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# Concept Note



Roundtable Discussion organized

By UN-OHRLLS and UN-DESA, in collaboration with FERDI, AfriCatalyst, OSF, the Paris Pact for People and Planet 4P, the Executive Directors for the Africa Group I, the Africa Group II, and France at the World Bank Group.

*On using a multidimensional vulnerability index for the allocation of development finance*

with Multilateral Development Banks and other International Financial Institutions, as well as Development Partners and select representatives from vulnerable countries.

21 April 2025, 9:15AM – 11:30AM ET

Open Society Foundations,  
Washington DC, United States



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# Background

The international community has now acknowledged vulnerability as a serious obstacle to sustainable development due to the damage caused by exogenous shocks and stressors to which countries are increasingly being exposed. The United Nations has made advances to address this challenge through, inter alia, the adoption of a Resolution on a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index, an index which quantifies structural vulnerability and (lack of) structural resilience of developing countries.

Steps have also been taken within the international community including by the international financial institutions as follows:

- During the Paris Summit for *a New Global Financing Pact* in June 2023, the Multilateral Development Banks agreed on a "*MDBs vision statement*", in which they agreed to explore how they could consider multidimensional vulnerability in concessional finance, while taking into account the work of the United Nations.
- At the October 2023 World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings in Marrakech, African and French executive directors, in collaboration with Ferdi, and with participation from the UN-OHRLS, government officials, and MDB representatives, convened to discuss integrating vulnerability into the allocation of concessional finance by Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).
- Many countries and several international organizations e.g. The Commonwealth Secretariat, Organisation internationale de la francophonie, African Union, etc.) have expressed their own interest for a reform to take into account vulnerability for the allocation of multilateral development assistance.
- More recently, in the perspective of *the 4th International UN Conference on Financing for Development* to be held in July, many countries, as well as the Secretariat of 4P (*Paris Pact for People and Planet*) in charge of the follow-up of the 2023 Paris Summit, have reaffirmed its wish that such a proposal be considered in order to direct financing to those countries most in need.

Indeed there are several ways by which development finance try to address the various kinds of vulnerability, in particular after severe shocks occur, hence in a way more curative than preventive.



Implementing a multidimensional vulnerability index, that measures structural vulnerability and structural resilience, adapted to individual organizational needs and objectives, could facilitate a more proactive, consistent, and transparent approach to the allocation of resources that better matches the financing needs of recipient countries. For equitable and effective use in concessional finance, the index should measure structural vulnerability i.e. vulnerabilities that are independent of current policy and serve as a complement (not substitute) to income per capita. This approach is already being pilot tested by several institutions e.g. e.g. the Global Environment Facility and the OECD.

A roundtable discussion will be convened by UN-OHRLLS and UN-DESA, in collaboration with FERDI, OSF, AfriCatalyst, 4P, the Executive Director for Africa Group I, the Executive Director for Africa Group II, and the Executive Director for France at the World Bank Group. It will serve as a forum to examine how a multidimensional vulnerability index e.g. the UN MVI, can better guide MDBs and international financial institutions in providing more targeted financing (ex ante and ex post) for sustainable development. A special focus will be brought to the possible introduction of such an index in the “Performance Based Allocation” formula used by several MDBs.

## Objective

The objective of the meeting is to explore the rationale and feasibility of, as well as possible obstacles to, the use of an index of multidimensional and structural vulnerability for allocation of and access to concessional resources. The discussion will also consider how such an index can complement other existing variables used to measure country development financing needs and its’ allocation.

## Expected Outcomes

- Improved understanding of how an index that measures multidimensional structural vulnerability can serve as a tool to enhance existing methodologies for determining financing needs and allocation.
- Identification of possible ways and conditions according to which such an index can be integrated into existing practices of IFIs and MDBs and a better understanding of the barriers to the implementation of such an index.
- Examination of the possibility to explore more deeply the consequences of this integration on country allocations, in cooperation with the MDBs.



## Event Details

The roundtable discussion will take place on 21 April 2025 from 9:30AM to 11:30AM ET at Open Society Foundations, Washington DC, United States, on the sidelines of the Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund.

## Provisional Programme

| Calendar          |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Time              | Agenda   |
| 9:15AM – 9:30AM   | Registration and Coffee  |
| 9:30AM - 9:50 AM  | <p>Welcome remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Desire Assogbavi</b>, Advocacy Advisor, Open Society Foundation</li> </ul> <p>Opening remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Abdoul Salam Bello</b>, Chief, OHRLLS</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou</b>, Acting Chair of the Paris Pact for People and the Planet (4P) and, French former Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships (by video)</li> <li>• <b>Prof. Patrick Guillaumont</b>, President, FERDI</li> <li>• AfriCatalyst</li> </ul> <p>Keynote address</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>H.E. Mr. Olavo Correia</b>, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Business, Cabo Verde</li> </ul> |
| 9:50AM – 10:10AM  | <p>Presentation of two reports on:</p> <p>(i) <i>How MDBs currently consider vulnerability in assessing the financing needs of developing countries, by <b>Dr. Louise Fox (UN Consultant and former Member of the UN High-Level Panel on the MVI)</b></i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Why and how they can use a vulnerability index in their allocation rules, what are the obstacles to do so, how those could be overcome, by <b>FERDI</b>.</i></p>  |
| 10:10AM – 10:40AM | <p>Interventions from MDBs, IFIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Ed Mountfield</b>, Vice President for Operations Policy and Country Services (OPCS), World Bank</li> <li>• Comments by Executive Directors at the World Bank Group</li> </ul>   |
| 10:40AM – 11:15AM | Stakeholder interactive discussions  |
| 11:15AM-11:20AM   | <p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Director for Group Africa I at the WBG</li> </ul>  |



## Guiding questions

- What are the limitations of the current general practice, i.e. partly compensating developing countries for the shocks they face after they have occurred, in assisting developing countries to better address their structural vulnerability and enhancing their resilience?
- Current MDBs methods for allocating ex ante development finance focuses primarily on country size, lack of income (as measured by GNI per capita) and a measurement of policy performance. Some MDBs add country features into their formulas, as well as specific windows. How can a more comprehensive measure of country needs for financing based on structural vulnerability be incorporated into access and allocation formulas?
- What are the main challenges faced by MDBs and other stakeholders in integrating a multidimensional vulnerability index into their allocation frameworks?
- What specific actions or commitments are needed to incorporate measures of country vulnerability into allocation policies?

## Contact information

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