Ending Poverty & Boosting Prosperity on a Livable Planet – An overview of the updated mission of the World Bank

DEAN JOLLIFFE, WORLD BANK
9 JANUARY 2025

PIP
Poverty & Inequality Platform
THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA

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What does it mean to be a *poverty economist* at the World Bank?

I: Overview of the “World Bank”

Examples of poverty & inequality analytics at the World Bank

II: Overview of the Poverty, Prosperity & Planet Report (2024)

III: Measurement challenges – research opportunities

IV: Efforts to improve transparency & understanding of poverty estimates

I. Overview of the World Bank –

Focus on poverty & inequality analytics at the World Bank

WHAT IS THE WORLD BANK?

- An international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low- and middle-income countries for the purposes of economic development. It is composed of two arms, IDA and IBRD.
- Its mission is to end poverty & boost prosperity on a livable planet.
- It also does a lot of analytical work, some related, some unrelated to loans/grants.

IDA

International Development Association

Interest-free loans and grants to governments of poorest countries

IBRD

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Low-Interest rate, flexible loans to governments of credit-worthy, low-income and middle- income countries

DRIVING ACTION, MEASURING RESULTS

The World Bank Group contributes to impactful, meaningful development results around the world. In the first half of fiscal 2024*, we:

Helped feed **156 million people**

Improved schooling for
280 million students

Reached **287 million people** living in poverty with effective social protection support†

Provided healthy water, sanitation, and/or hygiene to
59 million people

Enabled access to sustainable transportation for
77 million people

Provided **17 gigawatts** of renewable energy capacity

Committed to devote **45 percent** of annual financing to climate action by 2025, deployed equally between mitigation and adaptation

In fiscal 2024, the Bank Group announced the development of a new Scorecard that will track results across 22 indicators—a fraction of the previous 150—to provide a streamlined, clear picture of progress on all aspects of the Bank Group's mission, from improving access to healthcare to making food systems sustainable to boosting private investment.

For the first time, the work of all Bank Group financing institutions will be tracked through the same set of indicators. The new Scorecard will track the Bank Group's overarching vision of ending poverty on a livable planet.

WHY IS THE WORLD BANK WORKING ON POVERTY AND INEQUALITY?

1. **Awareness:** Educating and creating awareness about poverty and inequality among policy makers, civil society, and academia.
2. **Fund allocation:** Prioritizing resources *across countries* requires having some idea of how poor countries are
3. **Program effectiveness:** Prioritizing resources *within countries* requires having some idea of where the poor live
4. **Program design:** Understanding what reforms are most conducive to reductions in poverty and inequality requires knowing who is poor
5. **Public good:** Creating public-goods of knowledge and data allows for increased use of evidence-based decision making
6. **Monitoring:** Tracking progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals

WHO WORKS ON POVERTY AND INEQUALITY AT THE WORLD BANK?

- **Research Group:** Somewhat similar to doing research at a university, but instead of teaching, a third of the time is spent assisting World Bank operations
- **Data Group (typically global):** In charge of a data products (eg PIP), some time allocated to directed research (often related to improving data products)
- **Chief Economist Offices (typically region focus):** Produce reports on a particular region or thematic area, a fraction of the time is allocated to directed research (related to the region or thematic area).
- **Poverty & Equity Global Practice (typically country focus, largest mass):**
  - Aims to ensure WB loans are conducive to reducing poverty and inequality
  - Helps countries field household surveys and measure poverty
  - Produce publishable knowledge products, specific to country focus
  - Writes reports on poverty developments in a country (w country engagement)

Example of Poverty & Equity Global Practice – Afghanistan Poverty Assessment "Report"

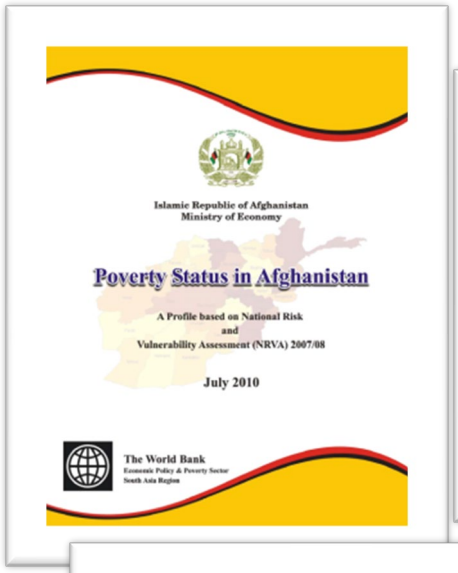
Afghanistan Poverty Assessment

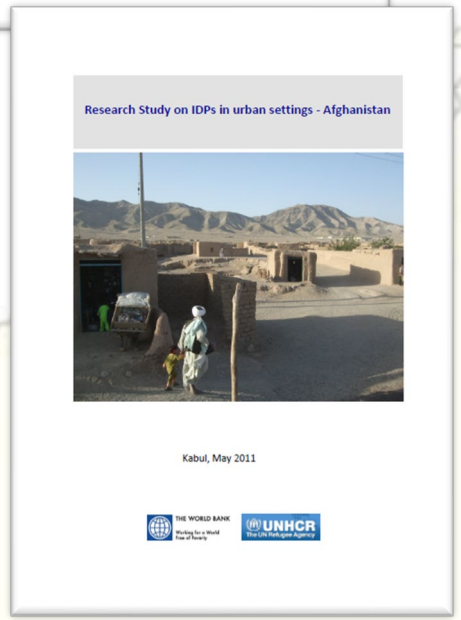
Poverty Status in Afghanistan
- Report (English)
- Report (Dari)
- Launch Presentation
- Full Presentation (Powerpoint)
- Press Release (English)
- Press Release (Dari)
- Methodology Report
- Methodology Presentation

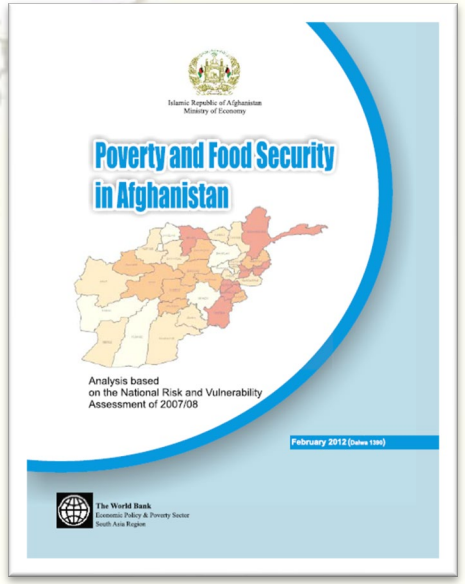
Provincial Briefs
- Report (English)
- Report (Dari)
- Press Release (English)
- Press Release (Dari)
- Press Release (Pashto)

Internal Displacement and Poverty
- Report (English)
- Policy Brief (English)
- Policy Brief (Dari)
- Launch Presentation
- Press Release (English)
- Press Release (Dari)
- Press Release (Pashto)

Food Security and poverty
- Report (English)
- Report (Dari)
- Launch Presentation
- Press Release (English)
- Press Release (Dari)
- Press Release (Pashto)
- Technical Paper (Food Prices)
- Technical Paper (Food Prices and Poverty)







Example of Poverty & Equity Global Practice – Bangladesh Poverty Assessment "Report"

- Poverty Report – WB product
- Special Issue of Bangladesh Development Studies (joint w BIDS)
  - 6 papers based on the Report
  - Indexing BDS, Public Access
- Small area estimates of poverty for policy (joint w GoB)
  - Poverty maps used in social protection programs
- Decades-long relationship w BD NSO (BBS)
  - Standardization, questionnaire design, sample design, analytical guidance

II. Overview of the Poverty, Prosperity & Planet Report (2024)

Joint report of the Data Group, Research Group and Poverty Global Practice

Lead Authors (TTLs):
Maria Eugenia Genoni
and Christoph Lakner

POVERTY, PROSPERITY, AND PLANET REPORT 2024

https://www.worldbank.org/3pr

THE WORLD BANK HAS A STATED MISSION:

ENDING EXTREME POVERTY AND BOOSTING SHARED PROSPERITY ON A LIVABLE PLANET

- The first post-pandemic assessment of global progress on this interlinked agenda shows:
  - The world **will not meet the SDG1 by 2030**. At the current pace, it would take decades to eradicate extreme poverty and more than a century to lift people above $6.85 per day.
  - Progress in reducing the **Global Prosperity Gap**, the World Bank's new measure of shared prosperity, **ground to a standstill** since the pandemic.
  - Nearly **one in five people are at risk of experiencing welfare losses due to an extreme weather** event from which they will struggle to recover.

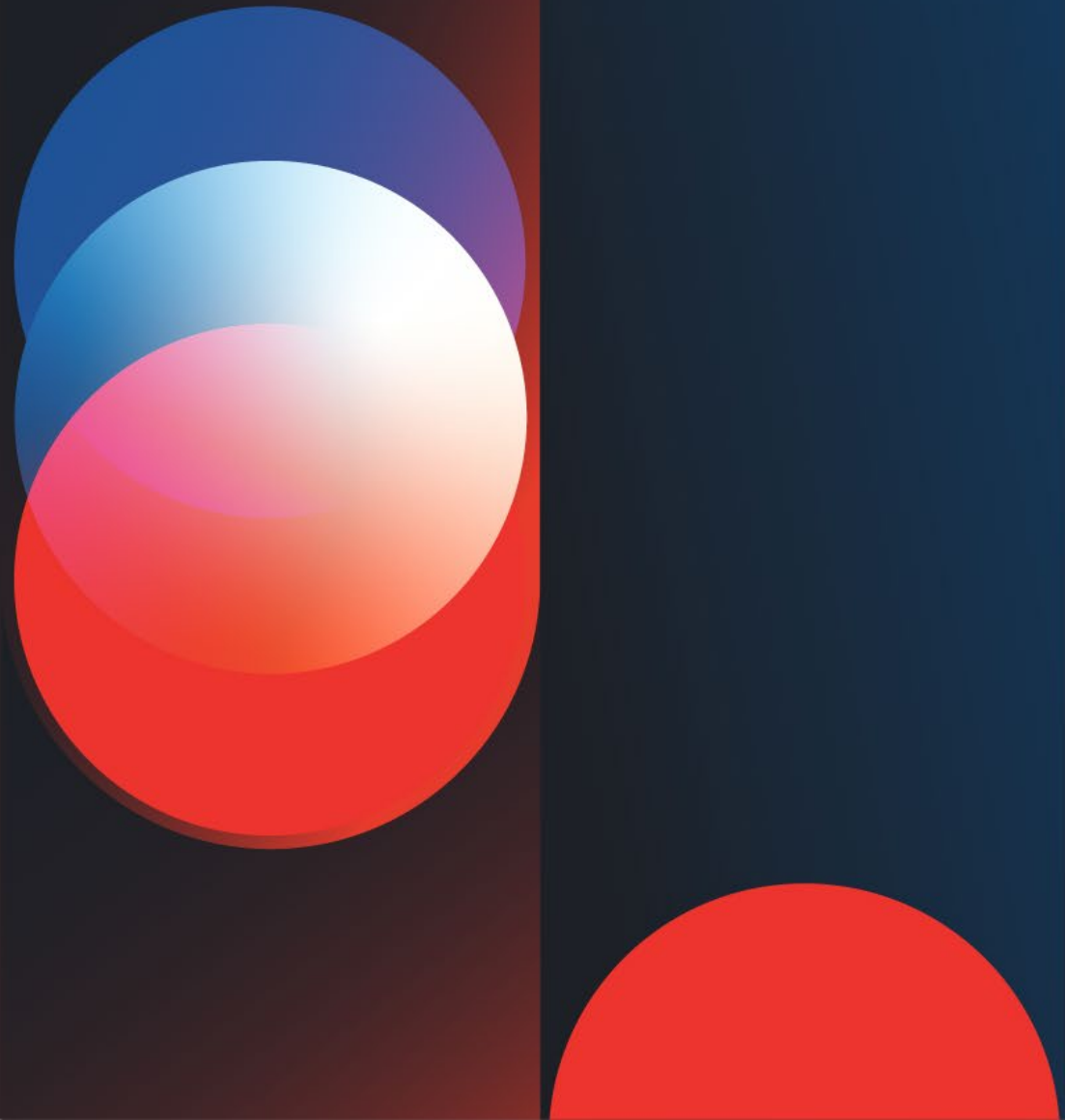
THERE IS A NEED TO PRIORITIZE DEPENDING ON WHERE COUNTRIES STAND ON THE INTERLINKED GOALS

- We explore different potential pathways out of the polycrisis taking seriously the **trade-offs and complementarities** across objectives that are embedded in different policies.
- Doing **what matters where it matters the most**:

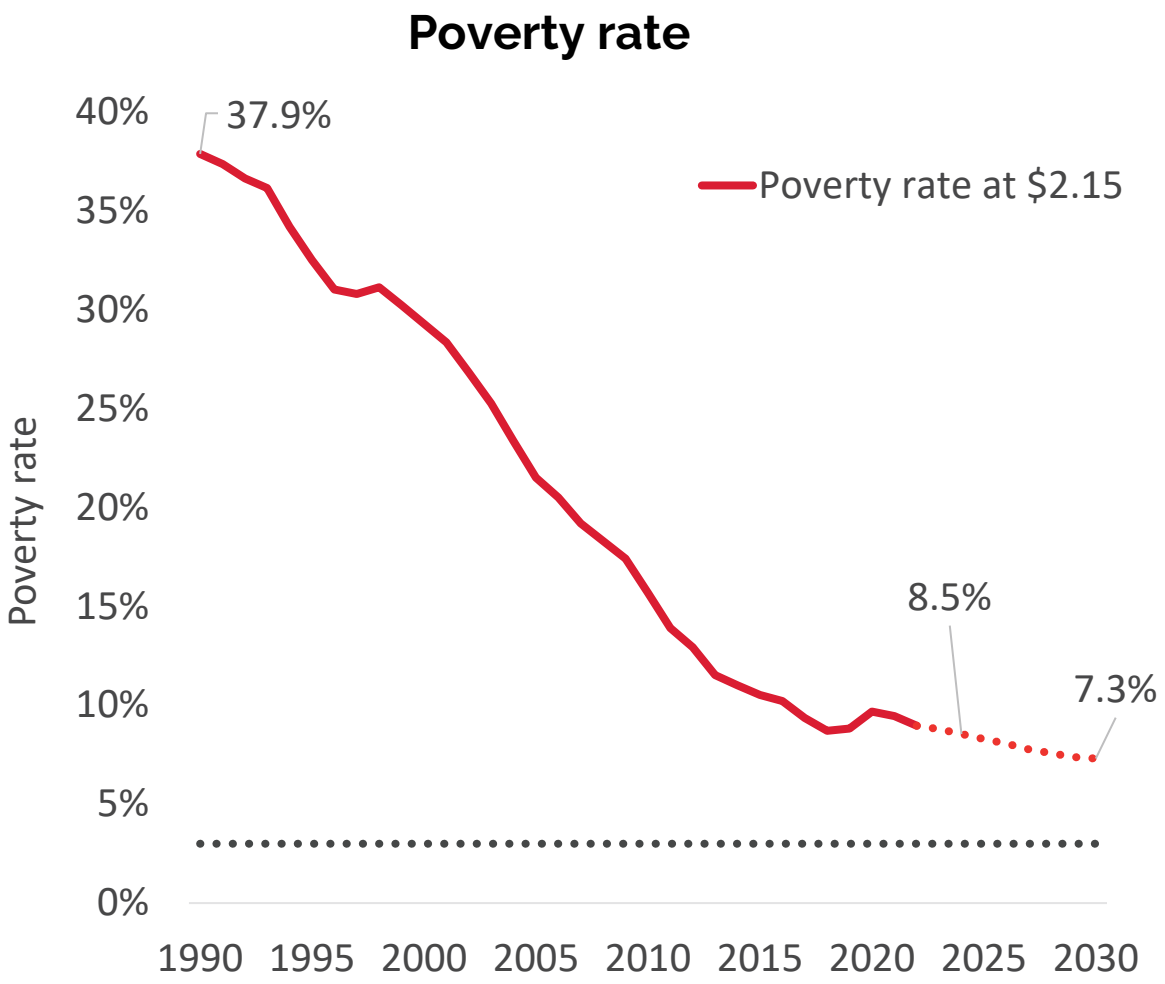
Low-income and fragile countries	Middle-income countries	High-income and upper-middle-income countries with high emissions
Prioritize poverty reduction by fostering investment in human, physical, and financial capital	**Prioritize income growth** that reduces vulnerability while scaling up **synergistic actions**	**Accelerate mitigation** while managing transition costs

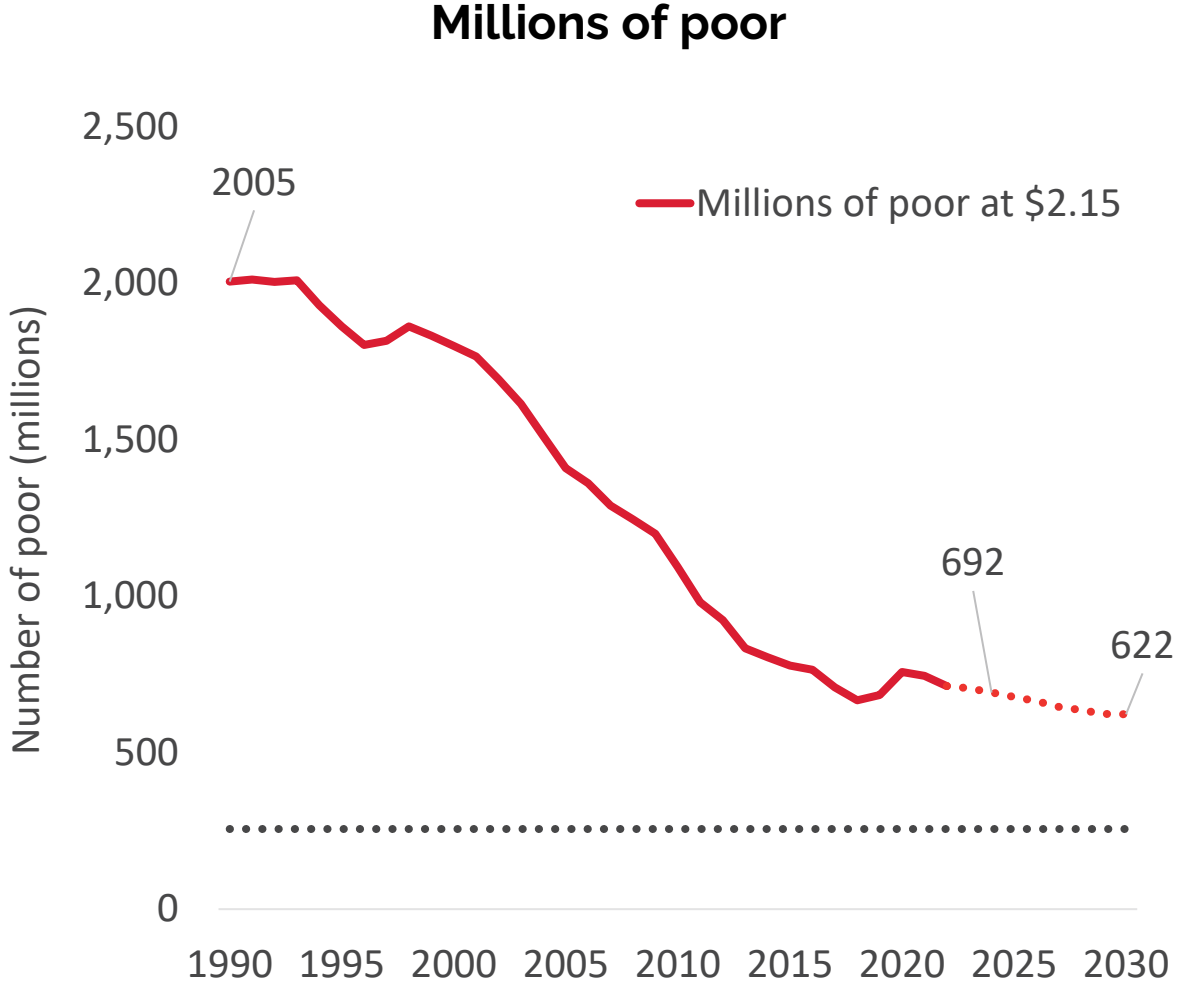
Progress

GLOBAL POVERTY REDUCTION AND IMPROVEMENTS IN SHARED PROSPERITY HAVE STALLED



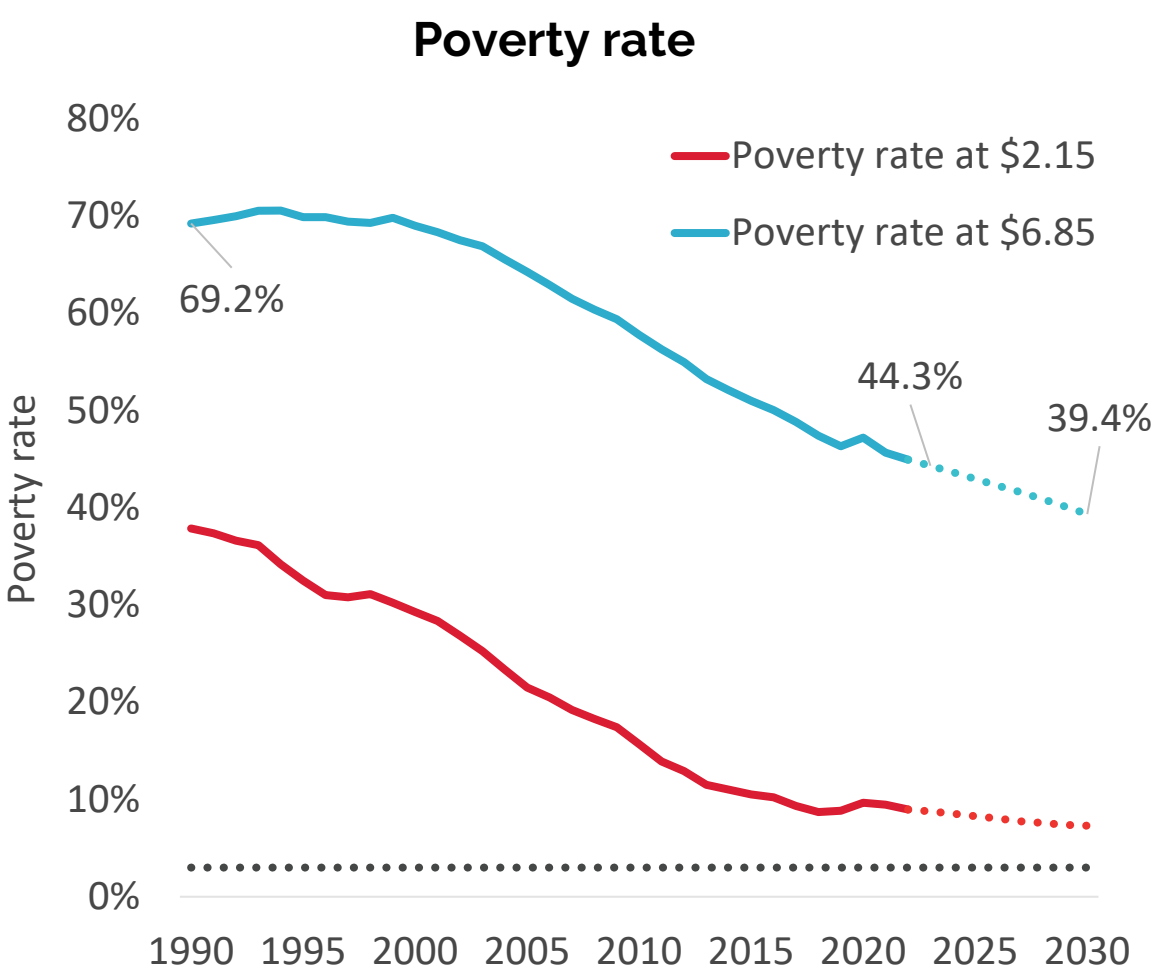
EXTREME POVERTY REDUCTION HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT, BUT OVER LAST DECADE, THE PACE HAS SLOWED TO A NEAR HALT

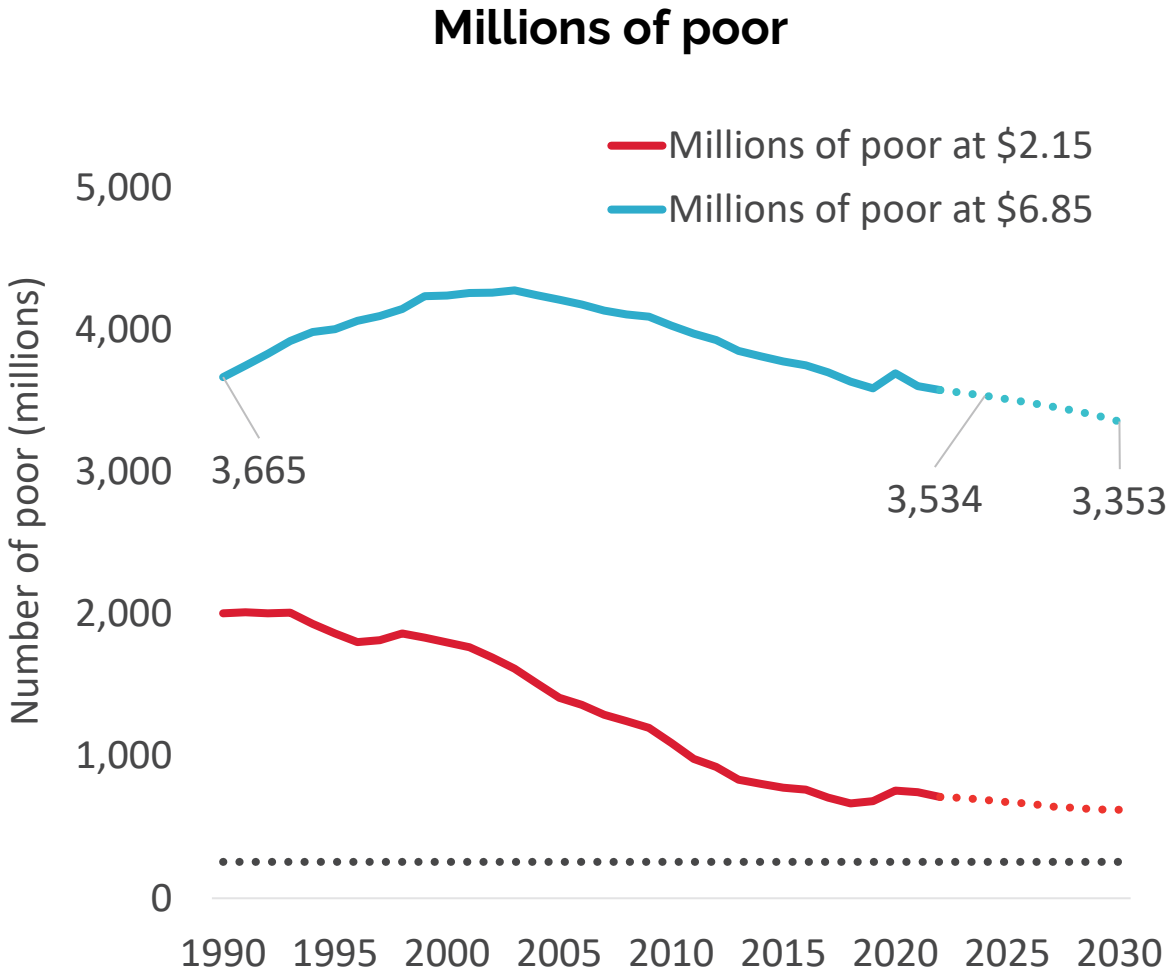




Source: pip.worldbank.org; horizontal dotted line shows 3% or 3% of global population in 2030.

AT A HIGHER STANDARD (BACKGROUND ON NEXT SLIDE), **NUMBER OF POOR PEOPLE UNCHANGED SINCE 1990**





Source: pip.worldbank.org; horizontal dotted line shows 3% or 3% of global population in 2030.

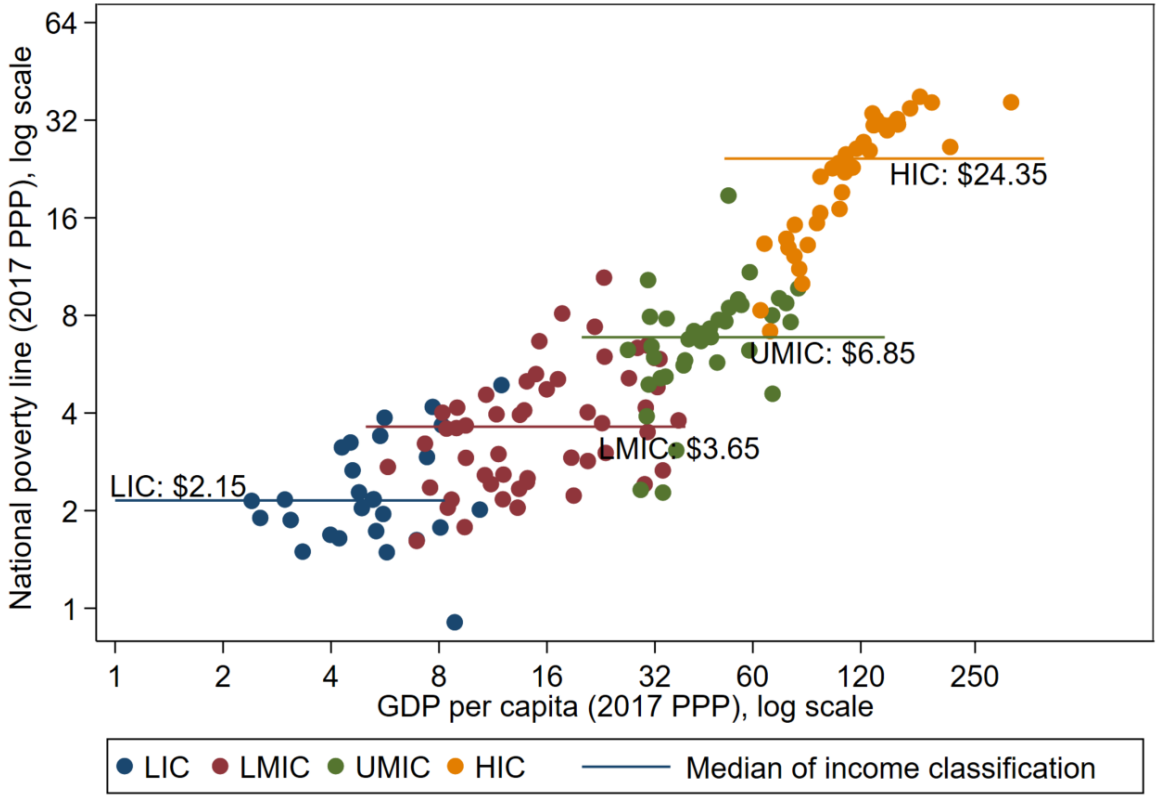
Background: International poverty lines (IPL), 2011 & 2017 PPPs

Income classification	Median ($) (2011 PPP)	Rounded	Obs	Median ($) (2017 PPP)	Rounded	Observa-tions
Low income (LIC)	1.91	**1.90**	33	2.15	**2.15**	28
Lower-middle income (LMIC)	3.21	**3.20**	32	3.63	**3.65**	54
Upper-middle income (UMIC)	5.48	**5.50**	32	6.85	**6.85**	37
High income (HIC)	21.7		29	24.36	**24.35**	38

1. Previous IPLs estimated on noncomparable national poverty lines, and only for few countries

2. Method for extracting national poverty lines, in per capita terms, for all countries in PIP.

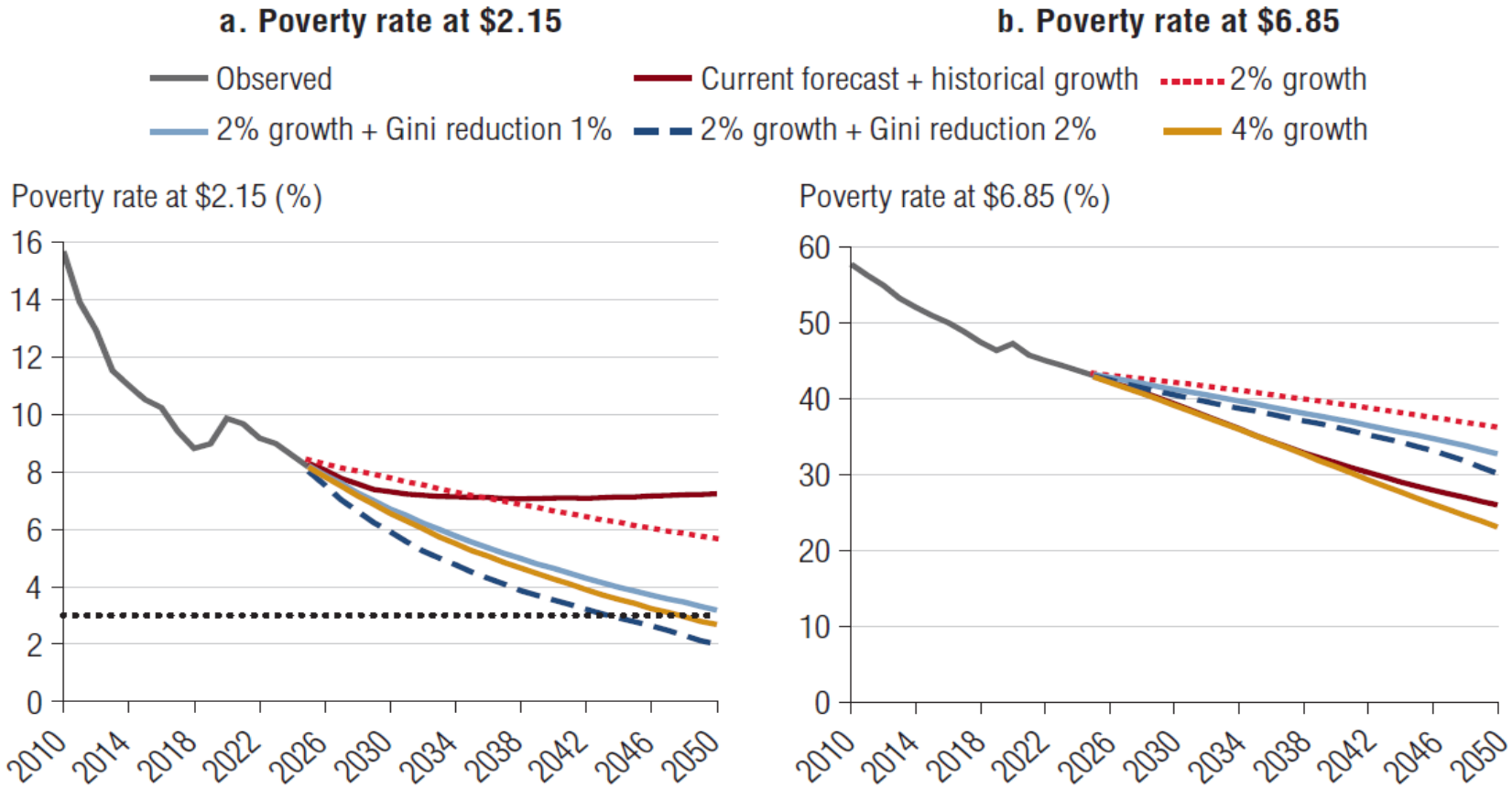
Jolliffe, D., Prydz, E.B., 2016. "Estimating international poverty lines from comparable national thresholds". *Journal of Economic Inequality* 14, 185–198. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10888-016-9327-5



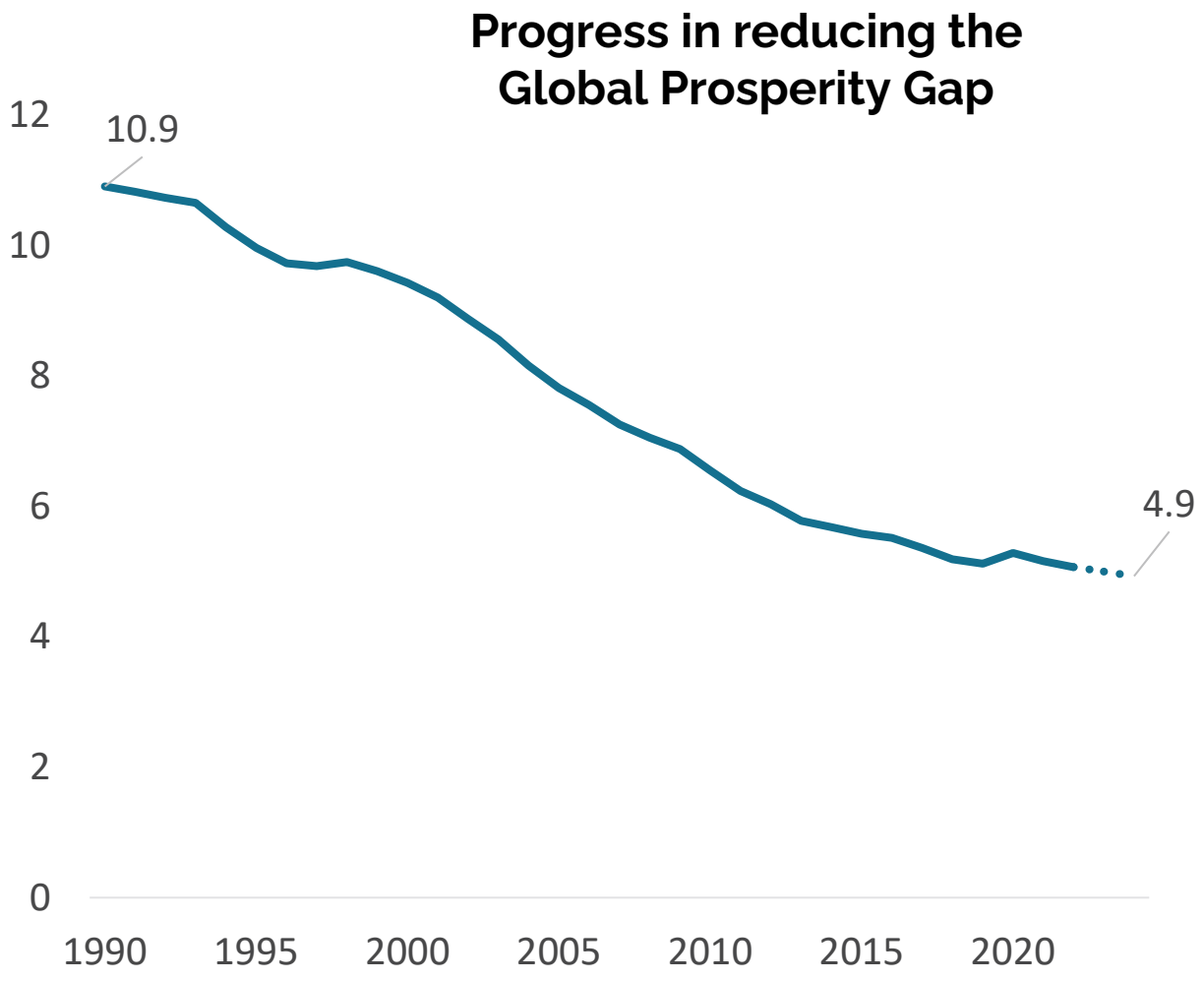
FORECASTING POVERTY: OFF PATH TO ELIMINATE EXTREME POVERTY; STEADY PROGRESS WHEN MEASURED AT $6.85

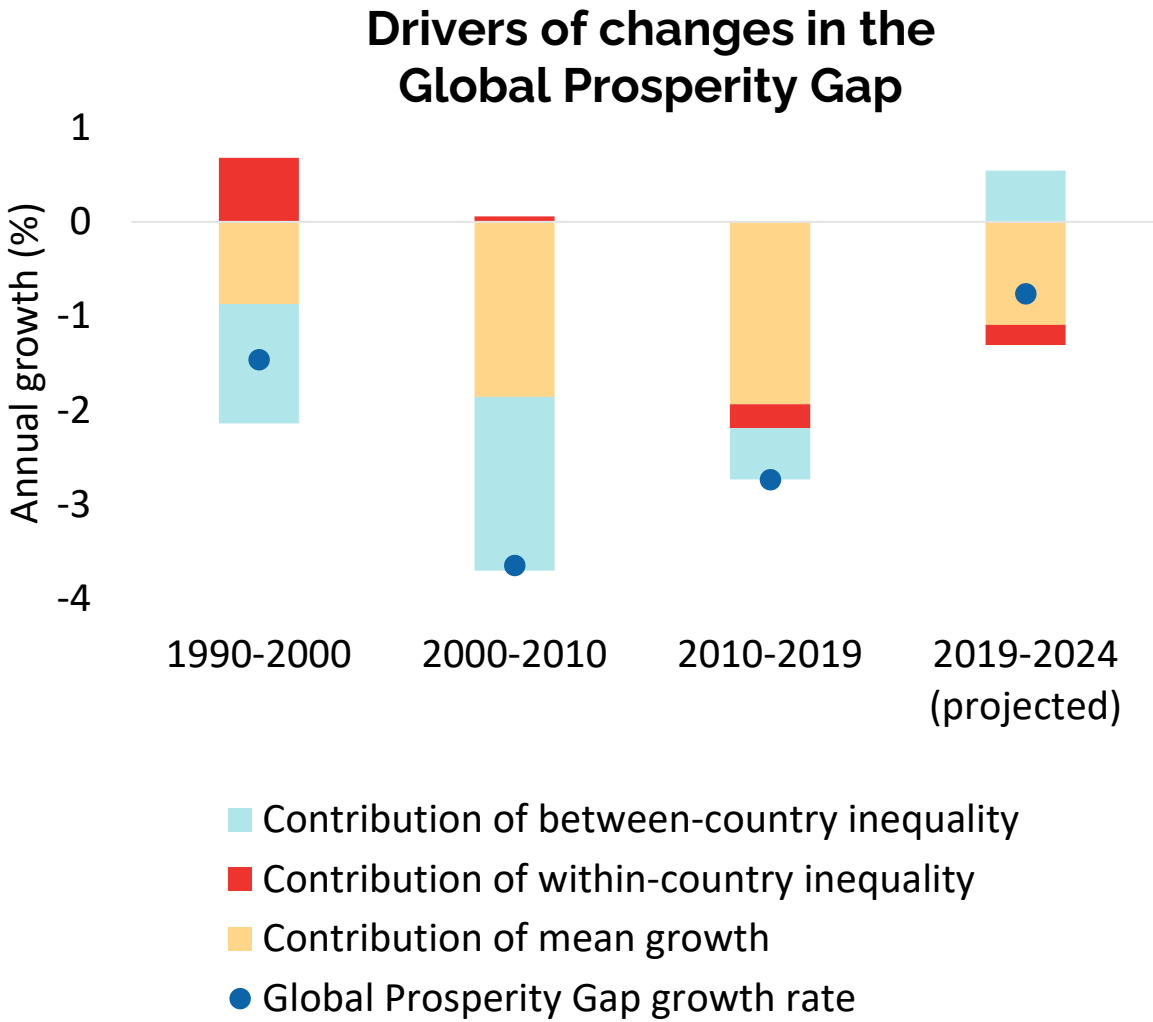
A continuation of current growth and demographic trends—"business as usual"—suggests slow progress on $2.15 but continuing progress on $6.85.

Projected extreme poverty rate in 2030: 7.3% (more than double 3% target)



PROGRESS IN SHARED PROSPERITY (BACKGROUND NEXT 2 SLIDES) ALSO SLOWED DOWN RECENTLY





Source: pip.worldbank.org.

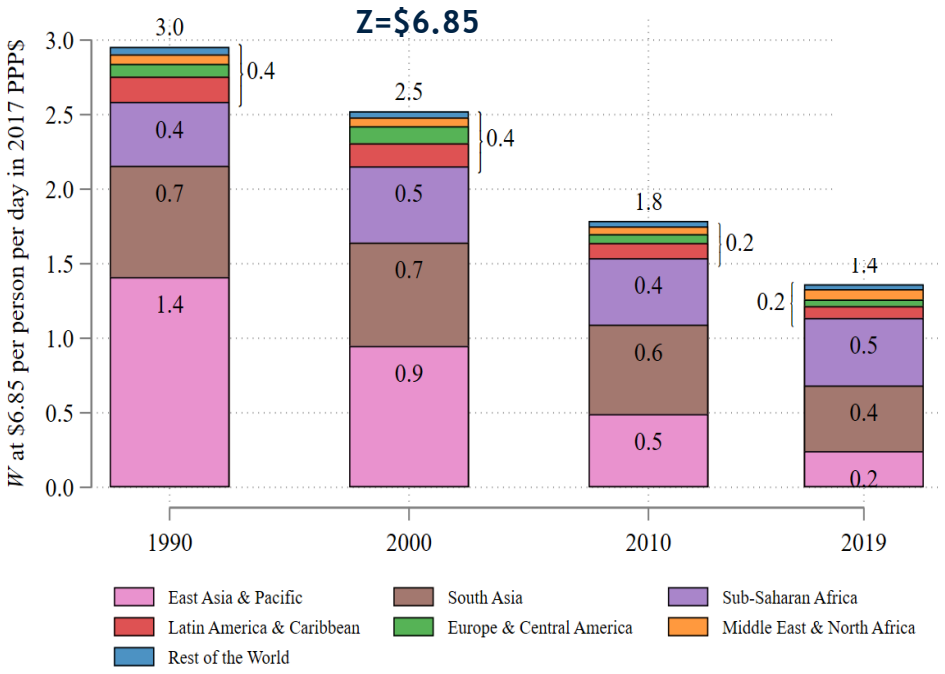
Prosperity Gap:
A distribution-sensitive index being used by the WB

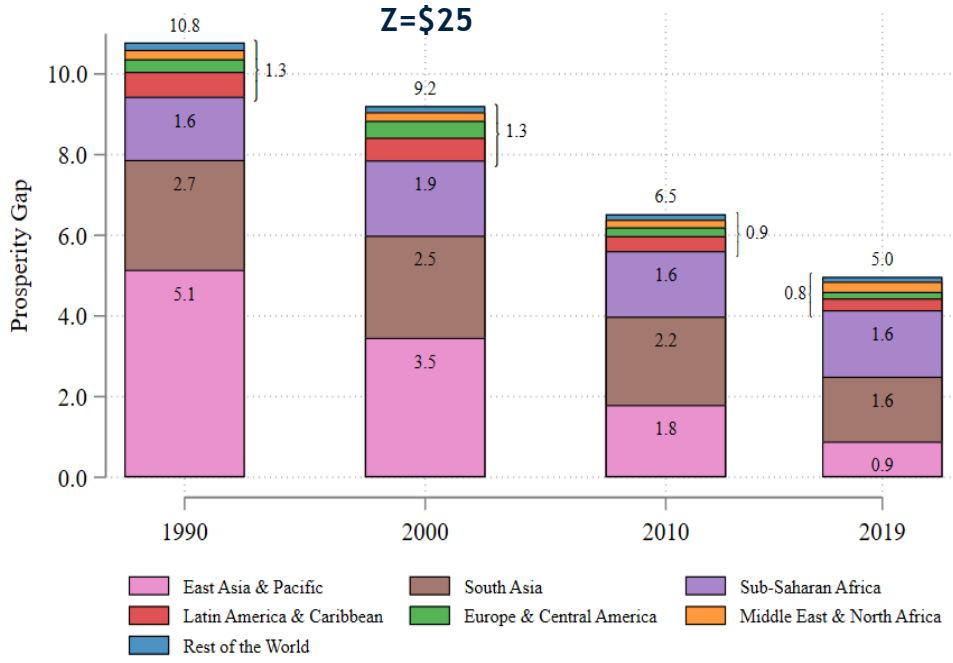
$$W(y,z) = \frac{1}{N}\sum_{i=1}^{N}\frac{z}{y_i}$$

- Simple interpretation:
  - $\frac{z}{y_i}$ is the factor by which income of individual i must increase to attain reference income z
  - $W(y;\ z)$ is the *average factor by which incomes must be multiplied to attain reference income* z
- Simple distribution-sensitive weights interpretation:
  - Person with $y_i = 2z$ gets weight of one half,
  - Person with $y_i = z$ gets weight of one, …
  - Person with $y_i = \frac{1}{100}z$ gets weight of 100
- $\boldsymbol{z}$ can be (i) a poverty line (low z), (ii) a prosperity standard (high z), or (iii) a linear function $\mathrm{z}(y)$ such as mean income, which generates an inequality index. W can be a welfare index, poverty index, inequality index.

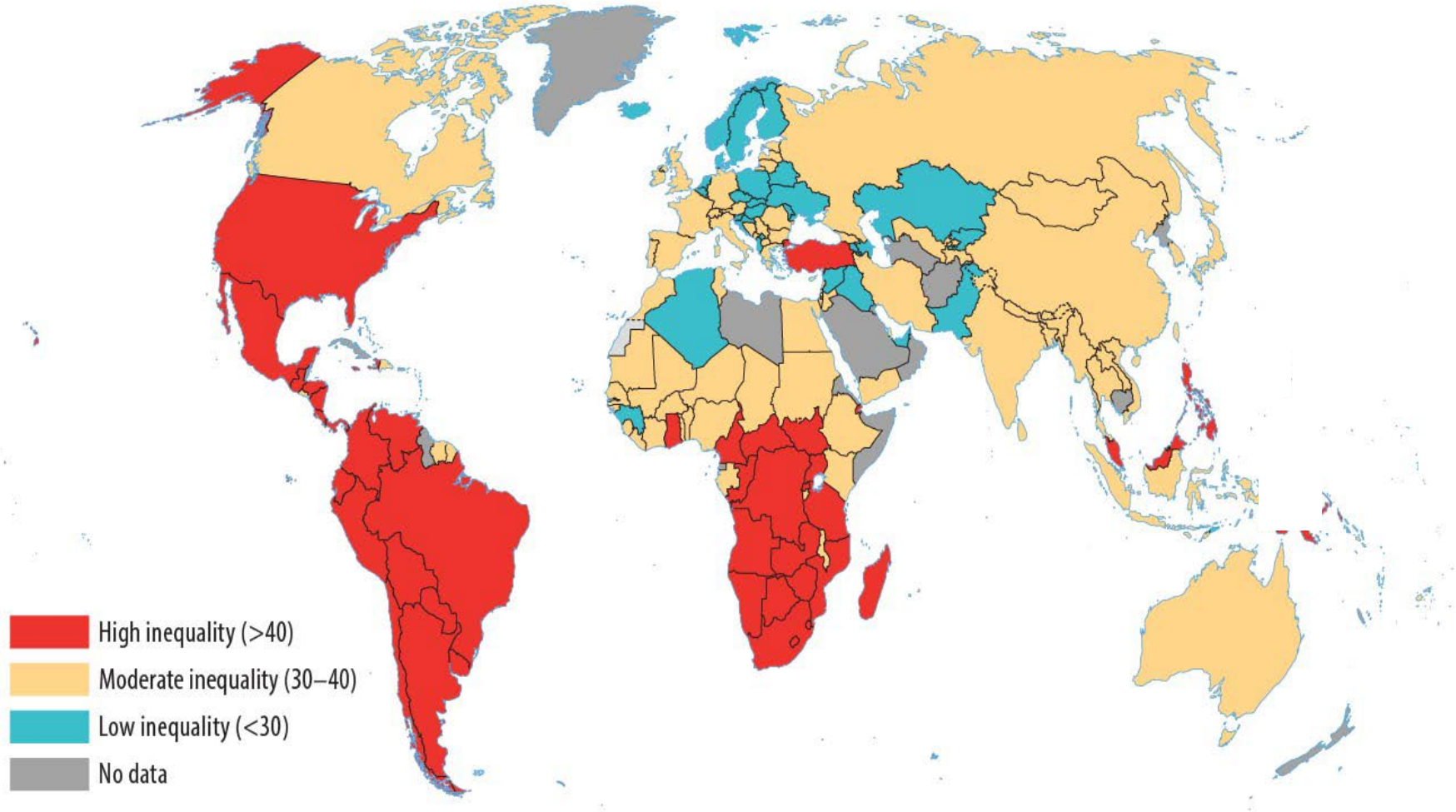
Kraay, Aart C., Christoph Lakner, Berk Ozler, Benoit Decerf, Dean Jolliffe, Olivier Sterck, and Nishant Yonzan. June 2023. "A New Distribution Sensitive Index for Measuring Welfare, Poverty, and Inequality." *Policy Research Working Paper Series, No. 10470*, Washington, DC: World Bank. https://ideas.repec.org//p/wbk/wbrwps/10470.html

Prosperity Gap is sub-group decomposable





NUMBER OF ECONOMIES WITH HIGH INEQUALITY HAS FALLEN, BUT REMAINS HIGH IN LATIN AMERICA AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



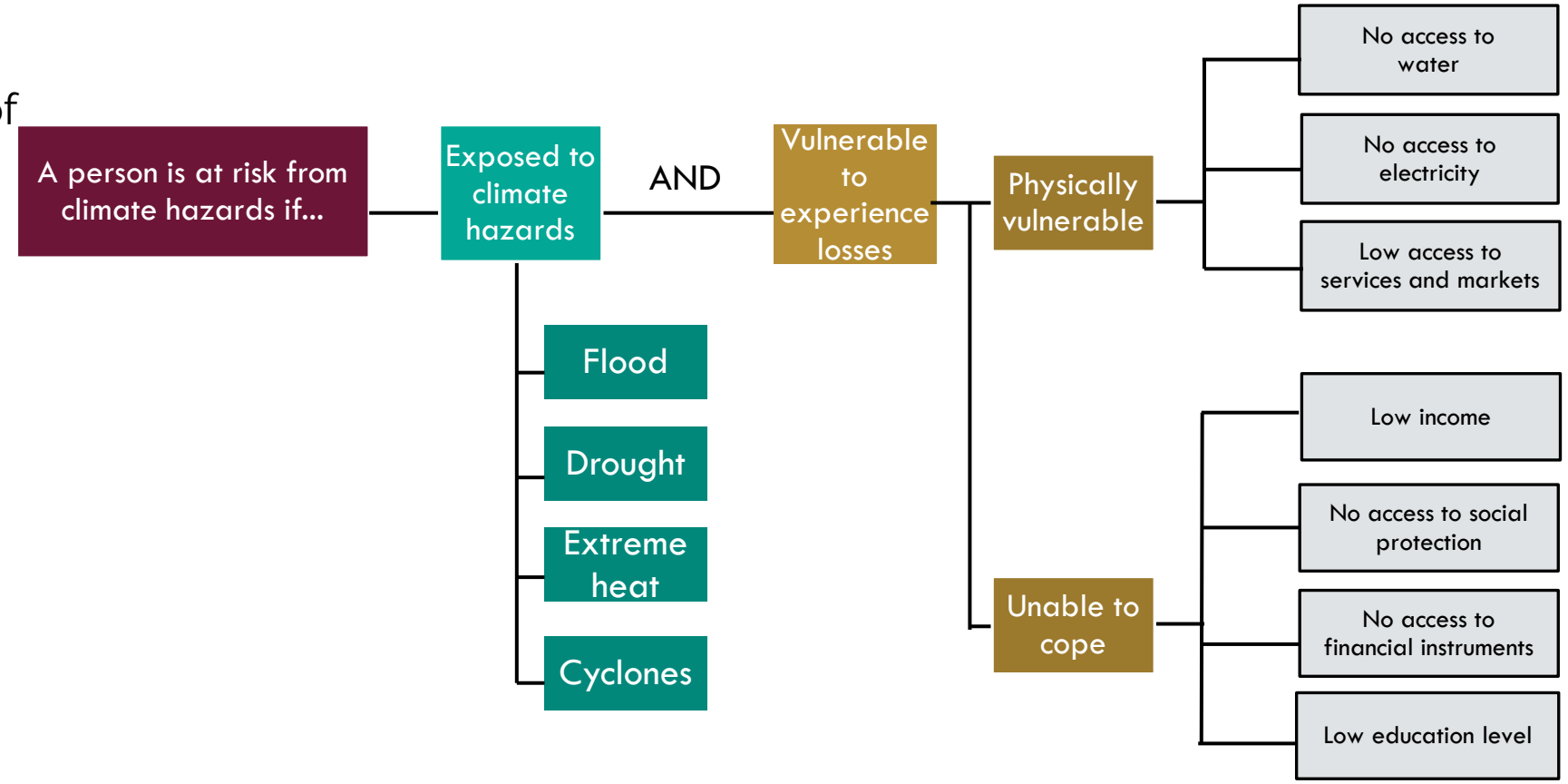
Source: pip.worldbank.org.

A NEW INDICATOR ON VULNERABILITY TO EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS IS MULTIDIMENSIONAL

The new Corporate Scorecard Vision indicators includes:
The Percentage of people at high risk from climate-related hazards globally

Multidimensional in terms of

1. Climate hazards
2. Vulnerability
3. Ability to cope



Source: World Bank Group Scorecard indicator (World Bank, n.d.).

ONE IN FIVE PEOPLE ARE AT RISK OF EXPERIENCING WELFARE LOSSES DUE TO AN EXTREME WEATHER EVENT FROM WHICH THEY WILL STRUGGLE TO RECOVER

Source: World Bank Scorecard indicator: the percentage of people at high risk of climate-related hazards globally, https://scorecard.worldbank.org/en/scorecard/home.

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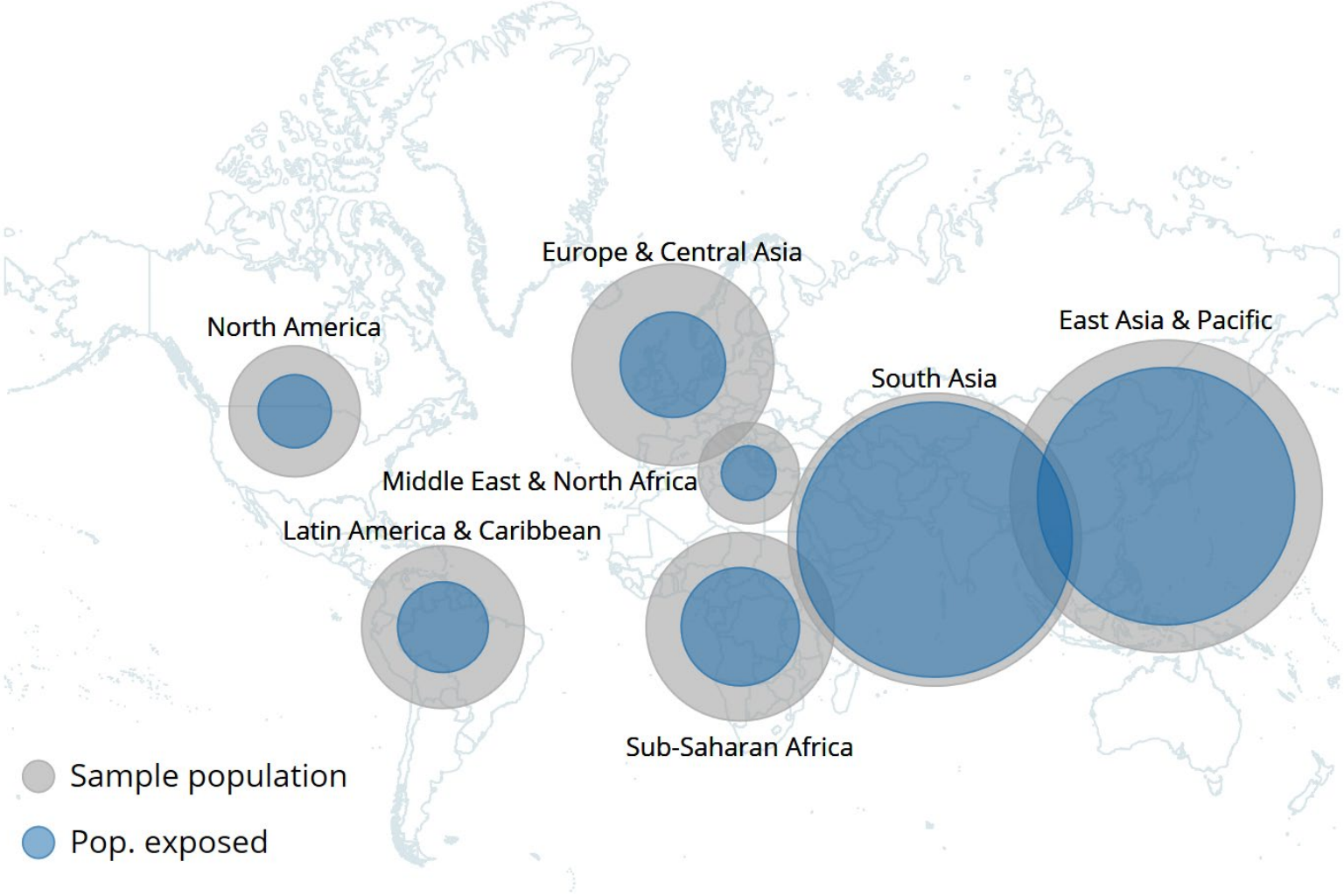

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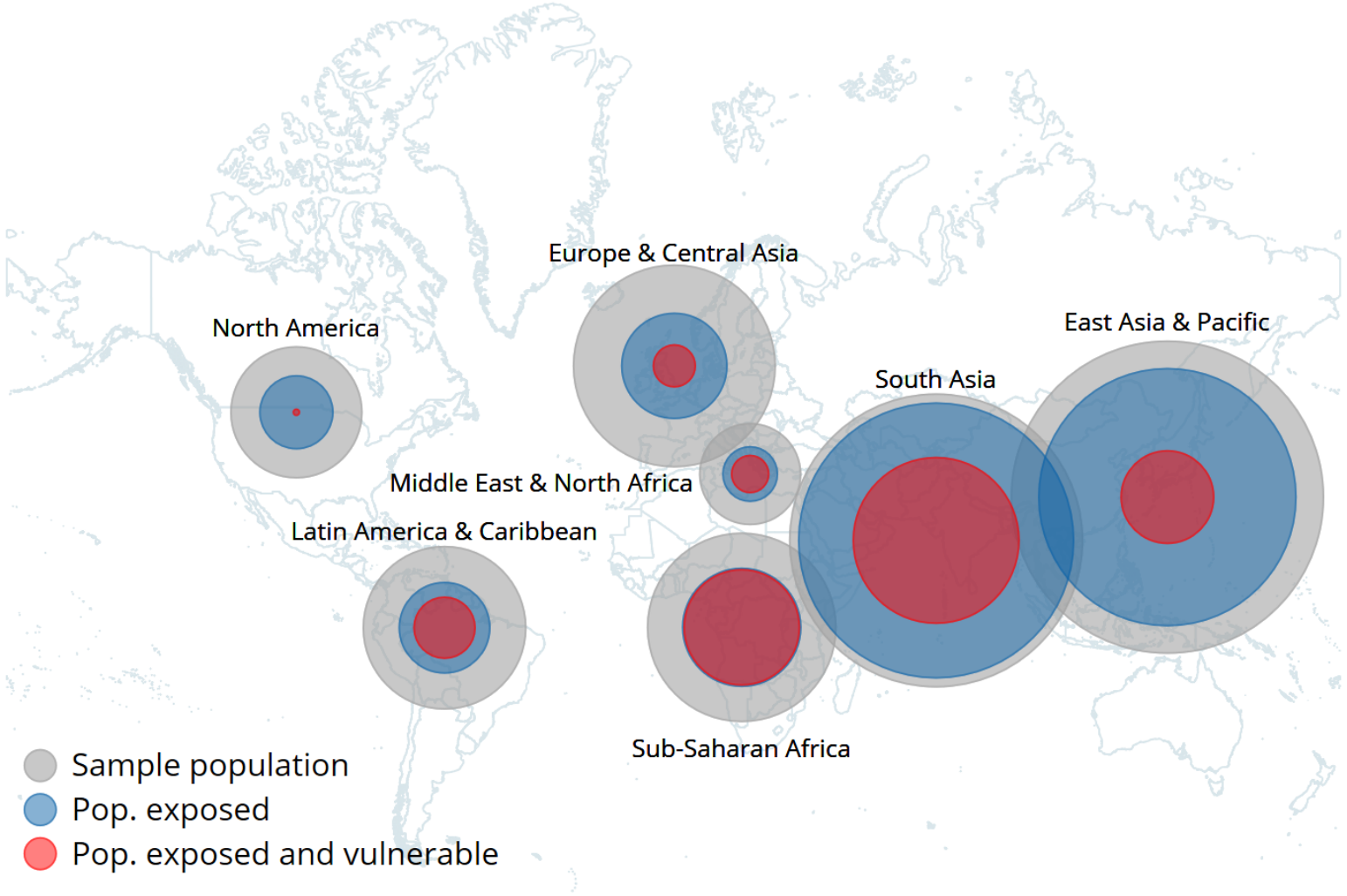


Source: World Bank Scorecard indicator: the percentage of people at high risk of climate-related hazards globally, https://scorecard.worldbank.org/en/scorecard/home.

Pathways and priorities

DOING WHAT MATTERS WHERE IT MATTERS THE MOST

PROGRESS ON THE THREE INTERLINKED GOALS REQUIRES FASTER AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS

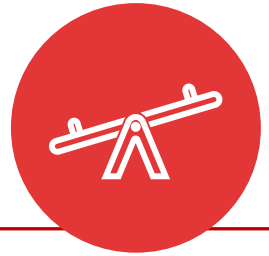
Growing incomes for the poor

- Better-functioning labor markets
- Investments in the productive capacity of people
- Structural conditions that enable socioeconomic mobility

Protecting people from extreme weather events (and other shocks)

- Lowering vulnerability by enhancing risk management
- Preventing the escalation of future climate hazards by accelerating transformations to reduce the emissions intensiveness of growth

POLICY MAKERS MUST PRIORITIZE AND MAKE DIFFICULT CHOICES



TRADE-OFFS

between growing incomes and lowering emissions

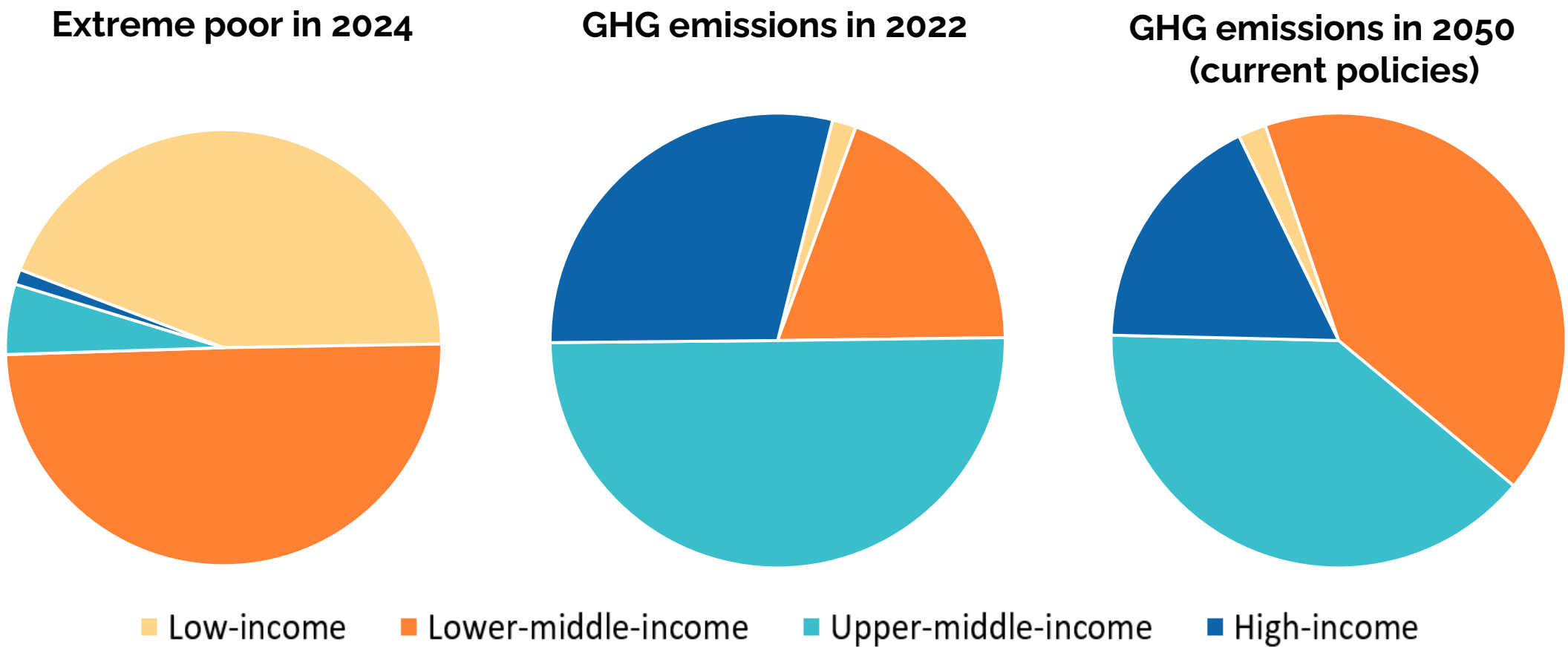
CONSTRAINTS

to scale up synergistic policies (e.g., cut air pollution)

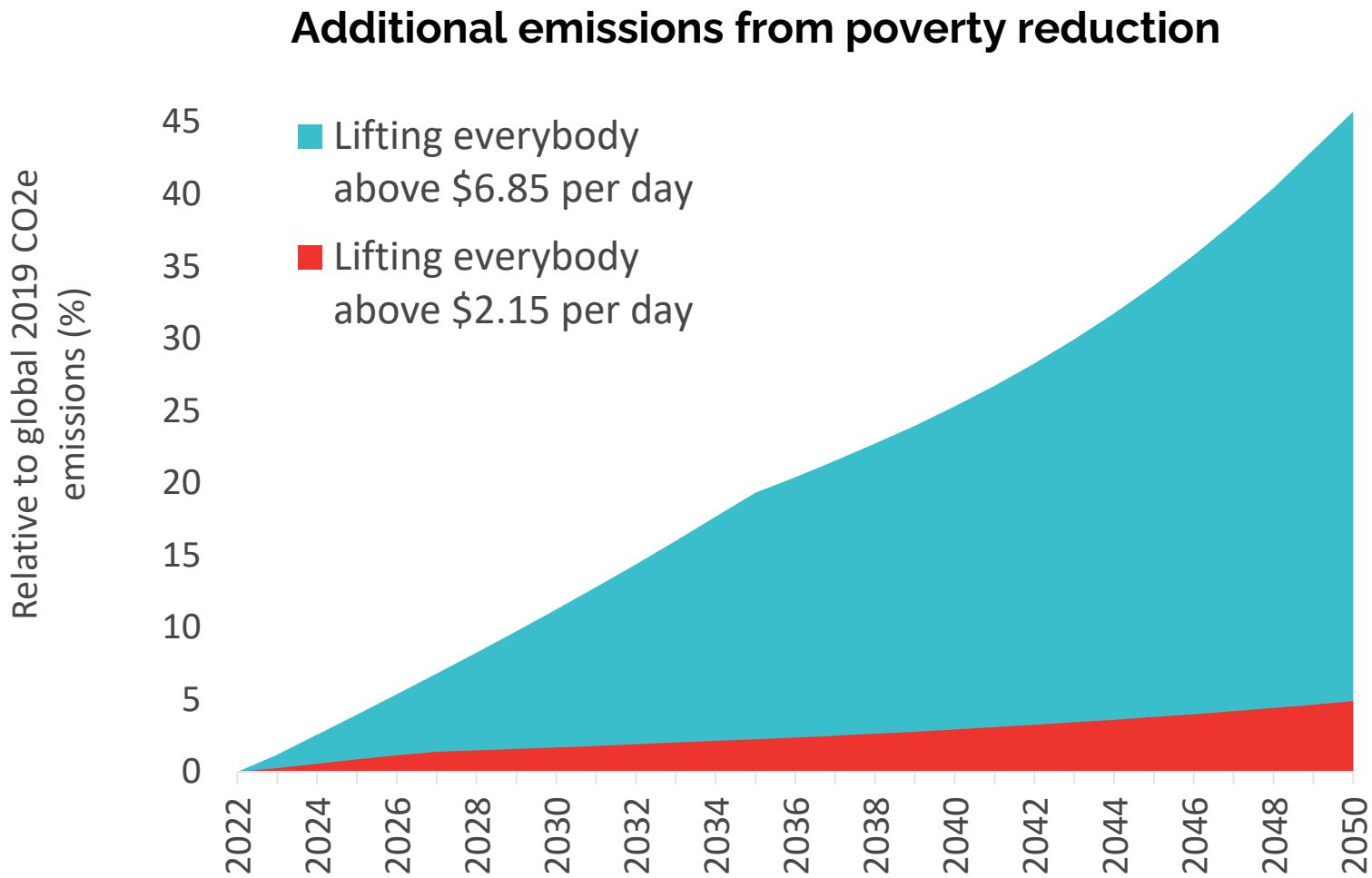
TRANSITION COSTS

and how to manage them varies by context

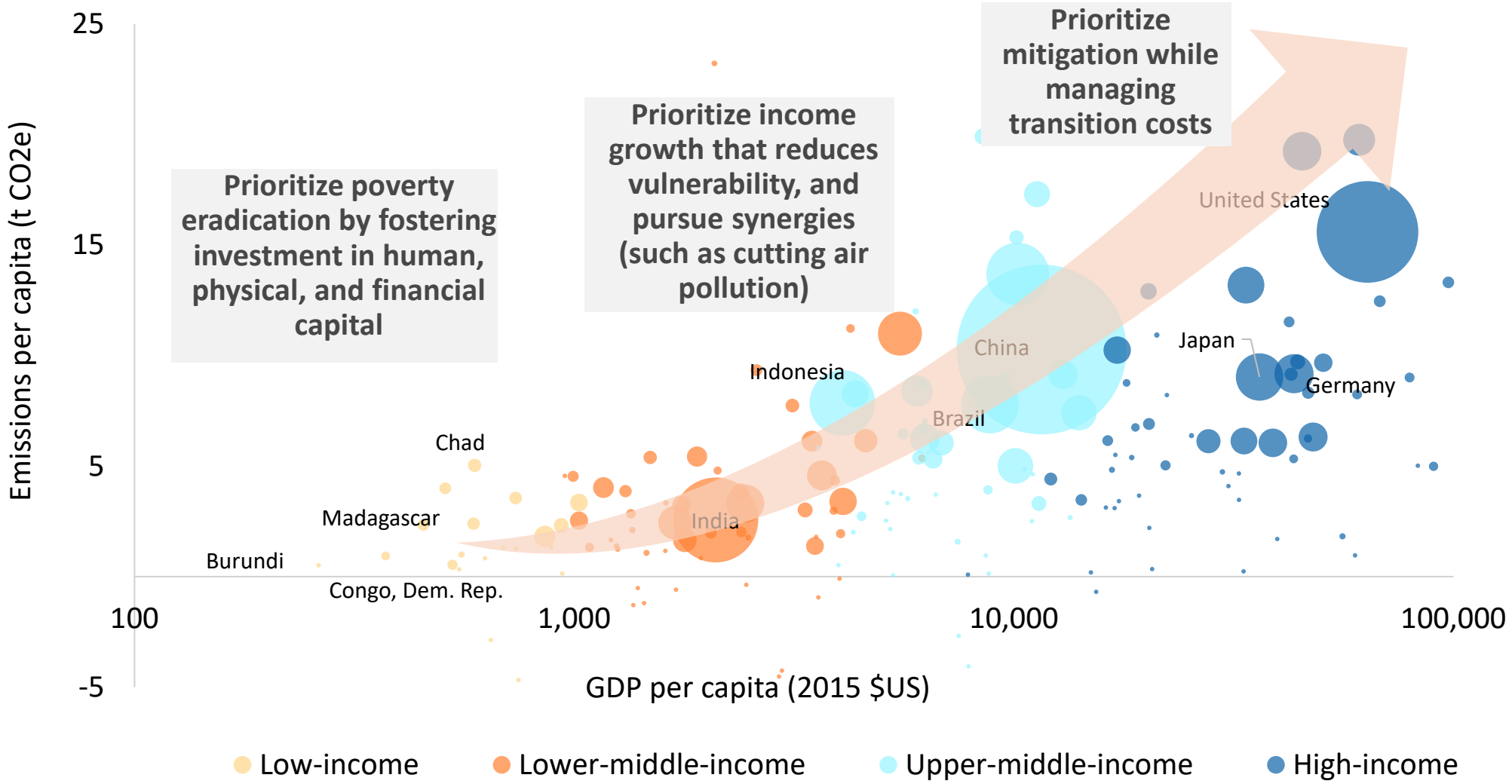
ACTIONS NEED TO CONSIDER WHERE THE POOR LIVE AND WHERE EMISSIONS COME FROM



ADVANCING ON ERADICATION OF EXTREME POVERTY DOES NOT COME AT A BIG COST FOR THE PLANET

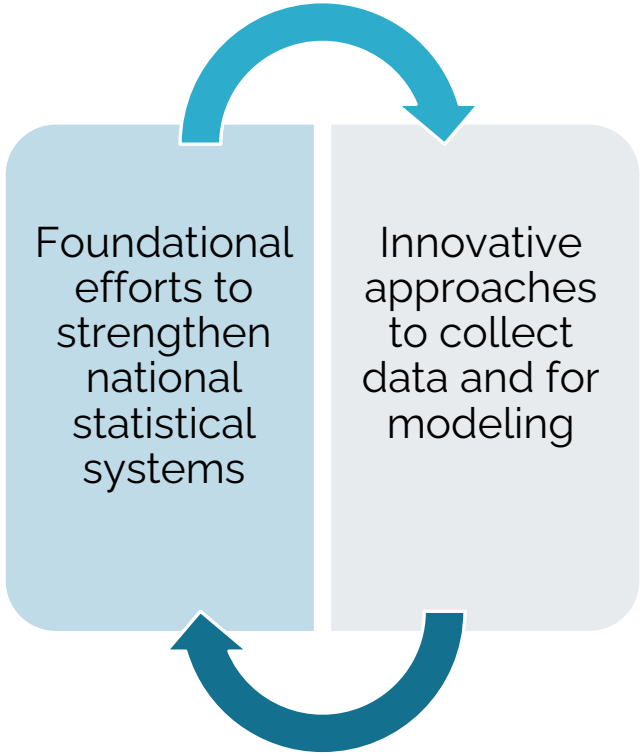


PRIORITIES TO ADVANCE ON THE INTERLINKED GOALS



ADVANCING ON THESE INTERLINKED GLOBAL CHALLENGES REQUIRES A SOLID FOUNDATION OF EVIDENCE

- More investment is needed to produce **reliable, granular, and timely data**.
- Bringing a **multidimensional lens** to poverty, shared prosperity, and the livable planet.



URGENT AND COORDINATED GLOBAL ACTION IS ESSENTIAL TO MEET THESE INTERLINKED GOALS

- The **financing gap for sustainable development is growing**, which hinders lower-income countries' ability to invest across multiple objectives.

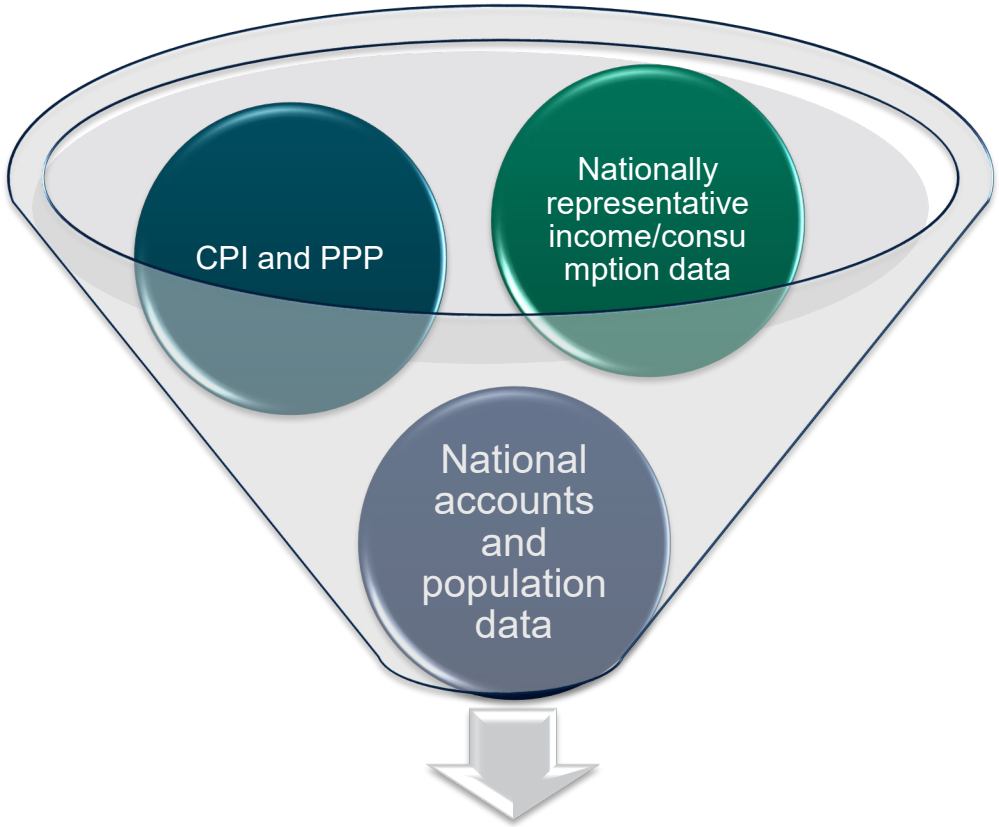
- This constrained environment creates an urgent need to focus and **prioritize the actions that will have the highest return for development** and that can allow the world to make significant progress.

- It calls for **fundamental changes in how countries approach their national development strategies** and their contribution to global public goods.

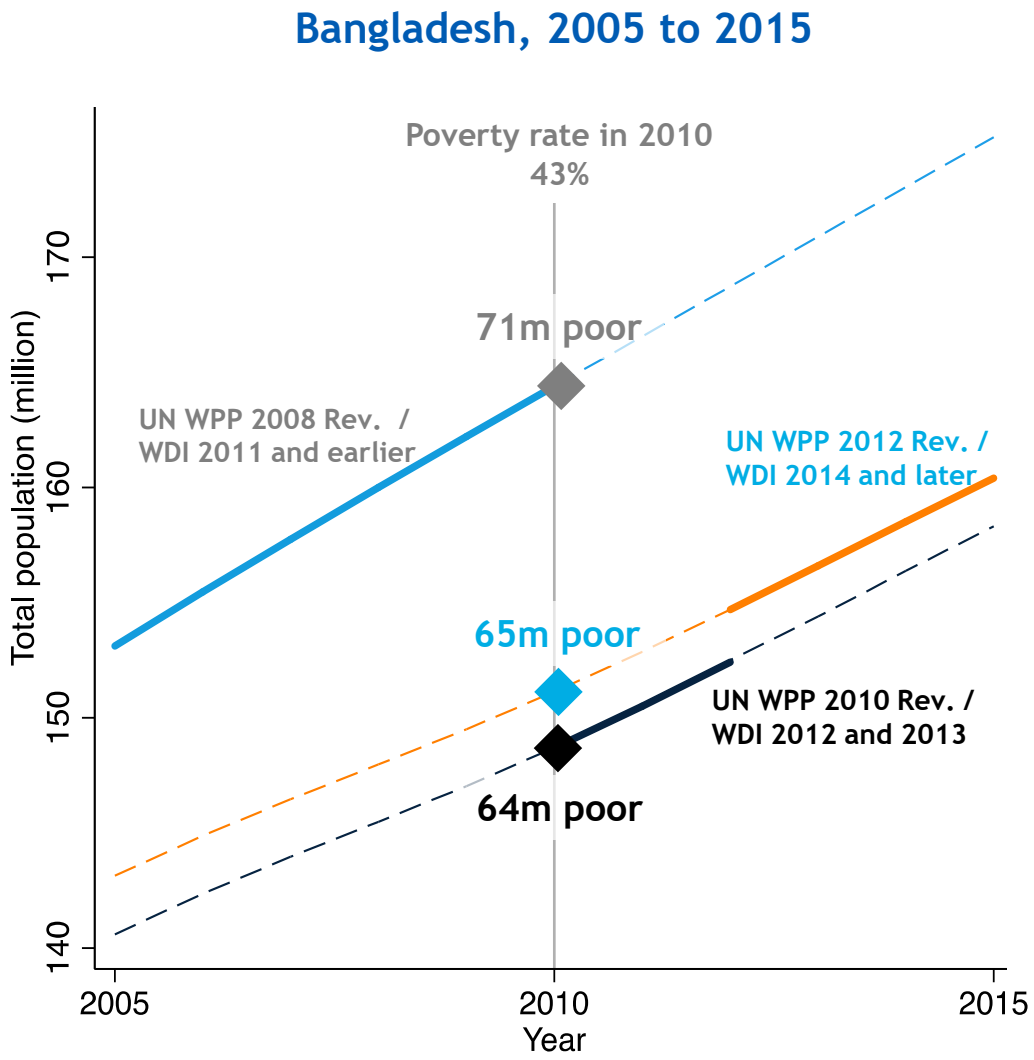
III. Measurement Challenges

Research Opportunities

The World Bank's global poverty numbers



Error in census data



- UN World Population Prospects (WPP) estimates serve as inputs to WDI and as baseline for official poverty estimates.

- Example of Bangladesh:
  - Census in 2011
  - UN WPP pre-census estimates significantly higher than post-census
  - With each revision, number of poor in changes, even at given poverty rate
- Bangladesh not exceptional
  - United States NRC (2000): 4.8% average absolute error in UN/WB 5-year projections
- Census forecast error perhaps easiest source of error to account for.

Jolliffe, Dean, Lanjouw, Peter, Chen, Shaohua, Kraay, Aart, Meyer, Christian, Negre, Mario, Prydz, Espen, Vakis, Renos and Kyla Wethli, 2014. A Measured Approach to Ending Poverty and Boosting Shared Prosperity: Concepts, Data, and the Twin Goals. The World Bank. https://hdl.handle.net/10986/20384

A very incomplete list of measurement challenges…

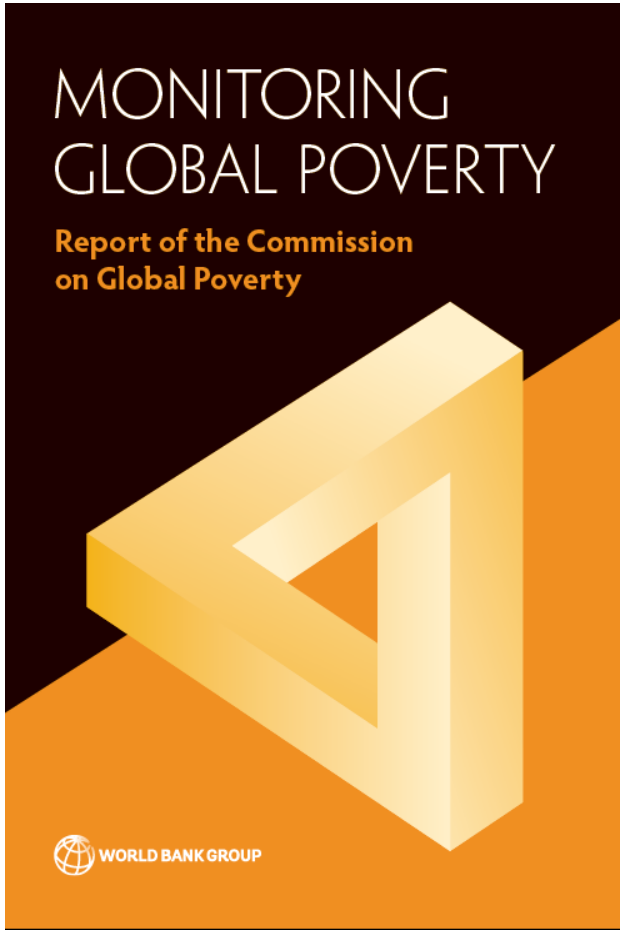
- *Note*: No country collects data to measure global poverty => many comparability concerns
- **Across Countries**
  - Maintaining comparable value of international poverty line is challenging. ICP literature.
  - *Maintaining comparable assessment of basic needs across countries (i.e., allowing value to vary)*
  - Questionnaire design varies, Consumption Income differences, Nonresponse concerns
  - Systematic divergence between household surveys and national accounts, HFCE
- **Within Countries (over time and at fixed point in time)**
  - Spatial variation in prices
  - Spatial variation in quantities needed to meet basic needs (e.g., fuel for heat, public good provision in urban areas, etc.). Spatial variation in typical food eaten by the poor
  - Timing of fieldwork (comparability over time)
- **Within Households**
  - Consumption is measured at the household; poverty and inequality typically estimated for the individual. How to allocate hh resources to the individual (i.e., AE & economies of scale)
  - Household consumption consists of nonshareable (e.g., food) and shareable (e.g., shelter). Should sum of individual consumption = total household consumption?

Relative standards

Societal poverty: Using a poverty line that increases in value as countries get wealthier

- Societal poverty reflects idea that as countries get wealthier, the standard of meeting basic needs increases.
- The wealthier a country, the more resources one needs to avoid social exclusion.
- The World Bank introduced the societal poverty line (SPL) in 2018, currently parameterized as:

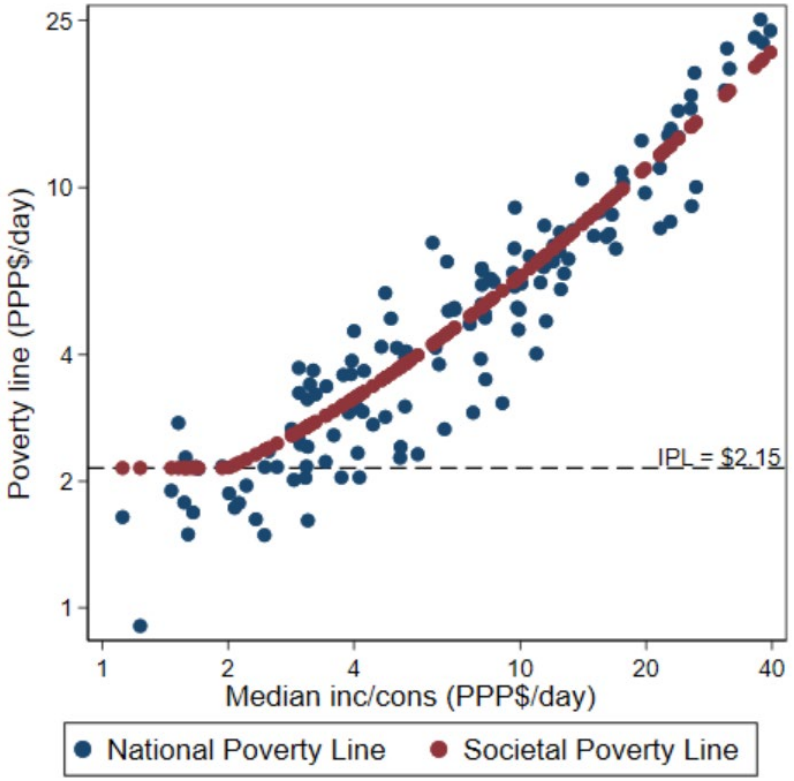
$$SPL = max[2.15, 1.15 + 0.5 * median\ consumption]$$



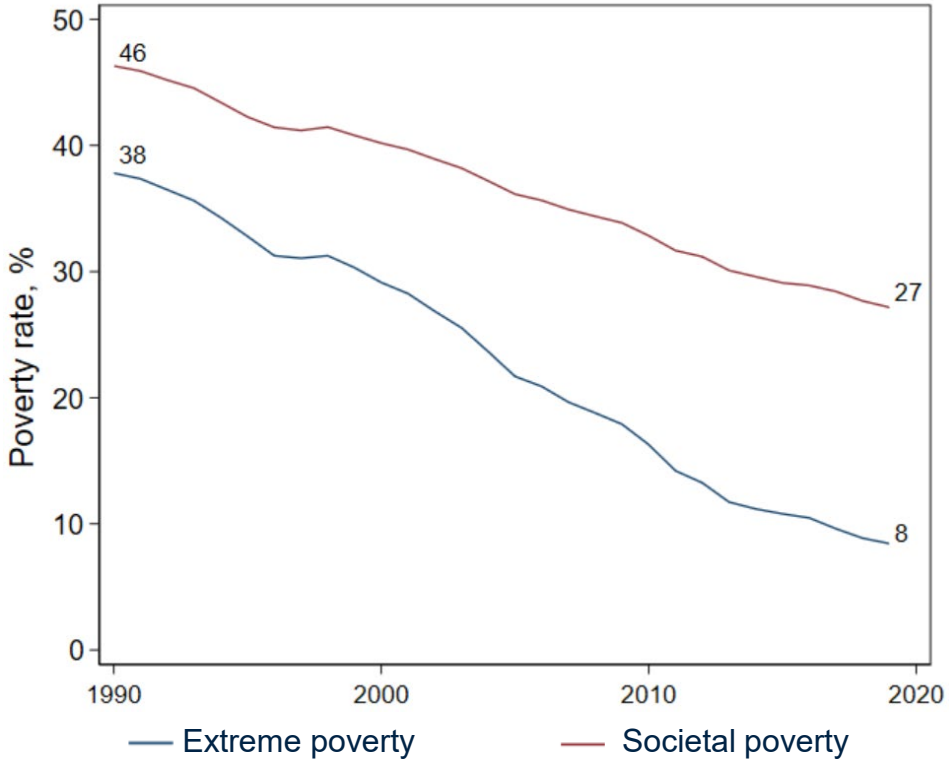
Jolliffe, D., Prydz, E.B., 2021. Societal Poverty: A Relative and Relevant Measure. *World Bank Economic Review* 35, 180–206. https://doi.org/10.1093/wber/lhz018

Societal poverty declines more slowly than extreme poverty

How countries define basic needs increases with income



Societal poverty declines more slowly with growth because the poverty line increases



Societal poverty more than 3 times extreme poverty

- The societal poverty line reflects average assessments of social & economic basic needs at different levels of development. SPL = max($2.15, $1.15+0.5 × Median Consumption)

A very incomplete list of measurement challenges…

- *Note*: No country collects data to measure global poverty => many comparability concerns
- **Across Countries**
  - Maintaining comparable value of international poverty line is challenging. ICP literature.
  - *Maintaining comparable assessment of basic needs across countries (i.e., allowing value to vary)*
  - Questionnaire design varies, Consumption Income differences, Nonresponse concerns
  - Systematic divergence between household surveys and national accounts, HFCE
- **Within Countries (over time and at fixed point in time)**
  - Spatial variation in prices
  - Spatial variation in quantities needed to meet basic needs (e.g., fuel for heat, public good provision in urban areas, etc.). Spatial variation in typical food eaten by the poor
  - *Timing of fieldwork (comparability over time)*
- **Within Households**
  - Consumption is measured at the household; poverty and inequality typically estimated for the individual. How to allocate hh resources to the individual (i.e., AE & economies of scale)
  - Household consumption consists of nonshareable (e.g., food) and shareable (e.g., shelter). Should sum of individual consumption = total household consumption?

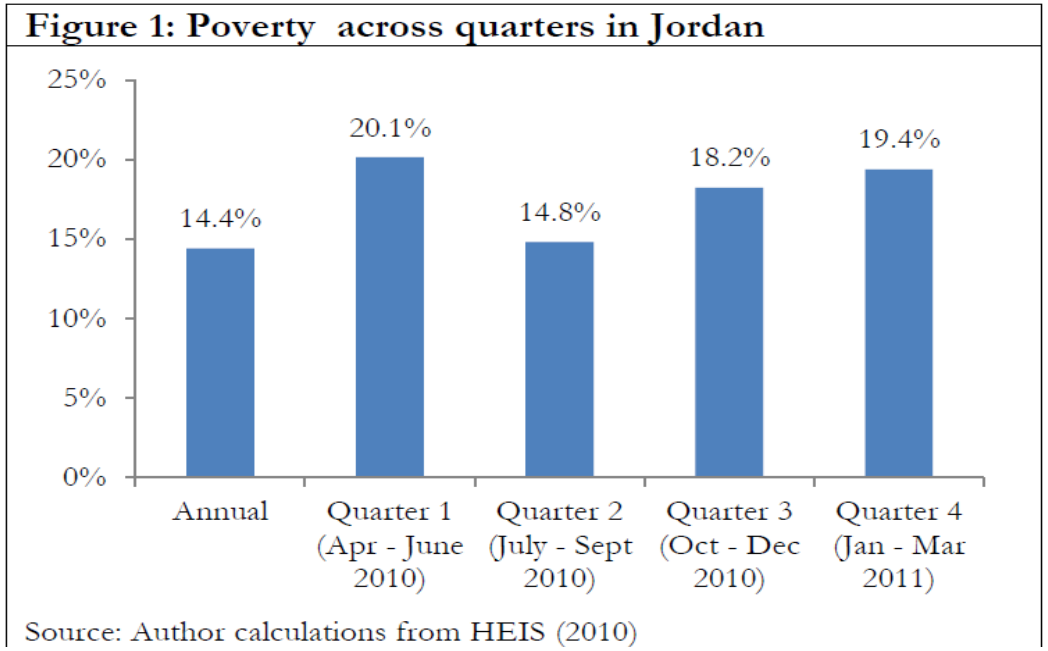
Variation in fieldwork protocols - timing

Poverty in Afghanistan – variation over season

Quarter		Poverty %
1	Fall-harvest 2007	23
2	Winter 2007/08	32
3	Spring 2008	44
4	Summer 2008	46
	Annual	**36**

Temporally stratified samples revealed massive variation in poverty, due to seasonality and food price shocks.

Seasonality in a non-agricultural economy



Jolliffe & Serajuddin, 2017. "Noncomparable Poverty Comparisons, *Journal of Development Studies*.

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Country-level results

- See changes in country-level poverty estimates here.

- Extreme poverty estimates decrease in low- and lower-middle-income countries.
  - 85 percent (23/27) of low-income countries (mostly in Sub-Saharan Africa)
  - Three-quarters (42/57) of lower-middle-income countries

- Extreme poverty estimates increase in high- and upper-middle-income countries.
  - More than three-quarters of high-income countries
  - More than half of upper-middle-income countries

- Regional rankings change slightly; countries rankings & individual rankings change more...

Jolliffe, D., Tetteh-Baah, S.K., 2024. Identifying the poor – Accounting for household economies of scale in global poverty estimates. *World Development* 179, 106593. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2024.106593

Global poverty, 2019
$2.15 (per capita) vs. $4.93 (square-root)

Region	Per capita poverty rate (%) at $2.15 (1)	Root N poverty rate (%) at $4.93 (2)	Change in poverty (pp) (3)	Millions of per capita poor (4)	Millions of root N poor (5)	Change in millions of poor (6)	Absolute deviations in millions of poor (7)	HH size, per capita poor (8)	HH size, root N poor (9)	HH size (10)	Countries (11)
Sub-Saharan Africa	34.9	31.3	**-3.6**	384	345	-39	44	34.9	31.3	-3.6	384
Middle East & North Africa	10.0	8.4	**-1.7**	36	30	-6	7	10.0	8.4	-1.7	36
Europe and Central Asia	2.3	2.0	**-0.3**	11	10	-1	2	2.3	2.0	-0.3	11
World	**10.6**	**10.6**	**0.0**	**643**	**643**	**0**	**120**	**10.6**	**10.6**	**0.0**	**643**
Other High Income	0.6	0.7	**0.1**	6	7	1	1	0.6	0.7	0.1	6
Latin America & Caribbean	4.3	4.9	**0.6**	26	29	3	5	4.3	4.9	0.6	26
East Asia & Pacific	3.4	4.2	**0.8**	22	27	5	9	3.4	4.2	0.8	22
South Asia	8.6	10.7	**2.0**	158	195	37	53	8.6	10.7	2.0	158

Global poverty, 2019 (per capita vs. square-root)

Σ Change over countries, by regions (people, millions)

Region	Per capita poverty rate (%) at $2.15 (1)	Root N poverty rate (%) at $4.93 (2)	Change in poverty (pp) (3)	Millions of per capita poor (4)	Millions of root N poor (5)	Change in millions of poor (6)	Absolute deviations in millions of poor (7)	HH size, per capita poor (8)	HH size, root N poor (9)	HH size (10)	Countries (11)
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Global poverty, 2019 (per capita vs. square-root)

Σ Absolute value of changes over all countries, by regions

Region	Per capita poverty rate (%) at $2.15 (1)	Root N poverty rate (%) at $4.93 (2)	Change in poverty (pp) (3)	Millions of per capita poor (4)	Millions of root N poor (5)	Change in millions of poor (6)	Absolute deviation in millions of poor (7)	HH size, per capita poor (8)	HH size, root N poor (9)	HH size (10)	Countries (11)
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Reclassification of poverty status, *Focusing on people*

Region	To nonpoor	To poor	Total
Sub-Saharan Africa	75	35	110
Middle East & North Africa	8	2	10
South Asia	38	75	113
Latin America & Caribbean	3	6	9
East Asia & Pacific	6	11	17
Europe & Central Asia	3	2	5
Advanced Countries	0	1	1
World	**132**	**132**	**264**

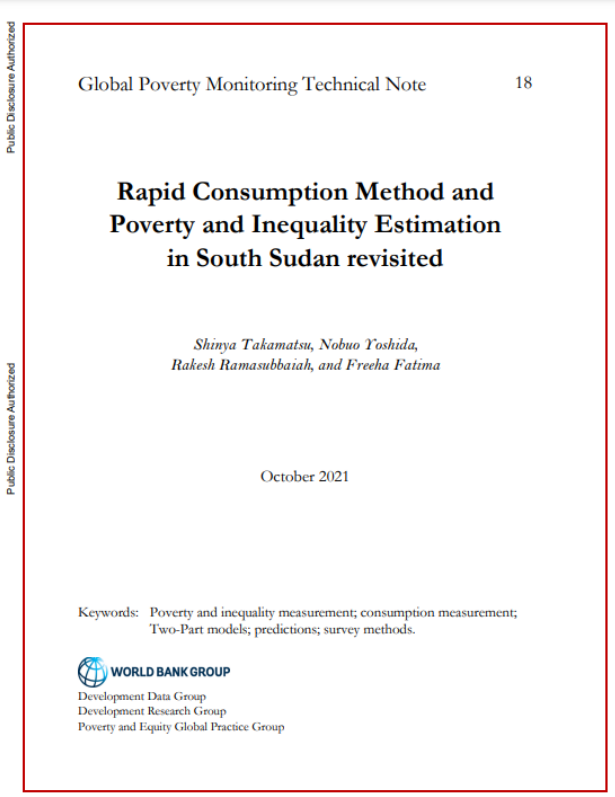
Total count of people whose poverty status changes, 264 million people

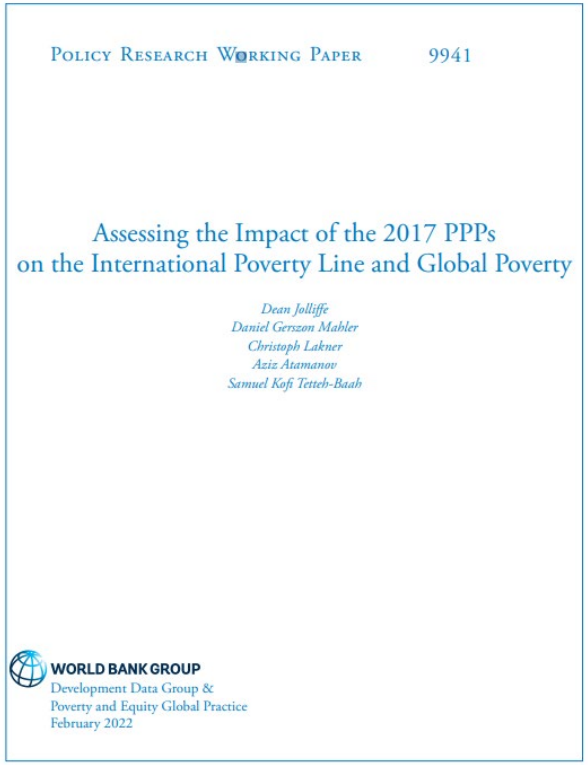
IV. Efforts to improve transparency & understanding of poverty estimates –

A teaser for
Giorgia Checchinato's lab sessions
on the Poverty & Inequality Platform (PIP)

Quality, accessibility, and transparency

- All major methodological decisions are peer reviewed internally and/or externally and documented through Global Poverty Monitoring Technical Notes, Policy Research Working Papers, and/or journal publication.





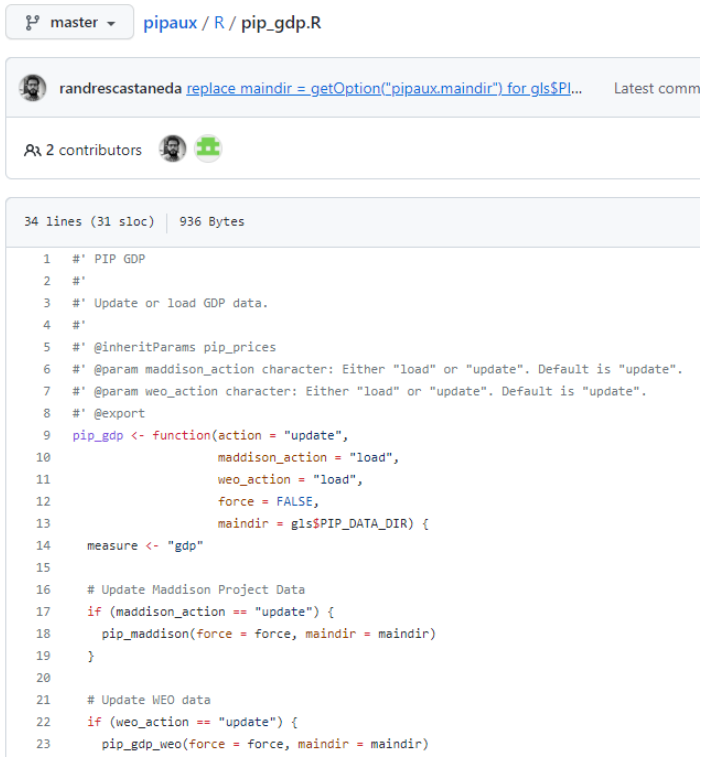
$1.25 line: … 2009. *World Bank Economic Review* 23, 163–184.

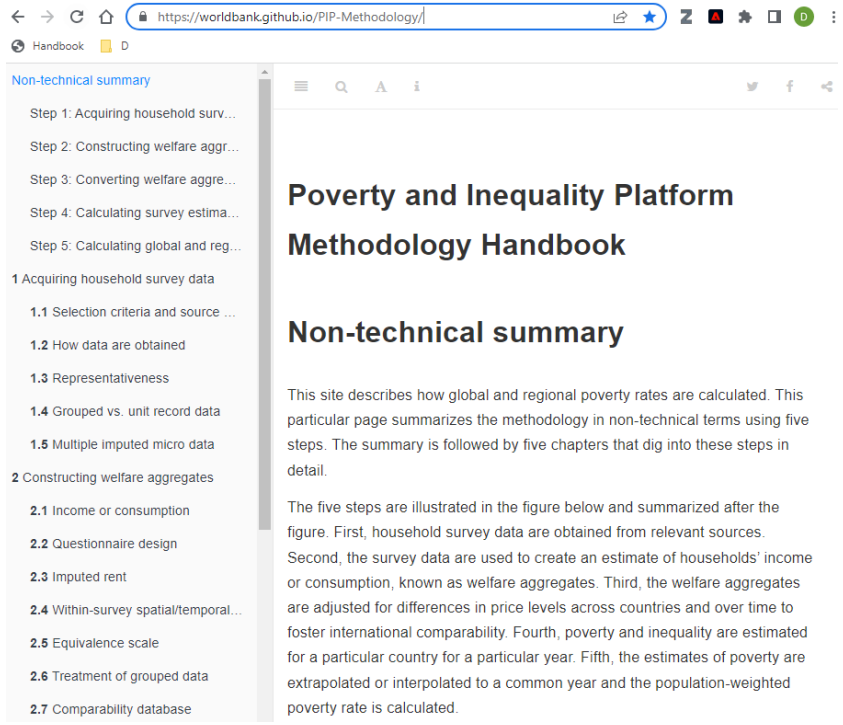
$1.90 line: … 2016. *Journal of Economic Inequality* 14, 141–72.

$2.15 line: … 2024. *World Bank Economic Review* forthcoming.

Quality, accessibility, and transparency

- All code necessary to create the poverty estimates are publicly available (https://github.com/PIP-Technical-Team)
- A description of the entire methodology is available in a technical handbook (https://worldbank.github.io/PIP-Methodology/)





Quality, accessibility, and transparency

- All estimates can be accessed through the Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP) (www.pip.worldbank.org).
- PIP is a comprehensive platform for all the World Bank's poverty and inequality data

- **The data can also be accessed through API-based solutions**
- Where data sharing agreements permit, the anonymized microdata are accessibly through PIP's Statistics On-Line (SOL) tool (www.pip.worldbank.org/sol)