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HOW SUSTAINABLE ARE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS? AN ANALYSIS OF THE STAPLE GOALS OF “NO POVERTY” AND “ZERO HUNGER”

Abstract:

In June 2012, The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The Conference, popularly known as Rio+20 produced a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which were officially launched at the conclusion of the target year of achieving the 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The objective of this paper is to analyze Goal 1 and Goal 2 of the SDG in relation to the set of 17 SDGs and with reference to the achievement of Goal 1 of the MDG.

The primary focus of the MDGs was eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Of the 8 MDGs adopted by the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, the first goal was “To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger”. Extreme poverty was defined as earning \$1.25 per day. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015 published by the United Nations shows that extreme poverty in developing countries has declined from 47 percent of total population in 1990 to 14 percent of total population in 2015. In terms of numbers, 836 million people in the developing countries still live in extreme poverty.

While eradication of poverty and hunger still remain the fundamental focus of the SDGs, the Rio+20 produced a set of more elaborate goals more than twice the number of MDGs. The first two SDGs are:

Goal 1: End poverty in all its form everywhere

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

The above two SDGs are further broken down into subsets of achievable goals with target dates ranging from 2025 to 2030.

The paper analyzes poverty “in all its form” and discusses the United Nation’s target dates of eradicating various forms of poverty. A historical analysis is presented about selecting the \$1.25 per day on the purchasing power parity basis as the yardstick for extreme poverty. In doing so, the paper analyzes the set of 17 SDGs as the basis for sustainability of economic development.

Keywords:

Sustainable development goals, Millennium development goals, Extreme poverty, Hunger, Purchasing power parity

JEL Classification: A10, C51, F01