements fall short in addressing the planetary nature of global challenges.

The report emphasizes how global interdependence is being reconfigured and calls for a new generation of global public goods. It proposes four areas for immediate action:

- Planetary public goods, for climate stability, as we confront the unprecedented challenges of the Anthropocene.
- Digital global public goods, for greater equity in harnessing new technologies for equitable human development.
- New and expanded financial mechanisms, including a novel track in international cooperation that complements humanitarian assistance and traditional development aid to low-income countries; and



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- Dialling down political polarization through new governance approaches focused on enhancing people's voices in deliberation and tackling misinformation.

In this context, multilateralism plays a fundamental role, the report argues, because bilateral engagements are not able to address the irreducibly planetary nature of the provision of global public goods.

Following the launch at the global level, the 2023/2024 HDR will be launched locally in Lesotho by the Government and UNDP at the end of March 2024 in Maseru. This ceremony will offer opportunity to the various stakeholders to discuss on the 2023/2024 key messages and recommendations, in relation with Lesotho's human development trend.

About the HDR

Launched in 1990, the HDR enables the UNDP to play a catalytic role in helping the International Community to develop appropriate responses to major emerging issues relating to the dimensions of human development. In this regard, the HDR aims to generate debate on an important development issue and, if necessary, raise awareness and alert leaders to the threats if appropriate measures are not taken. It also shows the progress made by countries, the disparities that exist between them and within them according to Human Development Indicators: Human Development Index (HDI) and its components (life expectancy at birth, expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling, and gross national income per capita), Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI).

In addition, to analyze progress in human development, countries produce National Reports on specific themes, selected according to their relevance.

To date, Lesotho has produced three National Human Development Reports (NHDR) on the following themes: (i) The first report, published in 1998, themed simply 'Human Development'; (ii) the second report, published in 2006 and themed 'The challenges of HIV and AIDS, Poverty and Food Insecurity'; (iii) the third report, published in 2016, 'Leveraging the power of youth for human development'.

The fourth NHDR, themed "Harnessing Technology and Innovations to accelerate human development in Lesotho" is under development and should be finalized in May 2024. The Lesotho 2024 NHDR will interrogate trends, experiences and lessons using capabilities approach, to determine the potential and realized impact of technology and innovations on human development.

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For the free download of the Human Development Report 2023/2024 and additional reference material on its index and implications specific to each region, please visit [UNDP Human Development Report 2023/24](https://www.undp.org/lesotho).

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