

for Policy Innovations Transformative Change

Implementing the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development



UNRISD

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

UNRISD FLAGSHIP REPORT 2016

for **Policy Innovations** **Transformative Change**

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for Sustainable Development**



The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is an autonomous research institute within the United Nations system that undertakes interdisciplinary research and policy analysis on the social dimensions of contemporary development issues. Through our work, we aim to ensure that social equity, inclusion and justice are central to development thinking, policy and practice.

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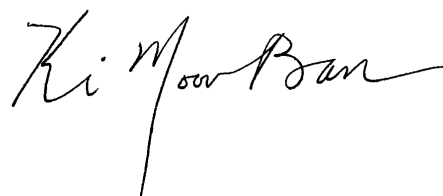
Foreword

Societies across the world are facing many complex and interwoven challenges—poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, demographic change, discrimination and violence—that threaten our efforts to enable people everywhere to live a peaceful, decent and dignified life on a healthy planet.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our shared plan to build that future. This report by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, *Policy Innovations for Transformative Change*, offers critical guidance on how countries can turn the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda into reality. It highlights the importance of addressing the root causes of problems, and of rebalancing the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

It shows how some governments—many of them in the Global South—are leading the way through inclusive political processes, new partnerships and new ways of approaching governance. The report also points to the critical role of civil society and movements in holding governments to account, as well as new forms of business that are explicitly incorporating social and environmental objectives.

We have much to learn in the years until 2030 about how to make this transformative change happen. Research by organizations like UNRISD will continue to play an important role in understanding the underlying processes and drivers of change, and in helping countries to learn from each other. At a time when resources are being stretched thinly across many challenges, it is crucial to maintain funding for research. We have a few short years to get things right. I commend the findings of this report to a wide global audience as we strive together to fulfil our promise to leave no one behind.



Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
October 2016

Acknowledgements

This report is the product of collective work by UNRISD staff and the collaborating researchers and partners in our networks around the globe. The report benefited greatly from conversations with numerous individuals on conceptual, methodological and case study issues as well as draft chapters. UNRISD gratefully acknowledges Sarah Cook, Director from 2009 to 2015, and Peter Utting, former Deputy Director and now Senior Research Associate, for their key role in kick-starting, supporting and framing this project. Paul Ladd, who joined UNRISD as Director in October 2015, has steered this project through turbulent times for the Institute and supported the report team with substantive comments, advice and guidance. Without his dedication, persistence and strong belief that UNRISD produces the kind of evidence and ideas that can support the international community to embark on a new pathway of transformation, this report would not have been possible.

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As a learning organization that aims to be inclusive of diverse perspectives and responsive to our constituents, we held a global online consultation on the draft report in July 2016. We are especially grateful for the thoughtful, substantive feedback received from the 58 participants in that consultation.

The evidence presented in the different chapters draws as much as possible on original UNRISD research conducted under the Institute's 2010-2015 research agenda, *Social Development in an Uncertain World*. This work was carried out in close collaboration with our networks and partners around the world and, importantly, in the Global South and reflects their views, methodologies and recommendations. Our aim is to bring this rich evidence and the diverse country experiences, showcasing both impressive achievements and protracted challenges, to the attention of policy makers and other political actors and stakeholders in an effort to understand and change, for the better, the complex challenges ahead of us.

As with all UNRISD activities, this report would not have been possible without the voluntary funding received from our institutional and project funders. We are especially grateful for the support received from the governments of Sweden, Switzerland and Finland in 2015-2016.

Report team

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- Chapter 2 was prepared by Ilcheong Yi, with inputs from Peter Utting and Giulia Scaroni
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- Chapter 4 was prepared by Peter Utting

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Jenifer Freedman coordinated the editorial and production side. The report benefited from the editorial support of Suroor Alikhan and Joannah Caborn Wengler. Sergio Sandoval produced the infographics, and designed the report based on a concept by Phoenix Design Aid; the layout and digital editions were prepared by Sergio Sandoval and David Vergari. Thanks are due to Alexander Denis, Daniela Dosseva and David Vergari for administrative support.

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