

SDC 2019 Annual Meeting Abstracts

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Title: Is Africa On Track to Ending Poverty by 2030?



The study develops and applies a methodology to assist countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) monitor and develop more effective and equitable strategies for poverty reduction. The impetus for the study is the United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development, which consists of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The first SDG calls for ending poverty by 2030. Although poverty has multiple dimensions, the focus of the study is on the monetary poverty. There is a strong evidence that change in poverty is related to change in mean income growth of the population and change in the distribution of income within the population. Thus, both income growth and income distribution are important to achieving the poverty reduction goal. The study offers unique analyses in several dimensions. First, it provides an assessment of the optimal mixes of income growth rates and inequality levels – i.e. optimal growth-inequality threshold – required to achieving the poverty reduction targets by 2030. It uses survey data and a nonlinear optimization method to predict the distribution of income around a given mean income of the population. The method is based on the entropy concept and applied to a sample of surveys conducted across Africa over the last two decades (2000-2017). The robustness of the methodology is assessed based on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the precursor to SDGs, performances and achievements. Second, the developed methodology is used to track Africa' progress towards achievement of the SDG on poverty. In this regard, countries current growth and inequality data are compared against the optimal growth-inequality threshold to assess their performance in achieving the poverty reduction goals by 2030. Third, the optimal income-inequality threshold and countries' growth potentials are used to project their ability to achieve the poverty reduction goals through accelerated growth. The assessment allows to highlight inequality gaps, if any, to be addressed. Thus, the framework enables a given country to assess its growth and inequality gaps in achieving the poverty reduction goals by 2030. Therefore, the study offers valuable information and guidance to SSA countries as they formulate and implement strategies towards meeting the SDGs.