

## DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

# Rethinking Poverty: Strengthening ADB's Approach for an Inclusive and Equitable Future

Monday, 14 April 2025

2:00 pm, in person with hybrid option

ADB Innovation Hub

### Background

Economic growth has fundamentally changed lives in Asia and the Pacific, lifting more than 1.5 billion people out of poverty over just two generations.<sup>1</sup> In only one generation, poverty rates in our region dropped from 75% of the population to less than 10%.<sup>2</sup> A new middle class now enjoys significantly improved standards of living.

Despite these enormous achievements around 500 million people still do not have access to clean water and over 1 billion people lack access to sanitation.<sup>3</sup> And while standards of living have risen for the people who comprise the new middle class, they remain vulnerable to poverty arising from personal and climate shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the fragility of development as progress on poverty reduction stalled and 70 million people in the region fell back into poverty because of job losses, reduced incomes and increased health care costs. Converging new threats from climate events, conflict, food insecurity, and geopolitical turbulence threaten millions more. Poverty in all its dimensions and dynamism remains a fundamental development challenge, with 326 million people considered to be living in extreme poverty.

At ADB we are intensifying our efforts and reinforcing our deep commitment to addressing vulnerability, fighting poverty, and supporting lives and livelihoods, as highlighted in the mid-term review of ADB's Strategy 2030 and the new Corporate Results Framework (CRF). The new CRF favors more direct reporting on development results linked to the SDGs—focused on the SDG pillars of people, planet, and prosperity—and sets a target of 75% of ADB operations contributing to poverty reduction and inclusiveness by 2030.

### OBJECTIVE

This seminar is aimed at ADB staff, government counterparts, development partners and researchers. Experts will discuss the challenges and necessary actions as ADB accelerates its financing for the final five years of the SDGs and its own corporate strategy, *Strategy 2030*.<sup>4</sup> A panel of experts will address approaches to poverty reduction and inclusion, highlighting what is working in areas such as social protection, quality jobs and livelihoods, financial inclusion and equitable access to essential services like education, health and infrastructure. The seminar will provide new insights and practical solutions to tackling poverty and inequality. The seminar will also showcase ADB's enhanced methodology for the poverty and social analysis that is at the

<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum. 2023. [Cohesive societies, competitive economies: how to tackle remaining poverty in Asia and the Pacific](#).

<sup>2</sup> UNU-WIDER. 2020. [Research Brief: A snapshot of poverty and inequality in Asia](#).

<sup>3</sup> World Economic Forum. 2023. [Cohesive societies, competitive economies: how to tackle remaining poverty in Asia and the Pacific](#); ADB. 2023. [Neeta Pokhrel on the Asia and the Pacific Water Resilience Initiative](#).

<sup>4</sup> ADB. 2018. [Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific](#).

heart of to strengthening ADB project design to effectively address poverty and promote social inclusion.

**Panel**

- Lu Shen, (Chair), Director, Results Management and Aid Effectiveness, SPD (confirmed)
- Justine Diokno-Sicat, ADB Executive Director and chair of Development Effectiveness Review Committee (Opening Remarks and panelist) (confirmed)
- Keetie Roelen, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for the Study of Global Development, Open University UK (confirmed)
- Aniceto Orbeta President Philippines Institute of Development Studies (confirmed)
- Tina Alinsunurin, Associate Professor, University of the Philippines, Los Banos (confirmed)