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**(UN’s Sustainable Development Goal of Reduced Inequalities among and within Nations)**

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**1.0 Introduction**

One of the United Nation’s sustainable Development Goals (Goal 10) is Reduced Inequalities within and among Nations. Inequality is a major global problem that must be given serious attention due to its monumental impact on global economy, politics, business, international relations, health and security.

The level of inequality that exists within and among nations is quite overwhelming and therefore requires drastic measures. This presentation addresses relevant questions on the impact of inequality, the level of inequality that currently exists at global level, the possibility of achieving reduced inequality and changes that must happen for this goal to be achieved. It also examines the role of education in addressing inequality.

**2.0 Question 1:**

Why is UN’s goal of Reduced Inequalities important, in your own opinion?

**2.1 Answer:**

The UN’s goal of Reduced Inequalities is very important because inequalities have serious implications on economic, social and political issues of the world. Countries and societies with inequalities are more likely to have high statistics on the following:

1. Infant Mortality
2. Poor life expectancy figure
3. Imprisonment
4. Lack of trust
5. Insurgency and terrorism
6. Kidnapping for financial gain
7. Poor education or more children dropping out of schools
8. Poor health care
9. Mental illness
10. Youth restiveness
11. Insecurity
12. Hatred and violence against the privileged members of the societies

The issue of inequality must be given urgent global attention because of its attendant consequences in societies where it exists.

The world or society where there is wide gap between the rich and the poor is a time bomb waiting to explode and therefore it is absolutely important for drastic measures to be put in place to significantly reduce the level of inequality within and among the Countries. That’s one of the ways to achieve lasting peace and security in our societies. Regardless of the height and thickness of the fences built by the privileged few in our societies, one day the less privileged and extremely poor people among us will certainly pull down those walls and wreak havoc.

For instance, in my Country, Nigeria, the rich people got a serious signal about how serious the issue of inequalities is in our societies. During a nationwide mass protests against police brutality with the theme “EndSars”, the protesters used the occasion of the protest as opportunity to attack the rich privileged few who they perceived to have looted public fund resulting in extreme inequality in the societies. Properties belonging to those people worth billions of dollars were targeted and burnt down to ashes.

Most of the crimes in my Country such as insurgency, banditry, kidnaping people for financial gain etc are being perpetrated by less privileged and uneducated people who have been abandoned for several decades. Some of them are now taking up arms against the State and of course innocent members of the societies as a revenge for the perceived injustice done against them.

As a result of the situation in my Country, I agree perfectly with the statement made by one of the facilitators in the video recommended as study material for this course that “the opposite of poverty is not wealth but justice”. Poor people see poverty as injustice done against them by the rich.

The earlier the issue of inequality is addressed, the better for all of us. Any attempt to neglect the issue of inequality is like setting the roof on fire while going to sleep. It is certain that the sleep will last for too long.

**3.0 Question 2:**

How is the State of Inequalities in the world?

3.1 **Answer**

It is very worrisome that while the bottom 20%-40% of the world population only have access to less than 5% of the global wealth, the top 20% account for more 80% of the entire global wealth.

Statistics also revealed that about 1 billion people live below poverty line of about $2 dollars per day while about 1 billion people live well above the poverty line of about $80 dollars per day. This implies that about 5 billion people live in between extreme poverty and extreme wealth.

Majority of the people below poverty line don’t have access to clean water, washing machine, electricity, quality health care, quality education, cooking gas and critical infrastructure.

Several millions of people around the world still die of hunger and preventable disease such as malaria, typhoid and cholera. Millions of children are out of school and they are either hawking or begging on the street.

There are communities in Africa where people still drink from the same stream where cows and goats drink from.

**4.0 Question 3:**

What changes need to happen to achieve Reduced Inequalities?

**4.1 Answer:**

If the goal of reduced inequalities will be achieved, drastic measures will have to be put in place. It cannot be achieved by doing business as usual. The global community must see the problem as it is and then consciously and collectively work towards addressing it significantly. Specifically, the following changes need to take place as recommended by the united Nation:

1. There should be deliberate attempt to promote inclusive social and economic growth.
2. Every Country should eliminate discriminatory laws, policies and practices.
3. Ensure developing Countries are better represented in decision-making on global issues so that solutions can be more effective, credible and accountable.
4. Political, economic and social policies need to be universal and pay particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized communities.
5. Improve regulation of global financial market.
6. Responsible and well-managed migration policies.
7. Encourage development assistance and investment in least developed countries.
8. Ensure that wealth and political power are equally shared.
9. Ensure that every one has access to quality education.
10. Increase taxes paid by the rich and decrease taxes payable by the poor.

We cannot reduce the inequality by paying lip service to it. There must be a deliberate effort to reform the policies and systems that keep people in perpetual poverty in our society regardless of the efforts they make to overcome it. We can no longer continue to blame the poor for being poor without creating the environment and equal opportunities for them to live above the poverty line.

We need to do more than addressing the symptoms of inequality and pay attention to the root cause of inequality which is lack of equal access to wealth, power, education and opportunities.

**5.0 Question 4:**

Do you think it is possible to achieve Reduced Inequalities around the world? Why or why not?

**5.1 Answer:**

It is very possible to achieve inequality around the world. However, it is not going to be an easy task. We cannot achieve inequality by doing business as usual. The effects of COVID-19 have even led to higher level of inequality in the world. The poorest and least developed Countries have been worst hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regardless of the difficulty involved, if there is strong commitment on the part of all the stakeholders, it is still very possible to reduce the level of inequality within and around the Nation.

We cannot afford to become completely pessimistic as that will only complicate the problems. As a matter of fact, the level of inequality we are dealing with either locally or globally is something we created or allowed and if we created it, then we can reduce it even if it will not be completely eradicated.

We can actually draw inspiration from the progress made in the area of economic growth. At a point in history, nobody believe Countries like China, Singapore, Japan and several others could achieve the level of economic growth that they have been able to record over the years. It once looked impossible but with determination and focus, what looked impossible became possible.

In the same vein, through collective effort and deliberate change in policies, I believe the goal of reduced inequality is also possible.

Another reason why it is possible is because some others Nation like Costa Rica, Sweden and even Rwanda have made tremendous progress in reducing the social inequality. It is even more surprising considering the fact that Costa Rica and Rwanda have modest GDP.

We also need to be more optimistic about achieving the goal of Reduced Inequality because the World leaders had made commitment to make it happen and we should trust them to deliver on their promise. What we need to do is hold them accountable through advocacy and continuous discussion in this regard.

**6.0 Question 5:**

How Can Education lead to a world with Reduced Inequality?

**6.1 Answer:**

Education is the most critical equalizer and leveler of inequality around the world. With quality education, the income gap between the poor and the rich can be reduced. Researches have shown that increased education will lead to increased earning. This is due to the fact that education gives access to jobs and opportunities with better income.

I came from extremely poor family background with illiterate parents but due to access to education, my social and economic status has changed dramatically. From first-hand experience, I understand how important education is in bridging the gap between the rich and the poor or between privileged and less privileged.

Schools also provide a very significant opportunity for the children from the rich and poor families to meet together regularly at the same places and become colleagues and friends. They can even end of marrying themselves. In the course of pursuing my education to master degree level, I have met people from different social and economic classes that ordinarily I wouldn’t have been able to meet except for schooling opportunity.

Education also provides ordinary and less privileged citizens the opportunity to be aware of and exercise their right to make input into or challenge the structures and policies that affect their lives. It has been established that as the level of education rises, the level of civic and political engagement also increases.

Education also play a major role in reducing the gender inequality in terms of income, poverty and political power of participation. The more educated women are, the closer their earnings are to those of men. Similarly, the more educated women are, the more they are likely to have power over their lives especially regarding the choice of who they marry and the number of children they will have.

The level of women education also have impact on their health and the health of their children. The rate of infant mortality among educated women is completely lower than that of uneducated ones.

**7.0 Question 6:**

How can education improve in your community so that the next generation has the tools and mindset to obtain reduced inequality?

**7.1 Answer:**

The nature and quality of education that is being delivered will go a long way to determine whether it will enhance reduced inequality or not. For education to provide the next generation with the tools and mindset required to obtain reduced inequalities, it must be improved in the following ways:

1. **It must be affordable and accessible to all:** Education will not lead to reduced inequality if it is only affordable for the children of the rich. It will only widen the level of inequality the more. However, affordability should not in any way imply poor quality. In this regard, it will require a deliberate policy and concerted effort for government to make education affordable and qualitative at the same time. One of the reasons why we have about 10 million out of school children in my Country, Nigeria is because some of those children are from extremely poor family and therefore their parents cannot afford to pay for their education.
2. **It must be public Driven**: Leaving important issue like education in the hands of private practitioners and investors is recipe for disaster as it affects achieving SDG of reduced inequalities because their major interest is profit-making as against inclusive literacy.
3. **There must be increased Government Funding**: In line with the World Bank recommendation, Countries especially the developing ones must invest considerable percentage of their annual budget on a consistent basis to cover up for the inequalities and deficit created by several years of neglect.
4. **Investment in Training of Teachers**: For education to be qualitative enough to become tool of achieving reduced inequalities, the teachers providing the education must be adequately trained and empowered to carry out their responsibilities professionally. They also need to be well paid and highly motivated. In most of least developed Countries, teachers are owed salaries for several months. It is most certain that such underpaid and poorly motivated teachers may not offer the best of service.

**8.0 Conclusion:**

The U.N’s sustainable Development Goal of reduced inequality is very important because it has serious social, economic and political implications within and among nations. Countries and Societies with high inequality have high rate of socio-economic problems like poverty, insecurity, infant mortality, lack of trust and lot more.

The level of inequality in the world presently is still quite alarming. The bottom 20%-40% of the world population only have access to less than 5% of the global wealth, the top 20% account for more 80% of the entire global wealth.

If the goal of reduced inequalities will be achieved, drastic measures will have to be put in place such as eliminating discriminatory laws and policies as well as ensuring equal access to wealth, power, education and opportunities.

The task of reducing inequality is quite difficult especially with the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. However, the goal is very possible if there would be strong commitment on the part of all the relevant stakeholders.

Finally, education plays a major role in reducing inequalities as it gives access to better jobs and increased income. It bridges the gap between the rich and poor and it reduces gender disparities. However, for the education to lead to reduced inequalities, it be accessible and affordable by all and sundry. It must be qualitative and pubic driven.

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