

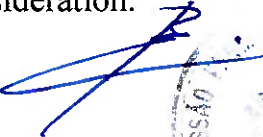


PERMANENT MISSION OF PORTUGAL  
GENEVA

DH -13 /2024

The Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to its request dated 6<sup>th</sup> November 2023, has the honour to enclose herewith the input of the Portuguese authorities to the report “Eradicating poverty in a post-growth context: preparing for the next Development Goals” of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

The Permanent Mission of Portugal avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

  
Geneva, 11 January 2024



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**Thematic Report to the Human Rights Council:  
"Eradicating poverty in a post-growth context: preparing for the next  
Development Goals."**

**Input from Portugal**

**1. Has your government designed measurements of social progress that complements GDP, in accordance with target 17.18 of the SDGs? If so, what alternative indicators were designed and how? Have such measurements accounted for unpaid care, reproductive, and household work and, if so, how? Which mechanisms, if any, have been established to increase accountability towards improving the performance of the State according to such indicators? Please share any lessons learned from the use of such alternative measurements of progress and associated monitoring mechanisms.**

Among the set of official statistics produced within the scope of the National Statistical System, based on the fundamental principles established in the legal regime established by *Law no. 22/2008 of 13 May*, statistics are provided by the Statistics Portugal (INE) in various areas that complement the assessment of GDP, which is why Portugal considers that it has achieved SDGs 17.18.2 and 17.18.3.

Statistics Portugal has also developed a *specific publication* that provides a statistical overview of the national performance in relation to the SDGs. Half of the indicators used are mainly produced or disseminated within the National Statistical System, supplemented by other external sources when necessary. The information allows statistical monitoring of national performance from 2015 (the start of the 2030 Agenda) to the most recent year available.

It has also developed the *Portuguese Well-being Index (WBI)*, which illustrates the evolution of well-being through ten synthetic indices and reveals two dimensions: Material Living Conditions and Quality of Life. The two indices evolved in opposite directions in 2007 and in the periods 2010 to 2013 and 2017 to 2019, as well as in 2021. From 2017 onwards, the evolution of the quality of life stagnated and the material living conditions always increased in these years, with the exception of the year 2020. The Quality of Life index showed a positive trend until 2016 after which it remained more or less constant. The *Material Living Conditions Index* showed a negative trend between 2010 and 2013, reaching a minimum in 2013. From that year onwards, it increased until 2022, after which it only decreased in 2020. Over the period 2004-2022, eight out of the ten WBI domains show a positive evolution. Education, knowledge and skills, and personal security were those with the most favourable evolution.



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The value of unpaid work in the area of care and domestic work (the reproductive aspect was not addressed) was the subject of a study/project *'The value of unpaid work for women and men - care work and domestic work'*, carried out between 2020-2022 by a research team in partnership with the Commission for Equality in Work and Employment (CITE). The results show that the value of unpaid care and domestic work in Portugal will be at least €40 billion per year. The value of unpaid work done by women amounts to almost 70% of the total monetary value of care and domestic work. If it were included in the calculation of GDP, it would represent between 15.6 and 26.6 per cent of total GDP. The results of this study also indicate that it is likely that, by 2030, the relative weight of unpaid care provided by families, and within families mainly by women, is likely to fall from 44 % to 35 % of care consumption needs, although families will continue to play the most important role in this area. In contrast, the weight of care provided by the market would increase from 14% to 16%; by civil society organisations, from 21% to 24%; and by the state, from 21% to 26%.

**2. Which measures have been adopted, if any, to ensure that growth primarily benefits the bottom 40 per cent of the population, in accordance with SDG target 10.1? Have other tools to assess progress towards the reduction of inequalities been designed and implemented?**

Several measures have been adopted in Portugal, to ensure that growth primarily benefits the bottom 40 per cent of the population, in line with SDG target 10.1. Some of the most important of these measures are:

**Minimum wage increase:** Portugal has significantly increased the national minimum wage in recent years, in order to increase peoples' income and to contribute to reducing inequalities and to strengthening the productivity and competitiveness of the economy. As part of the social dialogue, the Government signed a *Medium-Term Agreement for Improving Incomes, Wages, and Competitiveness* with the social partners in 2022, and has reinforced it by signing *another agreement in 2023*.

The main objective was to increase the value of wages in Portugal, namely the share of wages in GDP, by at least three percentage points by 2026 and to converge with the European Union average, while establishing a multiannual trajectory for updating the national minimum wage, in a gradual, predictable and sustainable manner, with concrete annual targets. This measure will also directly contribute to the realisation of the SDGs, in particular SDG 1 ("No poverty"), SGD5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 ("Decent work and economic growth") and SGD 10 (Reducing inequalities).

**Social Welfare Programmes:** The Portuguese government has implemented various social welfare programmes to support the most vulnerable population groups, including families with children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. These programmes



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provide, among other things, financial assistance, housing support, and health services, (see Annex for more information).

**Access to education and training:** Portugal has invested in improving access to quality education and training (including free childcare) for all segments of the population, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This includes initiatives to combat early school leaving and to promote educational opportunities for disadvantaged students.

**Healthcare System:** The country has also implemented policies to ensure access to quality healthcare services for all citizens. This is achieved through a universal, tax-funded healthcare system that provides free or subsidised medical care to all residents. Established 50 years ago and facing new challenges, the system is currently being reformed to better meet its objectives.

In addition to these specific measures, Portugal has also designed and implemented tools to assess progress in reducing inequalities. Some of these tools are:

**Monitoring inequality:** The Portuguese government regularly monitors income and wealth inequalities to assess the impact of policies and evaluate progress towards reducing inequalities, including a *new report*. This monitoring helps to identify gaps and prioritise interventions to address them effectively.

**Equality impact assessments:** Various policies and initiatives in Portugal are subject to equality impact assessments. These assessments help to identify potential inequalities and ensure that policies do not disproportionately affect any particular group, especially the bottom 40 per cent.

**Social inclusion plans:** The Portuguese government has established social inclusion plans, which aim to address several dimensions of inequality simultaneously. These plans target areas such as employment, education, healthcare, housing, equal treatment, etc, in order to improve the overall well-being and opportunities for the most disadvantaged groups of the population.

The specific actions and instruments are foreseen at different levels in the various national strategies, in particular the overarching *Portugal 2030 Strategy*, which is structured around four thematic agendas for the country's development in 2030: (i) people first: a better demographic balance, greater inclusion, and less inequality; (ii) digitalisation, innovation, and skills as drivers of development; (iii) climate change and sustainability; and resource sustainability and (iv) a country that is competitive externally and cohesive internally. These agendas are materialised in other policy instruments such as the *Main Options for 2023-2026*, the *National Reform Programme*, and the programming of national and European funding instruments, including the *Recovery and Resilience Plan* and the *Portugal 2020 and 2030 Strategies*.



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Also noteworthy are the *National Strategy for Combating Poverty 2021-2030* and its *Action Plan*, the *National Strategy for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities 2021-2025*; the *Decent Work Agenda and Valuing Young People in the Labour Market*; the *National Strategy for the Rights of the Child*; the *National Child Guarantee Plan*; the *National Plan for Active and Healthy Ageing*; the *National Health Plan 2030*, the *National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030*; the *2nd National Youth Plan*; and the *National Energy and Climate Plan*.

**3. Which obstacles did the State encounter in its search for development pathways not dependent on economic growth, consistent with its economic sovereignty and the prioritization of the well-being of the population? Which enabling international environment should be established in order to encourage the search for such alternative development pathways?**

Amongst the many different and specific obstacles that exist in different areas, there are always general obstacles:

- Economic and financial constraints: Moving away from a growth-centric model poses challenges in terms of generating sufficient revenue to fund social programmes and maintain public services;
- Political resistance: The implementation of alternative development pathways faces resistance from vested interests, such as corporations and political actors who benefit from the current growth-oriented system;
- Trade and globalisation pressures: In a globalised economy, countries often face pressure to participate in competitive markets, which can hinder a shift towards alternative development paths;
- Technological constraints: Developing alternative pathways may require technological advances and innovation, which could be a barrier if the necessary infrastructure or knowledge is lacking.

To encourage the search for alternative development pathways, it would be important to promote:

- Multilateral cooperation and policy coordination: International efforts to promote inclusive sustainable development and well-being over growth-oriented policies, and coordinated efforts among countries, including through the sharing of best practices and knowledge on alternative development strategies;
- Financial support: International organisations and developed countries should provide financial and technical support and incentives to countries pursuing alternative development pathways to help them overcome economic and social



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constraints;

- Trade policy: The international trading system should prioritise fair trade practices that promote inclusive sustainable development and prioritise social and environmental well-being;
- Technological cooperation: International cooperation in research and development can help countries overcome technological limitations and foster innovation in alternative development pathways.

**4. The way societies conceive of work, relate to the environment, and finance their economies and welfare systems locks them into growth-oriented economic models. What measures should be taken to overcome such growth dependencies in each of these areas? And how can human rights guide efforts to overcome such self-reinforcement?**

Overcoming growth dependency while mainstreaming human rights requires a comprehensive and multi-level approach that challenges existing norms, promotes inclusive and sustainable practices, and prioritises societal well-being, with inclusive and sustainable growth over mere economic expansion.

For example, in terms of work, it is important to:

- Implement policies that support work-life balance and promote well-being and fulfilment beyond traditional economic measures;
- Ensure workers' rights, such as fair wages, safe and secure working conditions, and the right to unionize, and promote social justice and equitable distribution of resources;
- Promote safe and secure new forms of work, fair progression, and the value of unpaid work such as caregiving, volunteering, and community service.

With regard to social protection/welfare systems it is necessary to:

- Implement universal social protection systems that guarantee access to basic services, such as health care, education, housing, and social security for all, regardless of their economic contribution.
- Develop comprehensive social safety nets that respond to the diverse and evolving needs of individuals and communities and support their well-being throughout the life cycle.
- Ensure the principles of non-discrimination, equal opportunities, and inclusive participation in welfare systems to protect the rights of marginalised groups.



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Human rights should guide efforts to overcome vicious circles, in particular by upholding the principles of dignity, equality, and non-discrimination, ensuring that the transition to alternative models does not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable; empowering individuals through access to information, education, and participation, enabling them to voice their concerns and contribute to the transformation process (as exemplified by, the *Living Labs* in the Portuguese Poverty Reduction Strategy), and holding corporations accountable for respecting human rights, both domestically and globally, ensuring that their operations are aligned with sustainable and socially responsible practices.