



COMCEC

**CCO BRIEF**  
**ON**  
**POVERTY**  
**ALLEVIATION**

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE  
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# CCO BRIEF ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

## I. Introduction

Between 1990 and 2015, extreme poverty (people living on less than \$1.90 a day) was cut in half, one of the most significant achievements in poverty reduction. The global extreme poverty rate fell from nearly 36 percent in 1990 to about 10 percent in 2015. This progress was driven by rapid economic growth in countries such as China, India and other parts of Asia, which lifted millions of people out of poverty.

As of 2023, around 9% of the global population, or about 713 million people, live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$2.15 per day. This figure is a slight upward revision due to updated data, but it is expected to decline to approximately 692 million by the end of 2024. This represents continued, though gradual, progress in reducing extreme poverty despite setbacks from global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite global progress, poverty reduction has been uneven. Poverty rates remain high in sub-Saharan Africa, and in many countries, poverty remains entrenched, with little progress in recent decades. Even in regions where poverty has been reduced, income inequality remains a challenge. Economic growth has not always been inclusive, and wealth inequality has increased in many countries. While progress in reducing monetary poverty has been remarkable, challenges such as inequality, regional disparities, and the lingering effects of the pandemic show that the fight against poverty is far from over.

The COVID-19 outbreak has disrupted economies and worsened the state of poverty worldwide. By paralyzing daily life in many ways, the outbreak has had a devastating impact on the global economy, causing recession and downsizing. Most businesses have struggled to continue operations, and large numbers of people have lost their jobs. The situation of the poor is much more fragile.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic wiped out several years of poverty reduction efforts. While the economic contraction caused by COVID-19 in the OIC countries was relatively slow, the impact on poverty has been drastic. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase of more than 13 million poor people in OIC countries from 2019 to 2021. Despite this background, the policy response in the OIC member countries has been slower than in the rest of the world.

The global spiral of high inflation caused by the pandemic, as well as the wars and other political problems that have arisen in recent years, have on the one hand led to an increase in poverty, and on the other hand, the fight against poverty has taken a back seat. Therefore, poverty reduction has become a development issue that requires more attention and more effort from international development cooperation.

Twenty-one of the forty-six countries on the list of Least Developed Countries are members of the OIC, and poverty is a very serious problem in these countries. Therefore, poverty alleviation is one of the permanent agenda items of the COMCEC.

The COMCEC Strategy identified poverty alleviation as one of the cooperation areas and Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG) was established with the strategic objective of “eradicating extreme poverty and hunger in the member countries.”

## II. Poverty Alleviation Efforts under the COMCEC

Natural disasters have become more frequent and severe worldwide in recent decades, driven by factors such as climate change, population growth, urbanization, and environmental

degradation. The climate crisis is intensifying events like heatwaves, droughts, storms, floods, and wildfires each year.

The poor segments of societies are particularly susceptible due to limited resources, weak infrastructure, and inadequate social support systems. Therefore, efforts to reduce the impact of natural disasters should focus on enhancing the resilience of disadvantaged communities. These endeavours include investing in early warning systems, improving infrastructure, strengthening disaster preparedness and response, and adopting sustainable development strategies that account for rising climate risks.

Due to the importance of the subject, the Poverty Alleviation Working Group has dedicated its Meetings in 2024 to the issue of reducing the adverse effects of natural disasters on the poor. In this respect, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Meetings of the PAWG were virtually held on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 and 16-17 September 2024 in Ankara, Türkiye respectively, with the theme “Alleviating Adverse Effects of Natural Disasters on Poor Segments of Society in the OIC Member Countries.”

#### **A. Alleviating Adverse Effects of Natural Disasters on Poor Segments of Society in the OIC Member Countries**

##### **(22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Meetings of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group)**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group was held virtually on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024 with the theme “Alleviating Adverse Effects of Natural Disasters on Poor Segments of Society in the OIC Member Countries.” The 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Working Group was held on 16-17 September 2024 in Ankara, Türkiye with the same theme.

A policy guide on the same theme is being prepared for two consecutive COMCEC PAWG Meetings (22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>). While the first draft version of the report was submitted to the 22<sup>nd</sup> PAWG meeting, the final version of the guide was submitted to the 23<sup>rd</sup> PAWG meeting.

The guide includes background and key concepts of natural disasters and their adverse effects on poor segment of the society, and reviews the experiences and recommended practices from the OIC as well as non-OIC countries. Moreover, the guide covers four case country analyses from OIC Member Countries namely Egypt, Indonesia, Türkiye and Uganda backed by field visits with government agencies and NGOs.

The guide also aims to shed light on the significant challenges faced by OIC Member Countries in addressing the issue of adverse impacts of natural disasters on poor segments of society. This guide highlights the key challenges faced by disadvantaged populations following natural disasters and emphasizes the urgent need for targeted interventions to address displacement, exposure, and humanitarian needs, ensuring equitable access to assistance and support for all affected populations.

Furthermore, the guide provides an overview of displacement, exposure, and humanitarian needs in the context of natural disasters in the OIC member countries. The guide also addressed the disaster management practices to assess disaster resilience and management among OIC member countries, with a focus on the needs and vulnerabilities of poor communities. Moreover, the guide indicates that while many countries have DRR strategies, significant gaps remain, particularly in budget allocations, staff shortages, and the inclusion of exposed groups in DRR plans.

The Guide also highlights that disasters exacerbate socio-economic vulnerabilities, pushing millions into poverty annually, but resilient infrastructure and social cohesion can mitigate these

impacts. The final version of the guide included policy recommendations on the effective ways of strengthening resilience against disasters in the OIC Member Countries.

The guide providing a roadmap for the Member Countries to address the issues of adverse impacts of natural disasters was also elaborated in detail during the 23rd Meeting. After fruitful discussions, 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting has come up with the following policy recommendations to be submitted to the 40th COMCEC Ministerial Session.

- *Developing a comprehensive and culturally tailored awareness campaign aimed at educating poor segments of populations in OIC Member Countries about disaster risk reduction (DRR) during the initial development stage of the DRR strategy*
- *Developing/improving governance framework through identifying the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes of all stakeholders involved in DRR*
- *Planning and designing robust communication systems, integrated information systems and early warning mechanisms that are inclusive and accessible to all, particularly poor populations, as part of the DRR strategy development stage*
- *Developing/improving international disaster risk reduction standards by taking into consideration international good practices and experiences of global networks during the development stage of the DRR strategy to strengthen the resilience of poor segments of society*
- *Implementing a structured, adaptive, and responsive annual work program, ensuring that all targeted tasks, milestones, and resource allocations are meticulously tracked and adjusted in real-time to effectively address the adverse effects of natural disasters on poor segments of society*
- *Actively engaging and integrating all relevant stakeholders into the operational phases of disaster risk reduction in OIC countries, ensuring their insights are continuously applied and their roles are clearly defined to enhance the effectiveness of DRR activities*
- *Fostering continuous knowledge exchange and capacity-building during the implementation phase ensures that all stakeholders, including local communities and government agencies, are well-equipped to respond effectively to disasters*
- *Developing a framework within the monitoring stage of the DRR strategy that focuses on regularly evaluating specific criteria, metrics, and key performance indicators (KPIs) designed to measure the immediate and long-term impacts of DRR efforts on the poor segments of society*
- *Developing mechanisms for regular evaluations that directly utilize the insights gained during the monitoring process to update strategic plans and optimize resource allocation for DRR in OIC countries, with a focus on reducing weaknesses among poor segments of society*
- *Improving the monitoring stage of the DRR strategy that includes the ongoing collection and processing of high-quality, timely data specific to the needs of poor communities by leveraging advanced technologies to enhance data-driven decision-making*

**B. COMCEC Project Funding**

COMCEC Project Funding (CPF) is the other important instrument of the Strategy. Projects financed under the CPF serve cooperation among member countries and are designed in accordance with the objectives and the expected outcomes defined by the Strategy in the poverty alleviation section. Projects also play important roles in realization of the policy recommendations formulated by the member countries during the PAWG meetings.

In 2024, 2 projects have been selected in the area of poverty alleviation to be implemented as follows: The first project’s title is “Developing Policy Framework Capacity in the Field of Social Security After Natural Disasters” and the project is being implemented by Türkiye with the partnership of Azerbaijan, Malaysia, Tunisia, SESRIC. The project aims at producing better policies and strengthening member countries’ preparedness and swift response capacity by discussing the possible measures and good practices. In this regard, Conference and Workshop will be organized in the project.

The second project, titled as “Empowering Youth through Enhancing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): A Pathway to Employment and Success” is being implemented by SESRIC for the benefit of 15 Member Countries. The main objective of the project is to identify key factors for improving TVET strategies and increase the capacities of the staff working in relevant areas of TVET. In this regard, training and workshop will be organized in the project.

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