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HOW INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT MATTERS TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE POPULATION

Some Statistical Evidence



Vienna, 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, agreed by all UN Member States in 2015, is a global action plan for people, planet and prosperity, which is relevant now and in the future. Building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets have been established to drive economic prosperity and social well-being while protecting the environment. The 2030 Agenda aims to leave no one behind and thus represents a shared blueprint for both developed and developing countries (UN, 2017).

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is fully committed to contributing to the achievement of the SDGs, while delivering on its mandate to support Member States in achieving inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID). SDG 9 calls for building resilient infrastructure, promoting sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation. Due to the SDG's interlinked nature, many of UNIDO's activities contribute to more than just SDG 9.

The main objective of this report is to provide statistical evidence on how closely industrial development is linked to people's living conditions and the quality of their lives. Countries' development is measured by their economic growth, defined in terms of rising levels of gross domestic product (GDP). The main disadvantage of using GDP as the main measure of development is that it does not capture important quality of life elements as well as inequalities, which are essential for the assessment of any community's well-being. It also disregards the effects that economic production and the associated increased demand for energy, food, services and consumer goods have on the environment

(Stiglitz et al., 2018).

Although 'well-being' has become a widely used term, promoted by both researchers and policymakers, there is no established definition. Well-being is a very broad concept that can be described by many dimensions and defining it has been the focus of many research papers (Dodge et al., 2012). Considering the significance of well-being for sustainable development, establishing well-designed measurement frameworks is crucial for policy-making (Llena-Nozal et al., 2019).

The OECD Framework for Measuring Well-Being and Progress was introduced to monitor not only the economic performance of countries, but people's living conditions as well. It builds around three distinct components: 1) material conditions, 2) quality of life, and 3) sustainability, each with their relevant dimensions. Based on this framework, the biennial OECD report "How's Life?" (OECD, 2017) presents a comprehensive set of internationally comparable well-being indicators for OECD and partner countries. At the same time, the OECD created the "Better Life Index" as a communication tool to engage directly with data users. The set of indicators is, however, dominated by subjective perspectives of the surveyed population (OECD, 2013).

The development of this framework to measure the level of well-being and its progress is a step towards making such information publicly available and to highlight priority areas for action followed by a reshaping of national policies. The available information allows researchers to extend the analysis by further indicators and to investigate potential linkages.

It is indisputable that the achievement of SDG 9 is linked to meeting the other Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. Inclusive and

sustainable industrialization drives sustained economic growth, the creation of decent jobs and income (SDG 8); it helps reduce poverty (SDG 1), hunger (SDG 2) and inequalities (SDG 5 and 10), while improving health and well-being (SDG 3), increasing resource and energy efficiency (SDG 6, 7, 11, 12) and reducing greenhouse gas and other polluting emissions, including from chemicals (SDG 13, 14, 15).

There is strong evidence that citizens living in developed industrialized countries enjoy far more prosperous and healthy lives than those who reside in least developed countries (LDCs) (Upadhyaya and Kepplinger, 2014). The former

benefit from high levels of education, better social security and health services, sophisticated transport and communication networks, and access to information, knowledge, technology and financial facilities required by businesses. This report presents empirical evidence on the correlation between industrial development and other dimensions of sustainable development, with a view to improving the understanding of these correlations among policymakers at both national and international level. The report does not, however, draw on the causal analysis of the variables under study.

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