

Synopsis

Dr. Kofi Annan, a former General Secretary of the United Nations (UN) famously argued that, “extreme poverty anywhere is a threat to human security everywhere”. For this and many other reasons, in 2015, all member countries of the UN adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which set out a 15-year plan to achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The first of the 17 goals is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. The aim is to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere and reduce poverty by at least 50% by 2030. This goal underscores the pivotal role of poverty reduction in achieving sustainable development in the world.

Although the world has made some progress in reducing poverty and extreme poverty, the 2019 SDGs report indicated that progress has been slow, and that the world was unlikely to achieve Goal 1 on this slow trajectory. The yet-to-be-launched 2023 SDG report paints a gloomier picture. Recent global events, including COVID-19 and the associated economic challenges, violent conflicts, and extreme weather conditions have reversed some progress made in poverty reduction. The most affected are countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, women and girls, and rural communities. There is the need for aggressive policies and action to drastically reduce poverty and extreme poverty.

While most developing countries struggle to achieve Goal 1 of the SDGs, China accomplished the task of eradicating extreme poverty in 2020, ten years ahead of the 2030 schedule. Through targeted Poverty Alleviation Policies, about 98.99 million rural people in China had been taken out of poverty by the end of 2020. China’s success at poverty reduction using targeted policies has become a contemporary example for most developing countries and is worth exploring by countries struggling to reduce poverty.

The IEA, in collaboration with Chinese Scholars in Poverty Studies and with funding from the Chinese Embassy in Ghana, is undertaking a project to pilot China’s Targeted Poverty Alleviation Model in three localities in Ghana namely: Fotobi (pineapple growers) and Dzatsui New Town (pawpaw and mixed farming) in the Nsawam Adoagyire Municipality, and Chorkor (fishermen and fish mongers) in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly. The project consists of three phases: field research to identify the nature of poverty and the economic opportunities in the three localities; a review of the Chinese Blueprint for poverty alleviation and design of a unique model for poverty alleviation in Ghana; and a pilot implementation of the poverty alleviation strategy in the three localities. If successful, this model will be advocated for adoption in West African countries with similar characteristics as Ghana.