



**United
Nations**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

HIGHLIGHTS 2020-2021

Towards Sustainable
Development For All

COPYRIGHT:

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Highlights 2020-2021
Published by the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
New York, New York 10017, United States of America

Copyright © 2021 United Nations
All rights reserved

This publication in its entirety may not be reproduced or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy,
recording or any information storage and retrieval system now known
or to be invented, without written permission from the publisher.

All queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to:

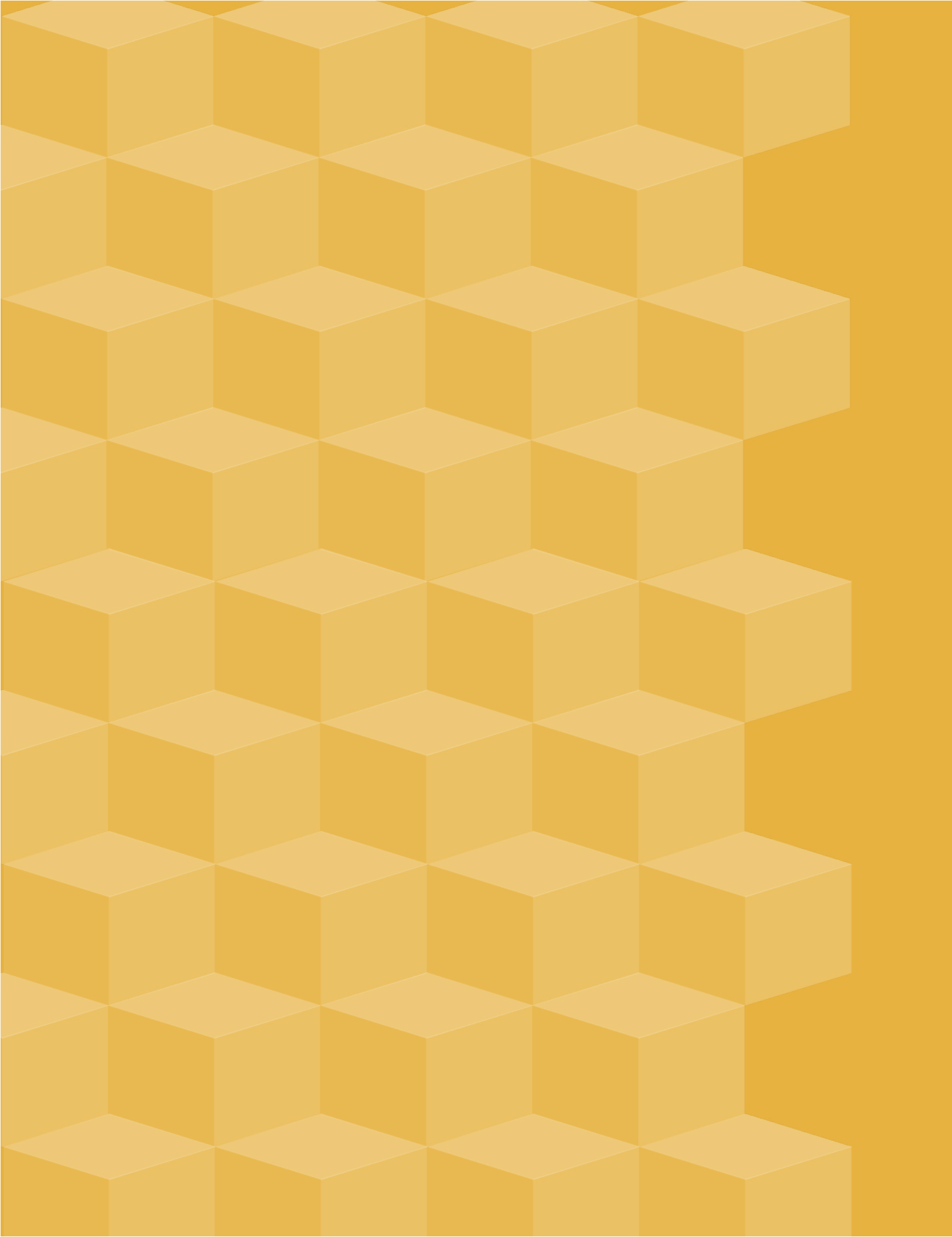
undesa@un.org

Designed and produced by:
Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
United Nations, New York



LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACT-A	Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator	IMF	International Monetary Fund	UN DCO	United Nations Development Coordination Office
ARIES	Artificial Intelligence for Environment & Sustainability	INFF	Integrated national financing framework	UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
CARICOM	Caribbean Community	ISWGHS	Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
CARICAD	Caribbean Centre for Development Administration	INTOSAI	International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions	UNDS	United Nations development system
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	ITU	International Telecommunication Union	UNEN	United Nations Economists Network
CLEWS	The Climate, Land (Food), Energy and Water Systems	LDC	Least developed country	UN-ENERGY	The United Nations' mechanism for inter-agency collaboration in the field of energy
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access	LDC5	Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019	MAG	Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group of the Internet Governance Forum	UNGGIM	United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum	MGoS	HLPF Major Group and other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism	UN GC	United Nations Global Compact
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	NGO	Non-governmental organization	UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	NSO	National Statistical Office	UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council	ODA	Official Development Assistance	UNPSA	United Nations Public Service Awards
EU	European Union	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	USD	United States dollars
FACTI Panel	High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity	PCT	Platform for Collaboration on Tax	UN-Water	Interagency mechanism for coordinating the UN's work on water and sanitation
FfD	Financing for Development	QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review	VNR	Voluntary National Review
FSDR	Financing for Sustainable Development Report	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal	WESP	World Economic Situation and Prospects
FTI	Frontier Technology Issues	SDI	Sustainable Development Investing	WHO	World Health Organization
G20	Group of Twenty	SDR	Special Drawing Rights	WSIS	World Summit on Information Society
GDP	Gross domestic product	SEEA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting		
GFGR	Global Forest Goals Report	SEEA-EA	System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Ecosystem Accounting		
GISD	Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance	SIDS	Small Island Developing States		
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	STI	Science, Technology and Innovation		
HLS	High-level Segment	STI4SDG Roadmaps	National science, technology, and innovation roadmaps for the SDGs		
IATT	United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs	UN	United Nations		
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development		
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund		
IEEE	Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.				
IGF	Internet Governance Forum				
ILO	International Labour Organization				



UN DESA's Annual Highlights report is a tool to communicate the contributions of the Department to the realization of internationally agreed development goals and shared social, economic, and environmental aspirations. It showcases the Department's role in gauging trends, building capacities, and shaping solutions. **UN DESA Highlights 2020-2021** covers activities over the period of the 75th Session of the General Assembly (September 2020 – August 2021) and is organized in alignment with the priorities set by the Department in response to priorities and needs expressed by Member States. UN DESA's work over the course of the 75th General Assembly was heavily focused on helping the world to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, while remaining committed to facilitating implementation of the 2030 Agenda, moving the world towards sustainable development for all.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- WHAT DOES UN DESA DO?
- SUPPORT TO INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES
- UN DESA IN NUMBERS

01

ADDRESSING
POVERTY AND THE
ROOT CAUSES OF
INEQUALITY

P18-31

02

ENSURING
SUSTAINABLE
FINANCING

P32-45

03

STRENGTHENING
GLOBAL DATA
CAPACITIES

P46-59

04

HARNESSING SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATION

P60-73

05

PROTECTING OUR
PLANET

P74-87

06

ACCELERATING ACTION
ON THE SDGS

P88-101

07

BUILDING RESILIENCE
AND PREPAREDNESS

P102-115

ANNEXES

- UN DESA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
- UN DESA ORGANIZATION CHART
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 75TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 76TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2020-2021 the COVID-19 pandemic added urgent context to the 10 critical action areas committed to by Member States in the political declaration at the SDG Summit in September 2019. The Department focused its work on entry points for accelerating integrated and cross sectoral progress towards sustainable development for all, with the need for future-focused pandemic response and recovery as a critical lens. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the need for transformative change. It has shone greater light on deep-set systemic flaws and added urgency to the need to root them out through data-driven, responsive, risk-informed, inclusive governance, a people- and planet-centred approach to economic development and financial management, and a reinvigorated multilateralism that unites the global community to resolve global problems.

10 priority action areas of Member States

- Leaving no one behind.
- Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing.
- Enhancing national implementation.
- Strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions.
- Bolstering local action to accelerate implementation.
- Reducing disaster risk and building resilience.
- Strengthening the high-level political forum.
- Solving challenges through international cooperation and enhancing the global partnership.
- Harnessing science, technology, and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development.
- Investing in data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals.



Fostering transformation towards a just, inclusive, and sustainable future

The world continues to be faced with the grim realities and the inescapable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, as of today, has no clear end in sight. As the global community grapples with what began as a health crisis and quickly escalated to a calamitous social and economic crisis, deep fault lines are felt in almost every aspect of our societies.

Indeed, the pandemic is cementing the reality that we live in a world of delicately integrated systems of operation and existence. The strength and stability of our economies goes beyond our ability to produce goods, provide services, and manage our finances. That is why we note with immense appreciation, that decision-makers at all levels are recognizing the importance of putting people and planet first. Throughout this pandemic, we have seen the benefits of prioritizing social protection, healthcare access, basic income, and other people-centred approaches. We also saw the criticality of access to the internet and digital services as the speed of the digital transformation and the growth of the digital economy were accelerated. The need for stronger, evidence-based, and risk-informed approaches to decision-making was also made clear.



Our experiences throughout the present pandemic have drawn greater attention to the importance of an effective science-policy interface and the need for reinvigorated multilateralism. The international community was challenged to provide an effective response to the health emergency while containing its acute social and economic fallout. UN DESA has responded to the challenge.

UN DESA Highlights 2020-2021 provides a quick look into the many efforts undertaken by the United Nations Department of Economic and

Social Affairs to foster transformation towards the just, inclusive and sustainable vision for the future as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the past year, we further strengthened our interdisciplinary approach, working across our range of expertise to shape multi-sectoral, multidimensional solutions to multi-faceted problems, building on synergies among the SDGs. We gave particular attention to building the capacities of Member States to operate through a multi-dimensional lens, strengthening public institutions to tap the 2030 Agenda as a framework for working across issues and sectors using whole-of-government approaches.

We strengthened our efforts to identify and promote social, economic, environmental, and financing policies and governance strategies, at global, regional, and national levels, that address the root causes of inequality within and across countries. Emphasis was placed on promoting and supporting the development of effective systems of social protection. Placing women and girls at the centre, and working across our work programmes on youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, we grew our attention to addressing intersectionality and discrimination.

We continued to support Member States and the global community to coordinate efforts to address the urgent issues of development financing. We provided guidance and options for shaping more sustainable financing systems with special emphasis on fairer management of international debt. We continued our work on guiding effective inclusion of the private sector in strengthening

development financing. Effective domestic resource mobilization through International Financing Frameworks, strengthened international tax cooperation, and guidance on curbing of illicit financial flows, remained highlights of our work.

We bolstered Member States' capacities to put data to the service of people and planet, by strengthening existing data sources and leveraging new ones, ensuring the availability of much-needed social, economic, and demographic data, information and analysis. We promoted and practiced a forward-looking approach, helping countries understand how to build greater resilience today, with an eye to supporting people and the planet tomorrow, with particular emphasis on the least developed countries, small island developing states, countries in Africa and in special situations.

Noting the acceleration of the global digital transformation, we worked with Member States and the global community to address the issues driving the digital divide. Our work aimed to mainstream attention to the role of science, technology, and innovation into broader development efforts, highlighting the mutually reinforcing nature of the digital divide and other forms of inequality.

The Department continued to make climate action a priority, aligning responses to the climate crisis with broader implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In our support to the High-level Dialogue on Energy, the United Nations Forum on Forests, and the Water Action Decade, among others, we continued to shape a global narrative of a people-centred approach to protecting our planet through sustainable use of natural and capital resources.

Our support to the intergovernmental machinery remains a fundamental part of our efforts to address these critical issues. As the substantive Secretariat to ECOSOC and its functional commissions and advisory bodies, the High-level Political Forum and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, we facilitated well-rounded deliberations, emphasising human dignity and justice for all. UN DESA's analysis and technical guidance informed a year of people-centred and planet-friendly intergovernmental outcomes that address global development challenges in a holistic manner.

As we move forward in the period of the 76th General Assembly and beyond, we will continue to promote accelerated action to achieve the SDGs. With the 2030 Agenda as the cornerstone of our efforts, we will continue to support relationships between governments and the people they serve, building trust and mutual understanding at global, regional and national levels, to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.

Together with Member States, civil society, businesses, and other stakeholders, we will help the world to recover better.

刘振民

WHAT DOES UN DESA DO?



UN DESA is a vital interface between global policies and national action in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Our main activities focus on promoting progress towards global development priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN DESA's work falls into three broad categories:



Intergovernmental support

By facilitating major global conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, as mandated by UN Member States, UN DESA assists countries as they find common ground, set norms, and take decisive steps forward.



Analysis

UN DESA generates, analyses, compiles and monitors a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and statistics to inform and advise Member States and other stakeholders on recommendations for shaping effective development policy and practice.



Capacity-building

UN DESA aids in translating policy frameworks developed in UN conferences and summits into programmes at the country level. Through technical assistance and advisory support, the Department supports Member States to build capacities in policy formulation and implementation, data collection and data application, to translate internationally agreed commitments, standards, policies and programmes into action on the ground.

In executing these functions, UN DESA helps governments and other stakeholders take integrated and networked approaches to decision-making, organising and supporting consultations with a range of stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society.



Major databases

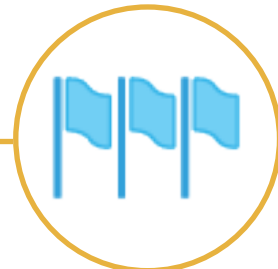
- UN COVID-19 Data Hub
- UN Data
- UN e-Government Knowledge Database
- UN Global SDG Indicators Database
- UN SDG Data Hub
- UN LDC Data
- Ocean Voluntary Commitment Database
- UN Public Service Awards Database
- National Accounts - Analysis of Main Aggregates (AMA)
- Population databases
- SDG Acceleration Action Database
- SDG Good Practices Database
- SIDS Partnerships Database
- UN Comtrade International Trade Statistics Database
- UN System SDG Implementation Database
- Voluntary National Reviews Database

Major publications



SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

UN intergovernmental meetings are critical to allow countries and other actors to review development progress, and shape and commit next steps for moving development forward, including through implementation of the 2030 Agenda. UN intergovernmental processes support policy reflection and peer learning, galvanize political will, and help to mobilize international cooperation, solidarity, and whole-of-society efforts. In 2020-2021, the world continued to meet at the UN despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. UN DESA worked to support virtual meetings. It continued preparing reports of the Secretary-General, and other thematic reports, to inject analysis and ideas into the discussions and supported the President of the General Assembly, President of ECOSOC and other representatives of Member States in the substantive organization of meetings and negotiations. UN DESA also helped to engage NGOs and major groups and other stakeholders in intergovernmental work.



General Assembly

Intergovernmental processes supported by UN DESA

- Plenary
- Economic and financial committee (Second Committee)
- Social, humanitarian and cultural committee (Third Committee)

Related high-level events and special thematic meetings supported by UN DESA in 2020-2021

- SDG Moment 2020
- First United Nations Summit on Biodiversity
- High-level event on the 25th Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development
- Ministerial Thematic Forums for the High-Level Dialogue on Energy
- UN Thematic Session on Water and Disasters

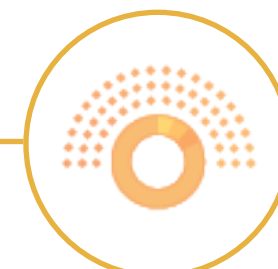


High-level political forum on sustainable development

Commissions

- Commission for Social Development
- Commission on Population and Development
- United Nations Statistical Commission
- United Nations Forum on Forests

- ECOSOC Special Meeting on *Reimagining Equality: Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the SDGs*.
- ECOSOC Special Meeting on *A Vaccine for All*



Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Committees and Advisory Bodies

- Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
- Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
- Committee of Experts on Public Administration
- Committee for Development Policy
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
- United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names



Forums

- | | |
|--|---|
| Development Cooperation Forum (ECOSOC) | World Data Forum |
| Financing for Development Forum (ECOSOC) | World Summit on the Information Society Forum |
| Internet Governance Forum | Youth Forum (ECOSOC) |
| Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs | |
| Partnership Forum (ECOSOC) | |
| Sustainable Development Goals Investment Fair | |



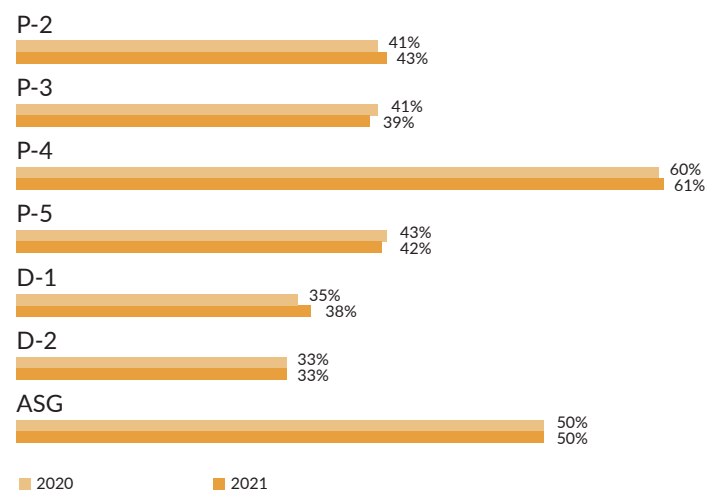
UN Collaborative Mechanisms

- Collaborative Partnership on Forests
- Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs
- High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for the 2030 Agenda
- Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
- Inter-agency Consultative Group on SIDS
- Inter-agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development
- Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs

UN DESA IN NUMBERS

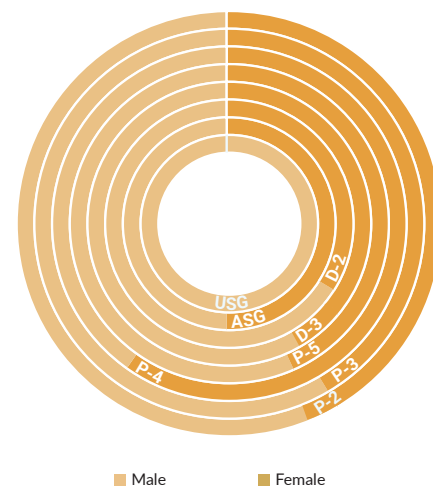
UN DESA Staff represent more than **80** countries worldwide, from all world regions

% of staff in professional categories who are female (2020 vs 2021)



As of 31 March 2021, UN DESA had achieved its target for gender balance at the ASG and P4 levels. The Department remains committed to the promise of gender parity and women's empowerment within its workforce, operations and substantive approach.

Progress toward gender parity at the Professional level in UN DESA



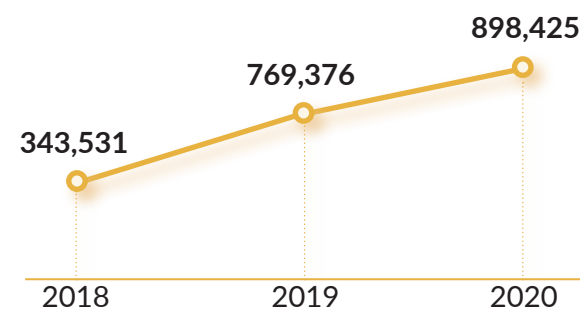
From January to December 2020, UN DESA submitted in total **208** parliamentary documents, including

- 51 Reports of the Secretary-General
- 28 Notes by the Secretary-General
- 48 Notes by the Secretariat
- 10 Procedural documents/agendas and programmes of work
- 4 Reports of the intergovernmental group meeting/expert bodies
- 16 New NGO Applications for Consultative Status with ECOSOC
- 7 Quadrennial Reports of NGOs with Consultative Status
- 40 NGO Statements
- 1 information document
- 1 Discussion paper on the theme of HLPF submitted by major groups and other stakeholders
- 1 Synthesis of voluntary submission to the HLPF
- 1 Compilation of main messages of Voluntary National Reviews

With the impact of the pandemic on travel, in 2020, UN DESA ran some **63** capacity-building projects and activities in more than **60** countries across the globe. The Department received **more than 100 requests** from Member States for capacity-building support.

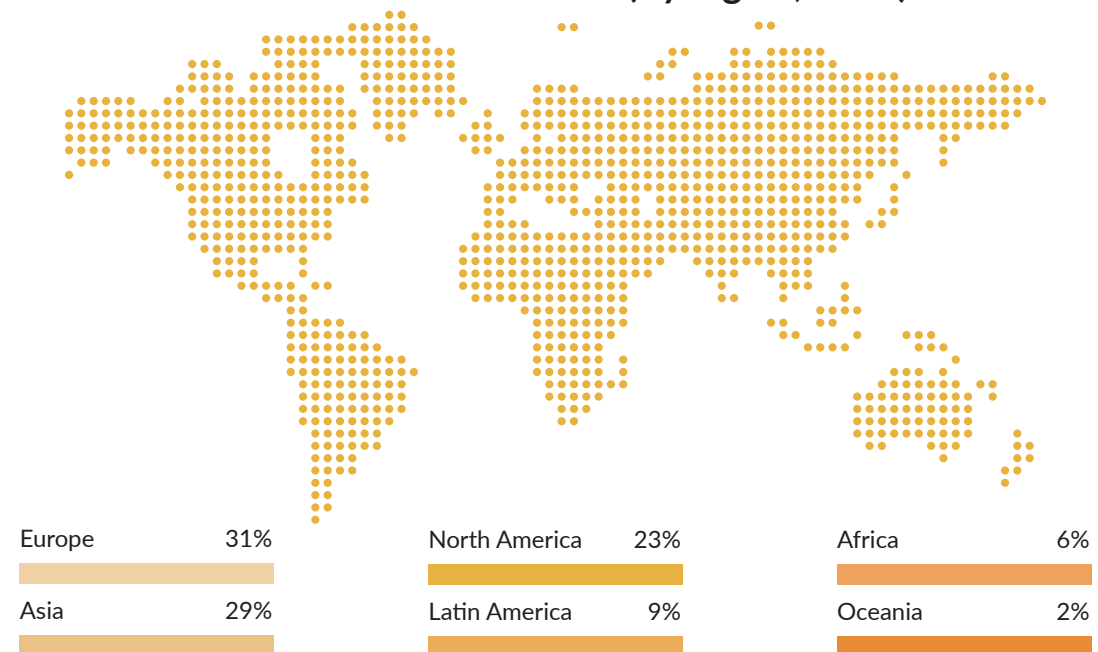
In 2020 **UN DESA's overall website visits increased by 15.2%** over 2019.

Top 5 downloaded UN DESA Publications

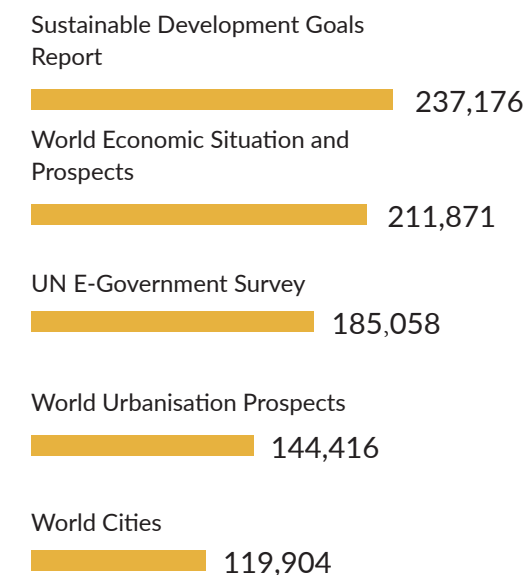


In 2020, UN DESA's top 5 most popular publications were downloaded a combined **898,425** times, a more than 16 per cent increase over 2019.

Share of visits to UN DESA websites (By region, 2020) Total visits



5 most downloaded UN DESA publications in 2020



Twitter

Combined followers across accounts managed by UN DESA: **800,938**
Follower growth in 2020: **7%**

Facebook

Combined Page Likes across accounts managed by UN DESA: **2,138,866**
Growth in Page Likes in 2020: **0.31%**



ADDRESSING POVERTY AND THE ROOT CAUSES OF INEQUALITY...

... because we will leave no one behind

With the COVID-19 pandemic driving one of the greatest social and economic crises in the history of the United Nations, UN DESA's work in 2020-2021 sought to shape solid recommendations and drive transformative action for inclusive social and economic policy, and people-centred development.

UN DESA...

- Provided detailed analysis and solid evidence for promoting economic security and strengthening social protection.
- Provided solutions for driving rural development, in the World Social Report 2021.
- Worked in Latin America to strengthen national capacities to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Drew critical attention to ageism and its impact on older persons lives.
- Examined successful practices and continuing obstacles to realizing indigenous peoples' rights to lands and territories.
- Supported ECOSCOC in examining racial equity and in promoting access to COVID-19 vaccines.

01

Addressing poverty and the root causes of inequality

The COVID-19 pandemic has had its greatest impact on those already furthest behind. It has highlighted the need for social, economic and financing policies and governance strategies that promote equity and inclusion. UN DESA's work in 2020-2021 sought to provide governments the support they needed to shape an inclusive recovery from the pandemic and get themselves on track to realize the goals of the 2030 Agenda, for all.

Promoting economic security and expanded social protection

While the pandemic and other global trends are increasing people's exposure to economic shocks, their ability to cope and recover has not improved accordingly. Economic insecurity disproportionately affects people in or near poverty, members of ethnic or racial minorities, women, migrants and youth, and it is likely to push members of these groups further behind. To address these concerns, UN DESA convened a series of online dialogues with experts and issued policy briefs on an evolving and pressing challenge in the context of the pandemic economic insecurity.

UN DESA's analysis demonstrated how often public institutions, services and social protection systems struggle

to adapt to rapidly changing needs. However, policy innovations in both developed and developing countries, that have come about as a response to the pandemic, demonstrate the capacity of social protection systems to adapt to changing circumstances. Since their release, the policy briefs have had notable reach, receiving 14,579 combined downloads through 31 August 2021.

Building national capacity for disability inclusion

UN DESA conducted a series of virtual and face-to-face workshops aimed at building national capacity to ratify and implement the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Central Asia, UN DESA supported governments to design national policies



© UNICEF/Pirozzi

for implementing the Convention, including through establishing accessibility standards. In particular, the Department supported Kyrgyzstan's Accessible Country Programme and Tajikistan's national action plan in support of implementation of the Convention.

In Latin America, UN DESA supported inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market by designing special training programme and reviewing national legislation. In Ecuador, the Department supported preparation of two good practices guidelines, one on inclusive education for youth with disabilities aimed especially at educators in higher education, and the other aimed at employers, to support labour inclusion for youth with disabilities. Forty-three workshops will be implemented across different provinces in the country.

UN DESA further supported the Peruvian Government to prepare training modules for municipal, regional, and local officials, representatives of NGOs and youth disability organizations in Arequipa, Trujillo, Ica and Huancayo. The modules are centred on successfully reaching the labour market, raising awareness in the work environment for disability inclusion, and contextualizing the legal framework for reasonable accommodation at work. Two workshops were conducted in June 2021 to launch the online platform, serving more than 300 participants. More than 9,300 visitors have accessed the modules since launched.



© UNICEF/UNI1313417/McIlwaine

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Improving national capacities for managing social protection systems

The UN DESA/ILO project, *Achieving SDGs and Ending Poverty Through Universal Social Protection*, continued its support to the governments of Cambodia and Pakistan to improve national capacities for developing and implementing inclusive social protection measures and schemes.

The project, which started in January 2019, ran through June 2021. The project provided technical support at country level to strengthen the capacity of public institutions and practitioners in areas identified as critical for social security governance in each context, including better coordination, improved data management, and better enforcement of social security laws.

UN DESA prepared comparative research on governance of social protection systems to provide better technical information for policymaking and undertook related in-country studies, that helped to inform in-country efforts.

Hundreds of civil servants and other stakeholders were trained in governance, administration, and management of social protection systems. ICT support was provided and databases for enhanced data collection, analysis and service provision were created. The project also supported increased visibility and coverage of programmes, while building a broader advocacy base for universal social protection. In Pakistan, more than 550,000 workers were registered during a coverage campaign, with two provinces moving towards universal coverage.



© UN Photo/ Stuart Price

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Exploring the expansion of social protection in Africa

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many African countries expanded their use of social protection measures to curb the socioeconomic impacts. In its March 2021 policy brief, **Social Policy**

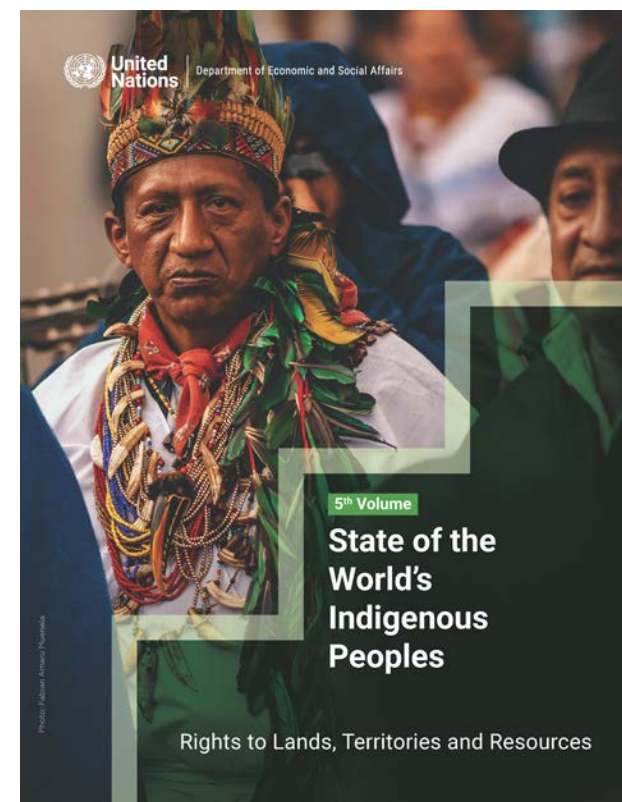
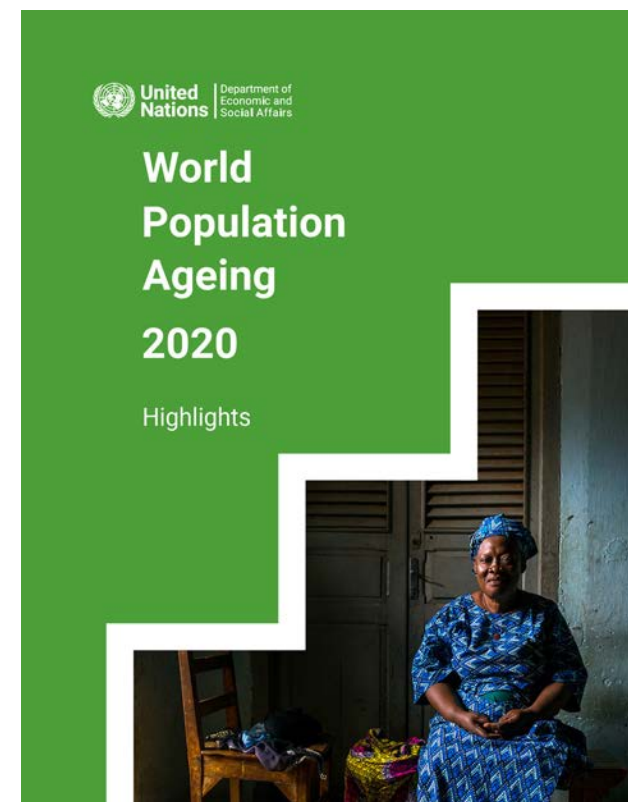
and Social Protection Measures to Build Africa Better Post-Covid-19, UN DESA highlighted the critical need for further investments in social protection to help African nations to build back better and stronger, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and urges development partners to support these efforts, particularly for the poorest countries with limited fiscal space. A commentary on the brief and its findings was featured in the UN's African Renewal magazine.

Addressing ageing, ageism and the rights of older persons

The world's population is growing older, with women comprising the majority of older persons. In 2021, one out of ten people or about 752 million persons were aged 65 years or over worldwide. That number is projected to more than double by 2050, reaching over 1.5 billion persons, or one in six globally. In 2020, UN DESA's **World Population Ageing Highlights** continued its strong tradition of highlighting the trajectory of population ageing based on projections of the **World Population Prospects** and outlining the potential impacts on development policy and practice. The report provides a meaningful reference for policymaking on ageing and older persons.

The 2020 report placed strong focus on the role of age in the COVID-19 pandemic. Older persons are at much higher risk of dying from the disease than any other age group. It also highlighted how older persons' living arrangements impact their chances of getting infected with -and dying from- COVID-19.

The Department also contributed to the first **Global Report on Ageism**, released in partnership with the World Health Organisation, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, and the United Nations Population Fund. Directed at policymakers, practitioners, researchers, development agencies and members of the private sector and civil society, the report defines the nature of ageism, presents evidence on the scale and impacts of ageism, and provides recommendations for action to address ageism and ensure a world for all ages.



Promoting the rights of indigenous peoples

UN DESA's **State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Volume V** offers a wide-ranging perspective on indigenous peoples' rights to lands, territories, and resources through analysis of legislation and agreements at the national and international level, and through customary law. It examines successful practices and continuing obstacles to realizing indigenous peoples' rights to lands and territories and suggests ways forward.

Indigenous peoples' relationship to their lands, territories and resources are at the heart of their identity, well-being, and culture. Preservation of the environment transmitted through traditional knowledge passed down through

generations is at the centre of their existence. The report continues to inform discussions in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues and serves as an important reference for policy makers and civil society for effectively supporting inclusion of indigenous peoples and the upholding of their collective rights.

Bringing the voices of youth to the table

At the 2021 ECOSOC Youth Forum (7-8 April 2021), youth leaders from around the world had the opportunity to engage with government representatives, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in civil society and the private sector to discuss bold solutions and initiatives for steering a resilient recovery from COVID-19 and setting the world



FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTION AND DECISIONS

Reimagining equality

In February 2021, the Economic and Social Council put a spotlight on structural racism through its special meeting, Reimagining Equality: Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the SDGs. UN DESA, in collaboration with

OHCHR, led the substantive preparations of the meeting. The meeting underscored the need for an ambitious whole-of-society approach with greater urgency to dismantle biases and systems that perpetuate racism and inequalities. Through a Presidential Statement, the meeting called for inclusion, justice and dignity for all.

Promoting vaccine equity

Vaccine equity was at the top of the Economic and Social Council's agenda in April 2021. The Special Meeting of the Council on *A Vaccine for All* revealed deep concerns about vaccine nationalism and restrictions on exports, intellectual property rights, lack of resources and capacities. UN DESA mobilized high-level Member State and UN system participation, and convened key stakeholders to address various dimensions of vaccine equity. A clear message from the meeting was that the response to the pandemic provides an opportunity to strengthen health systems and advance towards universal health coverage to help countries be better prepared and become more resilient against future pandemics.

BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Promoting inclusive multilateralism

The implementation of an agenda as ambitious as the 2030 Agenda requires unprecedented engagement of all actors, and NGOs are a key stakeholder for successful implementation. UN DESA supported the engagement of an increasing number of NGOs in the work of the Council and major groups and other stakeholders in the HLPF in an effort to maximize the impact of their contributions. There were some 396 written statements by NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC to the 2021 ECOSOC High-level segment, more than double the number submitted in 2020. UN DESA also continued to support the process for NGOs to obtain consultative status with the Council through the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. Currently, 5,882 NGOs are in consultative status with ECOSOC; 546 new applications have been received for the 2022 cycle. The Department has stepped-up the advice and support provided to NGOs on how to best contribute to the work of the UN, helping to enrich debates, increase ownership of UN work, and accelerate action towards realizing the SDGs by 2030.



back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. In its virtual format, the Forum attracted more than 19,000 participants, an exponential increase over the 1000 who participated in 2019. Co-organized by UN DESA and the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth (OSGEY), in collaboration with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), the Youth Forum also provided a platform for young people to express their concerns about how the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities and weak and biased social and economic systems across the globe. They highlighted how young people have been adversely affected by the growing uncertainty, lack of decent work, educational turmoil and increasing digital inequalities. They called for ensuring their meaningful participation in decision making at all levels, reducing discrimination and promoting the rule of law. Their concerns and recommendations were heard and discussed by the more than 400 government representatives present, including 61 high-level officials at the ministerial level and 25 senior officials from Youth Ministries and National Youth Councils.

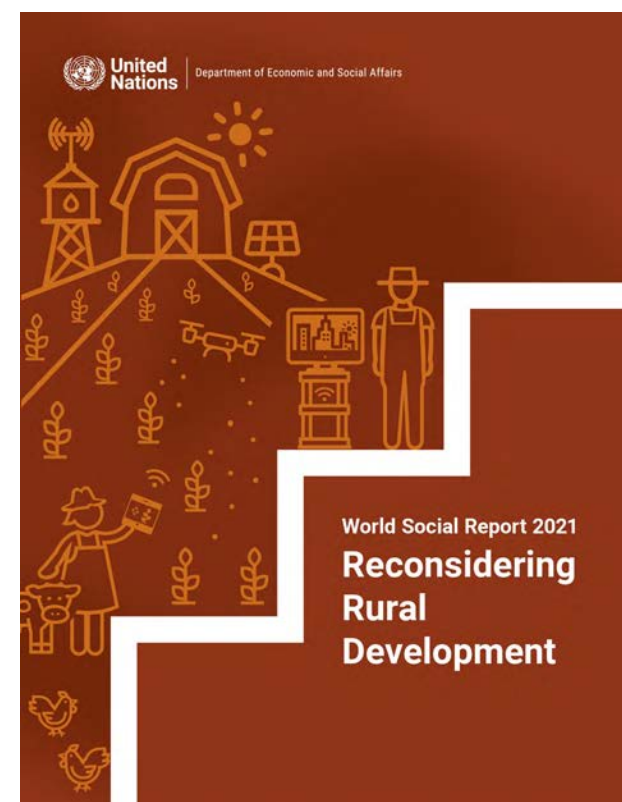
Supporting coordinated action on poverty eradication

The inter-agency system-wide plan of action for the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027) continues to guide coordinated UN-system action on poverty eradication. The Department reviewed the progress made, including by the United Nations system, in implementing the Decade, examined gaps and challenges and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The review assesses the derailing effect of the pandemic on the implementation of the Third Decade and highlights the increasing social inequality brought on by the current crisis. It shows how the United Nations has mobilized to save lives and promote better recovery in the face of the pandemic,

including through technical assistance to Member States and policy advice. The recommendations stemming from the review, encourage strengthened multilateralism, partnerships, and coordination among multiple stakeholders to move forward the types of future-focused policies necessary to build resilience within individuals and communities and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Addressing detrimental rural-urban divide

Rural areas are home to 80 per cent of the world's extreme poor, have fewer education, health, and other public services, and are witnessing severe degradation of natural resources. Rural populations are also more likely to face human rights abuses, gender inequality, poor working conditions, and the violation of indigenous land rights. UN



DESA's **World Social Report 2021** urges all to seize the opportunities presented by new technologies to finally end the rural-urban divide. The Report argues for moving the task of rural development to the centre of attention and adopting an approach that raises the average living standard of rural people to that of urban people, without migration, and that also avoids urban slums and squalor. With the revamp of the World Social Report in 2019, the report has continued to grow its reach. Downloads in 2020 reached 10,952, some 19% more than 2019 and 34% more than 2018.

Addressing access to water and sanitation

UN DESA is supporting UN Member States to implement the International Decade for Action, Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028. The Water Action Decade aims to accelerate efforts towards meeting water-related challenges. In March 2021, UN DESA supported the High-level Meeting on Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda convened by the

President of the General Assembly. 161 countries signed a cross regional statement on water, which highlights actions in support of promoting, protecting, and fulfilling the human rights to water and sanitation.

In follow-up to the 2020 launch of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework, UN DESA and UN-Water co-chaired a special event on Goal 6 at the High-level Political Forum 2021, to review the progress in implementation. The event launched the SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative, which is co-coordinated by UN DESA and UNESCO and is tailored to national capacity development needs and undertaken in collaboration with the UN system and other development partners at various levels of operation.



© UNICEF/UNI211923/Schermbaueker

PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

Addressing adolescent fertility to support inclusion of young women and girls

Levels and trends of adolescent fertility depend on the opportunities and constraints that young women and girls face in different contexts. Staying in school longer and having access to reproductive health-care services and information helps to keep adolescent fertility low.

In 2020, UN DESA published a pre-pandemic global report on childbearing among adolescents which showed that while adolescent fertility in many countries had fallen significantly since 1990-1995, there are disparities across and within countries and between population groups. Low levels of adolescent fertility were prevalent in countries that had adopted pragmatic policies and strategies to avoid teenage pregnancy and parenthood, including the promotion of sex education and contraceptive use through mass media and schools.

DRIVING INNOVATION

Implementing the UN Legal Identity Agenda

In 2020 the United Nations adopted the UN Legal Identity Agenda – a holistic approach to civil registration, vital statistics and identity management – as a recommended model for ensuring universal registration of all vital events, translated in regular, comprehensive and accurate vital statistics and legal identity for all.

As a co-chair of the UN Legal Identity Agenda Task Force, UN DESA helped drive development of a system that encompasses different government infrastructure components and establishes interoperability between:

- health institutions delivering their responsibilities of informing on the occurrence of births and deaths;
- national civil registration systems responsible for issuing legal tenders;
- national statistical systems in charge of producing reliable and regular vital and population statistics;
- the population registers that serve as a constantly updated list of people in the country; and
- the national identification system responsible for issuing legal identity credentials throughout the lifetime of an individual.



© UNICEF/UNI316644/Frank Dejongh



ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FINANCING...

© UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

... that supports a people-centred approach.

UN DESA supported Member States and the global community to address the urgent issues of sustainable financing for development, with focus on staving off the debt and liquidity crises emergent from the economic impacts of the pandemic and building resilience.

UN DESA...

- Led preparation of the 2021 Financing for Sustainable Development Report, putting forward joint analysis and policy recommendations to finance the pandemic response and strengthen risk-informed financing for sustainable development.
- Supported Member States to reach consensus on a series of ambitious policy actions to finance pandemic response and recovery and transition to more sustainable economies and societies.
- Shaped a reimagining of development cooperation – informed by risk, designed to build resilience, and strongly linked with climate action.
- Strengthened support to the UN Tax Committee.
- Advanced a concrete menu of options for Member States to address debt distress and liquidity challenges and combat illicit financial flows in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Coordinated the actions of the GISD Alliance with major policy making groups and financial system bodies to ensure that its recommendations are included in their priorities.
- Led the UN's work to develop a global methodology on integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs).

02

Ensuring sustainable financing

The COVID-19 crisis triggered the largest global recession in 90 years, setting back progress toward the SDGs and affecting all aspects of financing for development. Providing much needed guidance to Member States to respond and recover from the pandemic has been central to UN DESA's efforts.

Providing policy advice leadership on financing for sustainable development

UN DESA led the preparation and analytical work for the **2021 Financing for Sustainable Development Report (FSDR)**, the main substantive input to the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum, and product of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development. Launched in March, the 2021 FSDR highlighted the risk of a sharply diverging world in the near term where the gaps between rich and poor widen because some countries lack the necessary financial resources to combat the COVID-19 crisis and its socioeconomic impact. Short-term risks are compounded by growing systemic risks that threaten to further derail progress, such as climate change.

Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2021
Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development



United Nations



The report recommended immediate actions to prevent this scenario and put forward solutions to mobilize investments in people and in infrastructure to rebuild better. It also laid out reforms for the global financial and policy architecture to ensure that it is supportive of a sustainable and resilient recovery and aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The messages of the FSDR were amplified by targeted policy briefs on risk-informed finance, corporate sustainability reporting and blended finance.

Addressing Debt and Liquidity Risks

UN DESA supported Member States in developing policy solutions to address debt and liquidity in the follow-up process to the High-Level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, convened in May 2020 by the Secretary-General and the Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica. The Department supported the work of discussion groups led by Member States and including various international institutions,

which culminated in a menu of proposed policy options and recommendations, including on the need for debt relief beyond the G20's Debt Service Suspension Initiative, and for a new SDR allocation and mechanisms to channel SDRs to countries in need. These options were considered by Finance Ministers convened by the Deputy Secretary General and the Finance Ministers of Canada and Jamaica and, subsequently, by Heads of State and Government at a special meeting on the margins of the 75th United Nations General Assembly in September 2020. As a follow-up to these discussions, UN DESA is leading two of six clusters set up to advance the menu of policy options - liquidity and debt vulnerability and addressing special country needs. The cluster on liquidity and debt vulnerability contributed to the Secretary-General's brief, **Liquidity and Debt Solutions to Invest in the SDGs: The Time to Act is Now**, and supported the meeting of Heads of State and Government on *International Debt Architecture and Liquidity* in March 2021.



© Arne Hoel/ World Bank

PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

Mainstreaming gender perspectives in shaping fiscal policy

Gender issues are routinely covered in the annual Financing for Sustainable Development Report (FSDR). The Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development Gender Cluster Group, co-chaired by UN Women and UN DESA, ensures that gender perspectives are mainstreamed in the annual FSDR.

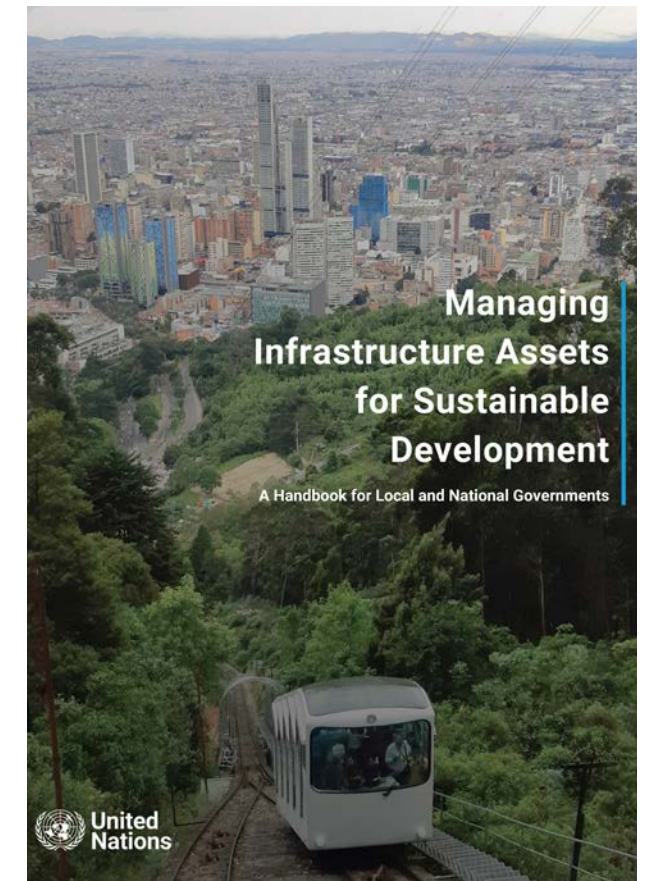
Some of the issues covered in the 2021 FSDR include how COVID-19 fiscal responses helped to mitigate the negative and disproportionate impact of the crisis on women and girls; official development assistance to gender equality and women's empowerment; gender responsiveness of climate finance; measures to address non-tariff barriers faced by women cross-border trade; and investing in gender statistics. UN DESA's analytical work also highlighted that the negative impacts of illicit financial flows are greater on women and girls.

Maximizing the value and sustainability of public infrastructure investments

Investments in public infrastructure assets – from bridges and watersheds to hospitals and garbage collection vehicles – play a key role in the SDGs, stemming the tides of the COVID-19 pandemic and confronting the climate, humanitarian, and other crises. Yet, efforts to close infrastructure investment gaps rarely factor in the financial costs, human skills and material resources needed to manage a wide portfolio of critical infrastructure assets over their entire life cycles.

In the last five years, UN DESA has sought to change this prevailing approach. A pilot project to introduce and implement sustainable, forward-looking infrastructure asset management in municipalities across Bangladesh, Nepal, Tanzania and Uganda yielded a still-growing body of knowledge and tools, now outlined in the UN DESA-UNCDF publication **Managing Infrastructure Assets for Sustainable Development: A Handbook for Local and National Governments**. Released in February 2021, the Handbook is available in Spanish, French, and Swahili, with more translations to come. With practical and accessible text and engaging infographics, the Handbook calls to action national and local governments in nurturing infrastructure assets and the key public services they enable to be reliable, crisis-resilient, and climate-smart.

UN DESA also partnered with UNITAR and Columbia University to create a Massive Open Online Course that transforms asset management principles and tools described in the Handbook into a virtual and visual learning experience. The self-paced course features interviews and testimonies from primary sources, including an asset manager from Malaysia's Department of Irrigation and Drainage, a public financial management expert from Nepal, a town clerk in Uganda and many more. Learners receive in-depth instruction in an engaging setting.



Curbing illicit financial flows

UN DESA supported Member States to advance a concrete menu of options to combat illicit financial flows in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department coordinated a multi-stakeholder discussion group on illicit financial flows, co-chaired by the Ambassadors of Barbados and Nigeria, as part of the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond. The menu of options was considered at a meeting of Heads of State and Government and fed into analytical work conducted by the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development.



STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Taking asset management principles and tools to the field

Between February and April 2021, UN DESA brought the asset management expertise of various field authorities to over 2,500 individuals across Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean in the “Online Solutions Dialogues”. This three-part interactive workshop series convened local and national government officials, together with industry, academic and civil society professionals, in discussions about

how to leverage infrastructure assets to meet the challenges affecting our economies, societies and geographies. Participants gained hands-on experience in developing Asset Management Action Plans, the flagship tool developed jointly by UN DESA and UNCDF, analysing trends in asset data over time and devising a climate adaptation strategy for a hazard facing their own communities.

The Dialogues put asset management on the radar screens of thousands of governments, cultivating a deeper commitment to sustainable and resilient infrastructure for the SDGs, backed by a growing network of knowledge and practical support.

BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

New UN-led knowledge platform on risk-informed and resilient infrastructure asset management

UN DESA has leveraged its partnerships with UNCDF and UNOPS in the context of its capacity development support on sustainable infrastructure asset management. Over 2020-2021, the three agencies collaborated on the finalization and launch of the UN Handbook on infrastructure asset management. The preparations of the Handbook convened numerous experts and practitioners from around the world and helped establish a new UN-led knowledge platform on risk-informed and resilient infrastructure asset management. The platform brings together central and local government infrastructure experts from local governments, the UN system, as well as experts from the African Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the Institute for Asset Management, the Overseas Development Institute, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and CitiesAlliance.



The Department also hosted the Independent Secretariat of the High-Level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity for Achieving the 2030 Agenda (FACTI Panel). The FACTI Panel's independent Secretariat successfully supported the Panel in its work and the widespread dissemination of its recommendations, despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, organising effective consultation and supporting production of high-quality analysis. Through its analysis the Panel has successfully advanced the global conversation on illicit financial flows and financial integrity issues.

Advancing international tax cooperation in times of crisis

UN DESA supported the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to deliver fully on its ambitious work programme and conclude its work at its 22nd Session in April 2021. COVID-19 has disrupted economies and consumption patterns, favouring digital business models over their bricks-and-mortar competitors. The 2021 UN Model Double Taxation Convention included

a new Article 12B that gives source (often developing) countries the treaty right to tax payments in their countries from automated digital services, where supported by domestic law. The pandemic has also displaced workers, through lockdowns and travel restrictions, and the UN Model has been amended to clarify when a home office in another state would constitute a "permanent establishment" - providing taxpayers with tax certainty, at a time when home offices have become more usual, often involuntarily. UN DESA also supported preparation of the **2021 United Nations Practical Manual on Transfer Pricing for Developing Countries**, addressing transfer pricing challenges related to cross-border inter-company transactions. This helps avoid profit shifting from high-tax to low-tax jurisdictions - despite the pandemic-related market disruptions that make comparison with market prices difficult.

The Department's Virtual Workshop on Practical and Policy Aspects of Taxation in a Digitalized Economy brought together over 160 participants for learning with top-tier experts on innovative issues in international tax.



© Nathaniel Tetteh on Unsplash

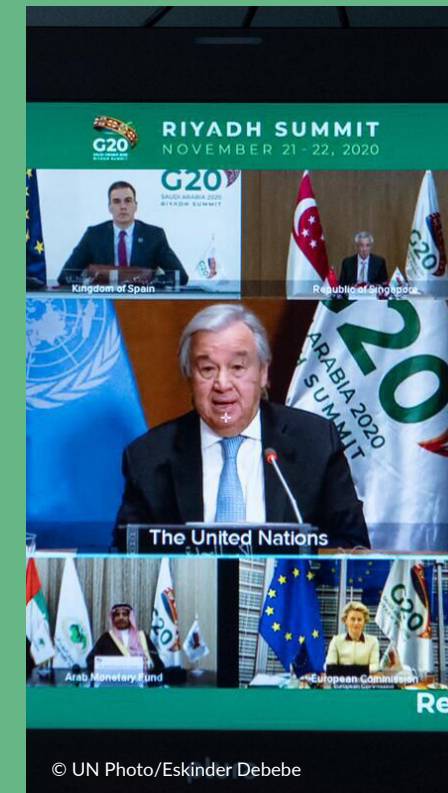
SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Advocating for special attention to the most vulnerable countries in the G20's response and recovery

Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin supported the Secretary-General's engagement at the Group of 20 (G20) as the UN G20 Sherpa. UN DESA convened the UN G20 Working Group with a view to bringing a strategic and coherent approach to policy deliberations.

UN DESA worked closely with the G20 Presidencies (Saudi Arabia and Italy) and consistently brought to the G20's attention the Secretary-General's call of: i) Redoubling efforts to fight the spread of COVID-19; ii) Mobilizing resources for the COVID-19 response and recovery; iii) Achieving a sustainable, resilient and inclusive future beyond COVID-19; and iv) Tackling climate change to achieve a carbon-neutral and sustainable world.

These continuous and effective engagements have helped raise awareness among G20 members of the importance of stronger reference to multilateral action, the 75th anniversary of the UN as well as the 2030 Agenda, which were reflected in the 2020 G20 Leaders Declaration. The Riyadh G20 Summit took place virtually from 20-21 November 2020.



In the Summit communique, G20 countries pledged to take all necessary measures to fight back the pandemic, making concrete commitments in health and socioeconomic response, including scaling up its support for Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) initiative and COVAX. The declaration also presents avenues towards a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery for all.



© Macau Photo Agency/Unsplash

FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTION AND DECISIONS

Fostering global consensus to finance a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive recovery - 2021 ECOSOC FfD Forum and its outcome

UN DESA provided analytical and advisory support to Member States discussions at the 2021 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum. The Forum broke new ground in the area of Financing for Development and was unprecedented in its reach and level of engagement. The Special Segment on Financing the COVID-19 recovery of the Forum, convened by the President of ECOSOC in consultation with the President of the General Assembly, garnered significant interest at the highest political level.

The Forum engaged Heads of State and Government as well as a Ministers and Vice-Ministers from over 50 countries. Unprecedented online interaction saw over 25,000 engagements being registered on social media in relation to the Forum, leading to a potential reach of around 4 billion users.

During the Forum, countries called for urgent global action to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of millions across the world.

The outcome document of the 2021 FfD Forum, agreed by consensus, represents a significant milestone for Financing for Development. It is the most ambitious since the Forum's inception, reinforcing the commitment of the international community to jointly tackle the COVID-19 crisis and commit to bold new actions that can set the world on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



© UN Photo/Stuart Price

The Virtual Workshop on Carbon Taxation engaged over 110 governments officials from more than 30 developing countries to learn about practical options to design and administer a carbon tax, at a time when many countries look for climate-smart solutions to finance the COVID-19 response and recovery.

Two virtual webinars on the COVID-19 Impact on Transfer Pricing and on the Transfer Pricing Aspects of Financial Transactions addressed the difficulty of comparability data during a pandemic and on how to deal with intra-group loans and guarantees. The webinars again brought developing country practitioners together with peers and renowned experts from the UN, OECD, academia, and private sector for a highly interactive learning event. Videos of the webinars are accessible online as training materials. UN DESA also continued to provide technical guidance on tax cooperation with the IMF, OECD and the World Bank, including through the Platform for Collaboration on

Tax (PCT). In February and March 2021, the PCT held two virtual workshops with over 700 participants to launch two toolkits on tax treaty negotiation and transfer pricing documentation.

Supporting Member States to implement integrated national financing frameworks

UN DESA continued to lead the UN's work to develop a global methodology on integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs) to help countries find solutions to close financing gaps and incorporate financing into planning processes. In April 2021, in the margins of the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum, UN DESA launched a dedicated website on INFF. The website contains published guidance notes on the INFF inception phase, assessment and diagnostics, financing strategy, governance and coordination, and monitoring and review building blocks. The Department, in collaboration with

the Regional Economic Commissions, is also supporting INFF development in 10 countries (Belarus, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Costa Rica, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Zambia). INFFs lay out the full range of financing sources – domestic public resources, aid and development cooperation, and domestic and international private finance – and allows countries to develop a strategy to increase investment, manage risks, and achieve sustainable development priorities, as identified in a country’s national sustainable development strategy.

Mobilizing finance and private sector investment for sustainable development

UN DESA continued its coordination of the work of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD), an Alliance of 30 global business leaders from the financial and non-financial sectors who collectively manage assets worth US\$16 trillion. Among the achievements of the GISD Alliance’s first year was the report *Renewed, Recharged,*

and *Reinforced: Urgent actions to harmonize and scale sustainable finance*, which was submitted as an input to the European Commission’s consultation on its *Renewed Sustainable Financing Strategy*. The report made more than 60 recommendations for global action to scale-up investment in sustainable development to help advance the SDGs. The Alliance also developed a unified definition of Sustainable Development Investing (SDI) and released the first of its kind *Call to Action for COVID-19 bonds*, which was endorsed by the International Capital Markets Association.



© Pau Casals on Unsplash



© Florian Wehde on Unsplash

DRIVING INNOVATION

Sustainable Development Goals Investment Fair

The 2021 SDG Investment Fair focused on how to build forward from COVID-19 by scaling up long-term investment for sustainable development. Convened by UN DESA, the Fair brought together ministers and senior government officials, the private sector, including CEO Members of the GISD Alliance, representatives from development finance institutions, multilateral institutions, academia and think tanks to discuss concrete actions on how to address the decline in foreign direct investment during the pandemic and

the continuous need to mobilize additional investments for the implementation of the SDGs. Ministers of Finance and Foreign Affairs pointed out the need to shift incentives towards the long term for all actors across the investment chain. In addition, participants discussed the need for sector-specific SDG-related metrics to strengthen the reporting on the sustainability impact of companies and to strengthen the alignment of private investment with sustainable development.



STRENGTHENING GLOBAL DATA CAPACITIES...

...because informed decision-making requires quality data

In 2020-2021, UN DESA helped put data to the task of effective decision-making, supporting Member States to build their capacities for collecting official data, tapping existing data sources, and developing new ones.

UN DESA...

- Monitored progress and gaps in global efforts to achieve the SDGs, highlighting the on-going impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supported Member States' efforts to compile and disseminate crucial, innovative, detailed, disaggregated, and geo-referenced data on the pandemic's impact on society, economy, and government.
- Coordinated development of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)

- Ecosystem Accounting (EA), the Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems, and other methodological guidelines supporting National Statistical Systems.
- Developed opportunities for members of the international statistical community to connect, coordinate, collaborate, and strengthen capacities, even in the absence of in-person networking.

03

Strengthening global data capacities

The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the need for real-time, disaggregated, and interrelated datasets, so that governments had the information they needed to respond effectively. UN DESA was there to guide them through.

Monitoring progress towards the SDGs

UN DESA led preparation of the annual **Sustainable Development Goals Report**, as central coordinator of the global SDG indicator framework and monitoring process. The Sustainable Development Goals Report and other monitoring tools provide policy makers and stakeholders with the latest SDG data to identify areas for targeted policy interventions and enable informed decision making. The 2021 Report demonstrates how COVID-19 has disrupted development activities for the SDG implementation across the world and set back years of progress made on the Global Goals. The annual report is based on data from the global SDG indicator framework developed by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators and is prepared in collaboration with over 200 experts from over 50 agencies, funds, and programmes.

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021



Supporting the global data response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it an unprecedented demand for urgently needed information to help save lives and livelihoods across the world. At the same time, the operation of statistical systems has been tremendously challenged due to lockdown measures and extraordinary budget cuts. UN DESA joined efforts with National Statistical Offices (NSOs), government agencies, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector around the world, to ensure that the best quality data and statistics are available to help address the crisis. This includes tracking the evolution of the disease, monitoring its social and economic impacts, and supporting governments' mitigation and recovery plans. As part of the 36-member Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, the Department contributed to a series of reports entitled **How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical**

perspective, which offer a snapshot of differential success in mitigating the pandemic across countries. The series has reached more than 50,000 readers since its release, providing insight into good practices and effective policies.

Conducted in collaboration with the World Bank and the UN Regional Commissions, a three-phase survey of NSOs assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on statistical operations, and the responses by NSOs to the mounting challenges. UN DESA's capacity development efforts continued to support NSOs to integrate innovative and experimental sources, methods, and technologies to make crucial data open and easily accessible to all sectors of society.

In the white paper, **COVID-19: Ready to Respond**, UN DESA highlighted how Member States used integrated geospatial information to understand and respond to the impact of COVID-19. Prepared in the Department's role

as Secretariat of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the paper outlined how, from early on, researchers and governments have been making use of highly visual geospatial data and applications to record and report the virus' spread. With the virus inherently anchored to geographic locations, response to the virus is also about location. For decision-makers it means understanding and communicating where to deploy and strengthen healthcare services, hospitals, and medical supply chains, and mitigate the economic impact. This effort by the geospatial community and UN DESA continues as the focus shifts now towards disseminating vaccines.

Developing new and progressive methodological guidelines

Since 2018, UN DESA has led a revision of the statistical framework and methodological development of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting-Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA EA). The SEEA EA enables countries to measure their natural capital and understand the contributions of nature to our prosperity. The Department

engaged over 100 experts to contribute to 23 discussion papers, and consulted with more than 500 additional experts in finalizing the framework. The SEEA EA takes a spatial approach and provides a framework for measuring the extent and health of ecosystems, as well as the services they provide to humanity. UN DESA's coordination of the 3-year revision process led to the submission of the draft text to the 52nd session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in March 2021, culminating in the adoption of SEEA EA as an international statistical standard, a critical step for introducing measures into national accounting systems to complement GDP.

UN DESA also continued to deliver important guidance for chief statisticians across the world for maintaining statistical capacity that meets current and evolving needs. The department guided preparation of the new **Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems**, which was endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2021. The Handbook is a living document that will be updated with new practices and challenges including through the outcomes of a series of upcoming regional thematic conferences.



© UNICEF/UN0401063/Himu



© Clay Banks on Unsplash

FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

Integrating statistical and geospatial information in decision-making

UN DESA in 2020-2021 provided secretariat support to four data-related intergovernmental processes: The Statistical Commission, the UN Committee of Experts for Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the UN Group of Experts for Geographical Names (UNGEGN), and the Commission on Population and Development.

The substantive work of these bodies enables the development of statistical standards, norms and data processes to support the collection, production, and management of sound data for policy-making. The National Statistical Offices and National Geospatial Information Agencies were represented in these intergovernmental bodies and collaborated to integrate statistical and geospatial information and had a commensurate impact in responding to COVID-19 by informing decision-makers and communicating to people on necessary actions.



© UN Women Moldova/Diana Savina

PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

World's Women 2020: Tracking data on gender equality

The Secretary-General's flagship report **The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics** presents the latest assessment of progress towards gender equality. It is a collection of 100 brief data-driven stories, accompanied by a geospatial data hub, all presented on an interactive portal.

Gender equality was analysed in six critical areas: population and families; health; education; economic empowerment; power and decision-making; violence against women and girls, all impacted by COVID-19. The report shows that despite some slow progress over time, no country has achieved gender equality. The report is the outcome of an unprecedented partnership spearheaded by UN DESA, including more than 30 national statistical offices, Regional Commissions, and international agencies. The collaboration enabled the report to zoom into gender data also at the national and sub-national levels.

UN DESA further contributed to developing new data reporting guidelines in the area of demographics. As the custodian agency for SDG indicator 3.7.2 on adolescent birth per 1,000 women, UN DESA had previously reported only on adolescent fertility for young women aged 15-19 years. In October 2020, UN DESA organized an expert group meeting on the evaluation of adolescent fertility data and estimates, which developed recommendations with a view to also report on adolescent fertility at ages 10-14 years. In May 2021, an expert group meeting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility aimed to support the official United Nations population estimates and projections by identifying mechanisms through which the COVID-19 pandemic may affect fertility, assessing recent data on marriage, fertility preferences, family planning and births; and providing recommendations to estimate the impact of the pandemic on fertility levels and trends.

Strengthening national statistical capacities

Starting in 2016, UN DESA led a 10 million USD capacity development programme on statistics and data with the 10 implementing UN Secretariat entities of the UN Development Account. Several hundred activities were executed covering more than 130 countries, including 37 Least Developed Countries. The programme's success saw it extended until April 2021, beyond its original 2019 end date, with an additional 1.4 million USD in funding. The achievements included advancing gender statistics globally, improving poverty measurement in Latin America, providing e-learning on environment statistics in Africa, building skills for trade statistics in the Caribbean, modernizing the statistical system of Benin, and updating the Statistics Act of the Seychelles and the Kyrgyz Republic.

“

On behalf of the National Statistical Committee (NSC) of the Kyrgyz Republic, I would like to express my gratitude for the long-term and fruitful collaboration with UNSD, aiming at strengthening the capacity of the NSC. The involvement [...] has helped us in bringing to the attention [...] the importance of the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics to be translated into a modern statistical legislation, securing trust while supporting the modernization and resilience of official statistics in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Akylbek Sultanov, Chairman of the NSC of the Kyrgyz Republic



© UNDP Bangladesh/Fahad Kaizer

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Improving data governance

UN DESA has developed a new interactive online training course on data governance for sustainable development. While there is an increasing emphasis on the centrality of data in implementing the SDGs, data governance has not been given sufficient importance. UN DESA's online training course aims to help countries fill this gap.

Strengthening the collection of administrative data

UN DESA and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data initiated the multi-stakeholder Collaborative on Use of Administrative Data for Statistics, consisting of countries and regional and international agencies. The Collaborative takes a cross-cutting approach to bring experiences from different thematic areas, countries and experts with different expertise. Administrative data collected by governments and service providers is increasingly important as a source for the production of official statistics in order to fill data gaps to monitor progress and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to address emerging challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Building resilient and sustainable national data and information systems

On World Statistics Day 2020, UN DESA launched the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians, a new global professional network for data officers, statisticians, geospatial and other data experts. The Global Network and its webinar series aim to support governments to build resilient and sustainable national data and information systems for the full implementation of the SDGs and for other decision making. The Network serves to improve coordination and collaboration among peers and organizations, to connect existing but not necessarily well-connected networks and initiatives, and to provide and share information on capacity-building efforts globally. The Global Network has a broad and growing participation of 1,600 colleagues from National Statistical Systems, the UN System, NGOs, and Academia.

Assessing the deaths attributable to the pandemic

In February 2021, UN DESA and WHO came together to create the Technical Advisory Group on COVID-19 Mortality Assessment,



© UNDP Iraq/Abdullah Dhiaa Al-deen

bringing together over 30 experts from around the world and from different areas of specialization, including national statistical offices, health ministries, and academia, especially in the areas of demography, epidemiology and statistics. This technical advisory group supports efforts by WHO, UN DESA, and UN Member States to obtain accurate estimates of numbers of deaths attributable to the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic.

With the changing age structure of societies as a key factor in determining the success of social and economic policy in the coming decades, UN DESA provided technical training in the collection of population data through census and surveys and population forecasting. The Department provided technical training to Georgia and Viet Nam in methodology and software for use in their national, regional, and municipal population projections. In the face of the limitations for in-person workshops, the Department developed a new approach of on-going remote, advisory support spanning several months, allowing for longer and more in-depth support as methods were applied.

Improving access to geospatial knowledge and skills

UN DESA made significant progress in improving and strengthening of nationally integrated geospatial information management in six target countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Fiji, Mongolia, Nepal and Tonga). With the help of UN DESA, these countries have developed a practical basis to implement the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, the Global Statistical Geospatial

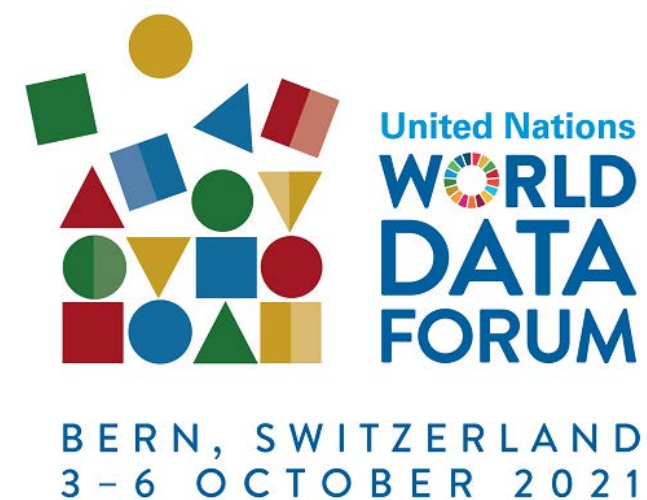
Framework and other key guiding frameworks to better share and integrate official statistics and geospatial information, with other forms of national data and across national governments.

UN DESA, with the Government of China, established the UN Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China. The centre will provide opportunities to build and expand global geospatial capacity, competence and capability and strengthen geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries.

Similarly, UN DESA and the government of Germany have agreed to establish the UN Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence in Bonn, Germany. The establishment of the Centre responds to a call by the UN General Assembly to engage in multilateral cooperation that addresses infrastructure gaps and duplications towards the development of a more sustainable Global Geodetic Reference Frame that leaves no-one behind. Geodesy plays a fundamental role in people's lives and is a foundation for evidence-based policies, decisions, and program delivery.



© The World Bank/ Scott Wallace.



Promoting peer-to-peer learning and collaboration

The United Nations World Data Forum 2020 was successfully transitioned from a planned in-person event for 1,500 participants to a virtual event which attracted more than 10,000 participants (40% under the age of 35) from more than 180 countries. The virtual programme contained 70 sessions with speakers from 300 organizations and covered a wide range of topics including data issues related to COVID-19, open data, citizen science, artificial intelligence, data privacy, communication, and funding. The Forum's virtual space also featured a youth documentary competition, an exhibit space, and networking opportunities.

The World Data Forum was organized around the quinquennial World Statistics Day which was coordinated by UN DESA and celebrated by NSOs around the world with the theme, *Connecting the world with data we can trust*, reflecting on the importance of trust, authoritative data, innovation, and the public good in national statistical systems.

Promoting statistical principles, integration of innovative data sources, and open data

UN DESA is supporting development and implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy, which responds to the urgent need for the UN System to innovate and modernize the way data is compiled, integrated, presented, and communicated to users from multiple constituencies, and to maximize the value of data and statistics. The UN System plays a crucial role in supporting countries and in ensuring the quality, harmonization, and consistency of the data it curates and disseminates.

UN DESA, in partnership with Statistics Korea and ESCAP, organized the 6th International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics. The conference focused on the COVID-19 response, Big Data and SDGs. The conference showcased the UN Global Platform and its regional hubs for Big Data in Brazil, China, Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates, which offer many opportunities for Big Data collaboration. The conference also highlighted how statistical institutes can acquire the right skills and capacities to fully benefit from use of new data sources and new technologies.



© Sergio Pires Vieira

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Supporting LDC graduation

As the Secretariat of the Committee for Development Policy, UN DESA updates the official data for the Least Developed Countries (LDC) criteria. The Department obtains data from international agencies, and uses it to calculate criteria scores.

Despite limited statistical capacity in many LDCs and other developing countries, UN DESA seeks to ensure data coverage for all 143 developing countries and all 15 LDC indicators. Once the data indicates sufficient and sustained progress against the criteria, LDCs may start the process to graduate from the LDC status. In 2021 three additional countries were recommended for graduation. LDC criteria are also used, together with other criteria, to allocate ODA. UN DESA also published data fact sheets for all LDCs from the 2021 triennial review, updated time series estimates of the latest LDC criteria, and released a new set of supplementary graduation indicators.

DRIVING INNOVATION

Improving the efficiency of household survey systems

UN DESA responded quickly to the tremendous challenges to national household survey programmes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey by UN DESA and the World Bank found that 96% of national statistical offices either partially or fully stopped face-to-face data collection at some point during the pandemic. At the same time, there is an increased need for timely, high-quality data on the impacts of the pandemic, and heightened demands for more efficient household survey systems. UN DESA together with the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys (ISWGHS) and other expert groups leads discussions on how household surveys should be best positioned for the next decade. The ISWGHS developed the technical guidance note, **Planning and Implementing Household Surveys Under COVID-19**, a COVID-19 impact surveys dashboard, and the UN Expert Group on Innovative and Effective Ways to Collect Time-Use Statistics developed a survey instrument to inform policy makers on the impact of crises on people's daily life.

Leveraging big data: the UN Global Platform

Hosted by UN DESA, the UN Global Platform, is run by and for the global statistical community to enable statisticians, data scientists, and data engineers to develop new methods and applications using big data and data science.



© Dana Schmidt

A new dashboard on trade, travel and transport indicators was developed on the platform, tracking ships and airplanes world-wide, and allowing close monitoring of the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. ARIES for SEEA was also launched on the platform, a state-of-the-art application that can generate ecosystem accounts for any region in the world.

The Department also develops training materials for big data and data science in official statistics. In 2021, hands-on training was provided remotely to Senegal and Uganda on the use of satellite data for crop statistics and for Cambodia in dissemination of national statistics and indicators using .STAT technology.



HARNESSING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION AND SHAPING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION...

© UNDP/Freya Morales

...because leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline

In 2020-2021, UN DESA highlighted and promoted the role of science, technology and innovation to shape inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery and development. The Department's work emphasized that the digital divide and other forms of inequality are mutually reinforcing, and both need to be tackled in tandem.

UN DESA...

- Brought together 6,000 participants connecting from 173 countries in the virtual 15th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).
 - Mobilized more than 10,000 scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs, and representatives of governments and civil society for discussions and action to harness science, technology, and innovation for the SDGs.
 - Brought together 45 UN system entities for joint analysis, pilot projects and capacity building
- around science, technology, and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - Provided data for policymakers on digital responses to COVID-19 through the UN E-Government Survey.
 - Produced periodic reviews on the impacts of emerging science and frontier technologies on sustainable development.
 - Analysed the implications of COVID-19 for science-policy advisory systems and showcased solutions.

04

Harnessing science, technology and innovation

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the centrality of digital solutions in addressing isolation, ensuring basic business continuity, delivering services, and keeping people informed. At the same time, digital transformation presents risks and challenges, especially for countries in special situations. UN DESA continued to provide forward looking policy advice and support global dialogue for addressing the challenges and leveraging opportunities.

Amplifying digital cooperation and bridging the digital divide

6,000 participants connecting from 173 countries took part in the 15th annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), supported by UN DESA. Under the overarching theme of *Internet for human resilience and solidarity*, the IGF 2020 featured engaged discussions about Internet policies, amplifying digital cooperation and shaping the Internet into a driver for respecting human rights, bridging the digital divide and achieving the SDGs.

A high-level leaders' track involved global experts and leaders from all disciplines in discussions on the role of the Internet in health, economy, security, social development,

and environment. A Youth Summit brought together young Internet leaders from different parts of the world. Parliamentarians from around the world also gathered at a roundtable to discuss trust online during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the grassroots level, a network of national, regional and youth IGF initiatives collected more than 100 contributions on the transformative potential of the Internet in emergency situations.

UN DESA continued to administer the IGF Secretariat and work with members of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) of the IGF, to implement the measures of the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation and enhance the Internet Governance Forum.



IGF Internet Governance Forum

400,000+ page views

20,929 connections to the sessions

295 webinars and meetings



STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Accelerating digital transformation

UN DESA organized a capacity building webinar on *Developing Institutional Capacities in Digital Transformation for a More Inclusive and Equitable Recovery* in December 2020. One of the webinar's key messages is that the global community can best support the digital transformation of developing countries by forging effective partnerships. During the webinar, country lessons were shared in addressing emerging requirements and challenges for policy and decision-making in the age of digital transformation. Overall, more than 300 Member States representatives and other stakeholders benefitted from the webinar, helping to develop country capacity to participate in, and benefit from, the growing opportunities of digitalization while mitigating the risks.

The webinar, *Accelerating Digital Transformation for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19*, further provided a platform for sharing different country experiences on effective digital government strategies and supporting countries' efforts in strengthening digital capacities for accelerating the digital transformation to address recovery from COVID-19. The Webinar was pre-registered by a total of 425 participants, from 120 countries. Among them 168 participants were from Africa, and 106 from Asia. The actual number of viewers of the videoconferencing tools is much higher than this number. The number of views of the Facebook livestream video exceeded 3,800.

DRIVING INNOVATION

UN Public Service Awards

The United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA) programme recognizes the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions in realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially in advancing effective, efficient, transparent, accountable, innovative and citizen-centered public governance and services for sustainable development.

The 2021 UNPSA featured four categories:

1. Fostering innovation to deliver inclusive and equitable services for all including through digital transformation
2. Enhancing the effectiveness of public institutions to reach the SDGs
3. Promoting gender-responsive public services to achieve the SDGs
4. Institutional preparedness and response in times of crisis

A total of 214 nominations from 44 countries were received for the 2021 Awards. Category 1 had the greatest number of submissions and SDG 3, 5, 16 and 17 were the most ubiquitous SDGs for innovation. Asia-Pacific was a leading region with the largest number of initiatives submitted.

The winning initiatives were invited to share their experiences and lessons learned at the UN Public Service Forum in Dubai, UAE, in October 2021.

UN innovation competition and exhibition

The 2021 STI Forum included a virtual exhibition featuring the winners of two innovation competitions organized by UN DESA, in 2020 and 2021, in partnership with the Global Innovation Exchange. The 2021 competition sought innovations developed or adapted to address COVID-19-associated disruptions, while the 2020 competition focused on innovations for transformative change more broadly. The 10 winners of the 2021 competition were chosen from more than 625 entries, and the 15 winners of the 2020 competition were selected from among nearly 350 entries. The virtual exhibition consisted of a series of moderated roundtables that allowed the innovators to describe their cutting-edge initiatives and share insights from continuing to implement their innovations in context of the covid-19 pandemic. The roundtables were organized around themes: food systems, vulnerable communities, education, maternal and child health and environmental sustainability.

UN DESA also supported the annual World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, which provides a multi-stakeholder platform to foster global cooperation and provide meaningful connections to information society by ensuring Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as a key enabler for sustainable development. The final week of the WSIS Forum was held in May 2021 with pre-events held from January onwards under the theme of *ICTs for Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Societies and Economies*. The Forum focused on accelerating action on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic towards SDG achievement by 2030. The WSIS Forum is co-organized by ITU, UNCTAD, UNESCO, and UNDP with the engagement of other UN Agencies, including UN DESA.

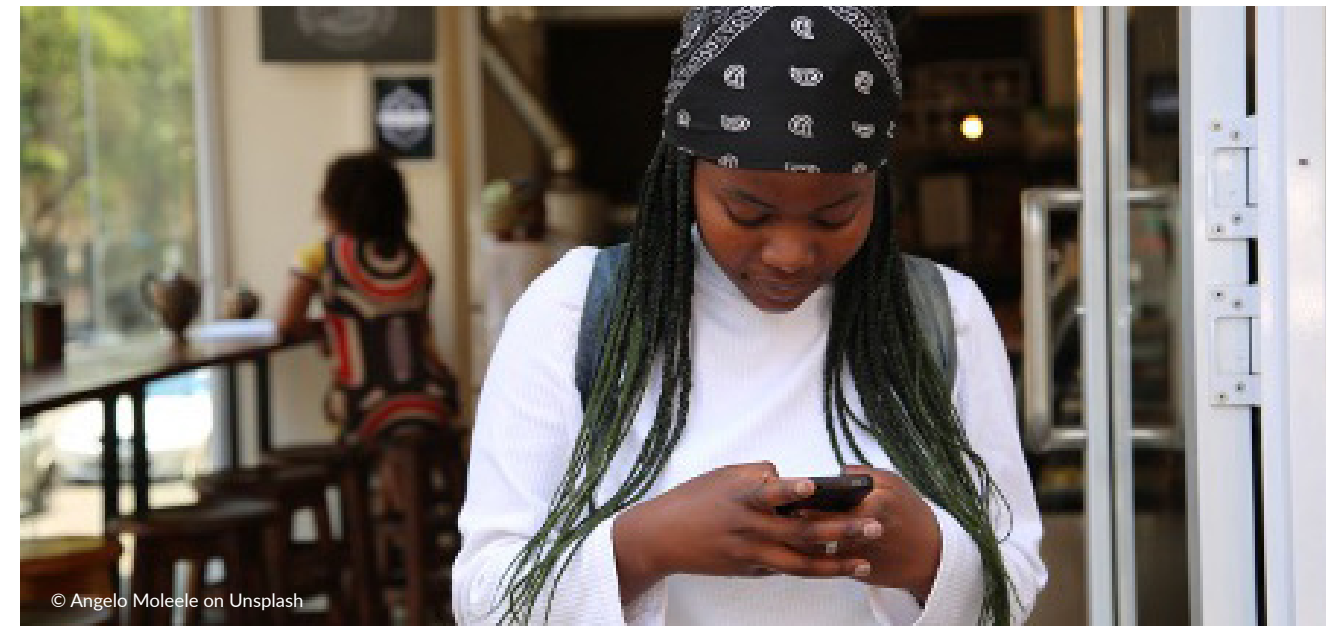
Promoting e-governance and digital service delivery

To build local capacity for public service delivery, UN DESA developed a 5-module introductory course outlining aspects and tools for developing and improving local e-government. Participants gain an understanding of the

importance of local e-government services and linking these with the SDGs, major challenges of local e-government and various uses of emerging technologies to enhance service delivery. UN DESA has so far trained more than 483 local government officials with 5 additional workshops planned.

UN DESA's Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) organized a regional symposium on public institutions and digital government that promoted knowledge sharing and the exchange of innovative practices on leveraging public governance and digital technologies for SDG implementation, especially in response to COVID-19. The Regional Symposium was attended by more than 200 participants from 64 countries with a diversified representation from government agencies, think tanks, academia, private sector, civil society and international organizations.

The capacity development webinar, *Leveraging ICTs and Digital Government for Innovative Solutions to Address the COVID-19 Pandemic - Responses in Africa*, also helped to equip African countries with strengthened



capacity in leveraging ICTs and digital government to fight COVID-19. This webinar was organized in collaboration with the African Association for Public Administration and Management, the African Union Development Agency, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and ITU Regional Office for Africa. The Webinar was pre-registered by a total of 299 participants with the participation of 70 countries with more than 3000 additional views of the Facebook livestream video.

Providing perspective on the impacts of emerging science and frontier technologies

The fast pace of science and technology in many fields, such as robotics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and nanotechnology is having broad impacts on economy, society, and the environment. To support decision-makers to make sense of the rapid changes, UN DESA brought together hundreds of experts and stakeholders and synthesized a wide range of research, science-policy briefs, UN publications and assessments. In partnership with IEEE, the Department initiated a new series of online

events on *New Technologies, Ethics and Policy Engagement for Sustainable Development*. It further synthesized state-of-the-art findings from integrated assessments, scenario, and technology studies to identify promising technology scenarios and high impact digital technology solutions for the SDGs.

As co-lead in the research and analysis work stream of the United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (IATT), the Department contributed to the report, *Emerging science, frontier technologies, and the SDGs - Perspectives from the UN system and science and technology communities*, released in May 2021.

UN DESA, jointly with ITU, explored the development implications of quantum information technology in the online event, *The Era of Quantum Information Technology - Promises and Pitfalls*, held in May 2021. The event included an exchange of views among academic and private sector experts on the rapidly evolving cluster of quantum sensors, quantum computing and the emerging quantum internet.

It served as a reality check and offered a rough timeline of technology applications, their potential development impacts, and important actions to be taken by public and private sectors, to build the necessary infrastructure and skills in preparation for these new possibilities.

The Department also continued its periodic review of how emerging and frontier technologies matter for sustainable development. The Department's quarterly publication, **Frontier Technology Issues (FTI)** serves to stimulate technology-related discussions within the Department and other UN agencies, and serve as a springboard for broader discussions to enrich policy discourse on frontier technologies. The November 2020 FTI examined the role of digital technologies in creating decent work (SDG 8), improving health services and outcomes (SDG 3), and promoting education and learning (SDG 4), but warns that despite the benefits, technology is widening disparities and those on the wrong side of the digital divide risk being left further behind. The June 2021 FTI examined the growing importance of lithium-ion batteries in laying the foundation for a fossil fuel-free (3Fs) economy.

Putting STI to the service of the SDGs

More than 10,000 scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs, and representatives from governments and civil society participated in or listened live to the formal sessions of the 6th Annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and the SDGs (STI Forum). The potential social media reach neared 980 million. Convened by the President of ECOSOC and co-chaired by Latvia and Indonesia, the UN DESA-supported Forum discussed the theme, *Science, technology and innovation for a sustainable and resilient COVID-19 recovery, and effective pathways of inclusive action towards the Sustainable Development Goals.*

The Forum comprised ministerial and thematic sessions, an exhibition featuring the winners of the UN innovation competition, and 33 side events. It deliberated on lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for shaping a better science-policy-society interface, a resilient recovery, and rapid responses to global challenges. It identified STI solutions for "building back better" and accelerating progress towards the SDGs and for ensuring inclusion in innovation. The co-chairs' summary of the Forum informed the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.



The [UN DESA] Webinar [on Toolkit on Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery] was an eye opener for the many possibilities and opportunities of innovation in my country .

Akylbek Sultanov, Chairman of the NSC of the Kyrgyz Republic

Facilitated Online Capacity Development Training

Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean Region

Capacity Development Webinar Series

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Promoting integrated digital government

Through a development account project, UN DESA is working with two landlocked LDCs (Bhutan and Lao PDR) and two Pacific SIDS (Fiji and Vanuatu) on institutional arrangements for policy integration, coordination and stakeholder engagement in SDG implementation and reviews in Asia and the Pacific. The focus is to support the transition from analog silos in public administration towards innovation and integrated digital government for public service delivery.

In Lao PDR, UN DESA is supporting an incremental digital approach to support One-Door-Service Centers. In Fiji, UN DESA supported implementation of their Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee to count on digital improvements to highlight inter-Ministerial dialogue and workflows.

The project also supported the development of a Digital Government Capability Assessment (DGCA) which was pilot tested with 14 Caribbean countries.

Taking Caribbean public service delivery into the digital future

UN DESA, in collaboration with the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), organized a series of 10 training webinars on Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development that engaged 14 Caribbean countries. The Virtual Training on Innovation, Digital Government and Public Service Delivery for Sustainable Development in the Caribbean resulted in ideas for regional cooperation with concrete follow-up actions such as the creation of a virtual Regional Innovation Lab for Innovation and Digital Government in the Caribbean, with support from CARICAD and CARICOM. In view of COVID-19, the Webinar Series was an adaptation of the Toolkit on Innovation and Digital Government for Public Service Delivery developed as part of UN DESA's Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs.



© Charles Deluvio on Unsplash

PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

Gender equality in post-pandemic recovery

The “gender digital divide” stymies women’s access to online learning,

finance and other essential online services. Without gender sensitive policies in the hybrid work environment, a two-tier workforce is real threat, with men able to socialize with peers at the office while women juggle work and care at home. UN DESA’s June 2021 economic briefing highlighted the importance of this and other factors of gender equality for post-pandemic recovery.

BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

National science, technology and innovation roadmaps for the SDGs

National science, technology and innovation roadmaps for the SDGs (STI4SDG roadmaps) are helping chart the way forward for coherent STI policy making in support of the SDGs.

UN DESA has led UN interagency work on STI4SDGs roadmaps, bringing together UN entities, the World Bank and other international partners, such as OECD, the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, and the Government of Japan. As a member of the IATT, the Department contributed to a joint Guidebook for the Preparation of STI for SDGs Roadmaps. In November 2020, a Partnership in Action on STI4SDGs Roadmaps was launched, aimed at mobilizing a much wider range of actors for effective and visionary STI4SDG roadmaps.

2030 Connect – a one-stop entry point for technology solutions and STI information

The UN has launched “2030 Connect,” an online platform that taps the expertise and networks of the UN system and its partners, to provide access to the latest science and evidence, disaggregated data, and technology solutions. The platform also provides resource for building capacity and fostering innovation for applying STI to development policy and practice.

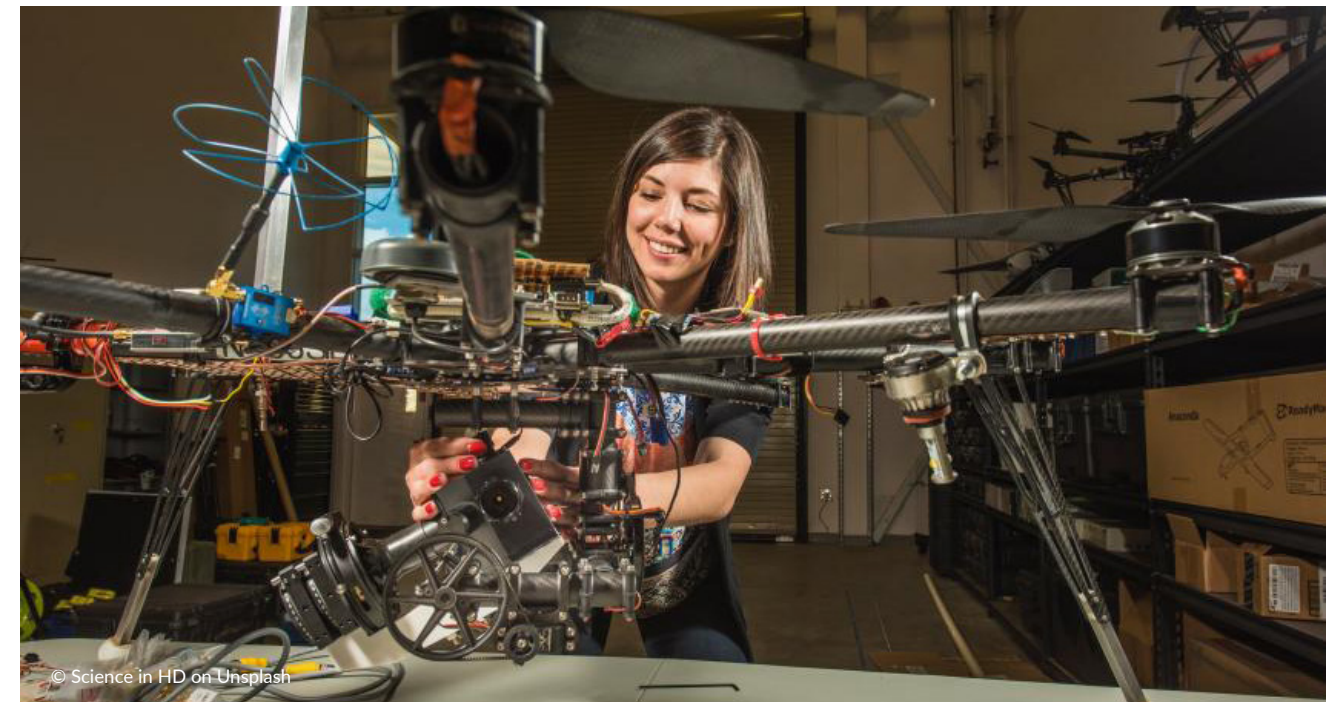
FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTION AND COMMITMENTS

Leveraging digital technologies for social inclusion

UN DESA supported deliberations at the 59th session of the Commission for Social Development, addressing *Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all*. The Department undertook analytical work, which helped inform deliberations, that addressed the role of the pandemic in accelerating the pace of digital transformation, opening the opportunities for advancing social progress and fostering social inclusion, while simultaneously exacerbating the risk of increased inequalities and exclusion of those who are not digitally connected. The outcome of the Commission, adopted by consensus, highlighted the need for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to close the digital divides and promote digital inclusion, by addressing the challenges associated with access, affordability, digital literacy and digital skills in national and regional contexts to ensure that new technologies benefit all.

Strengthening the science-policy-society interface

The 2021 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) included a dedicated session on mobilizing science, technology and innovation and strengthening the science-policy-society interface. The 2021 session built on the outcomes of the 2021 STI Forum, to explore measures to ensure that science and technology support the realization of the SDGs for all and bridge the digital divide.





PROTECTING OUR PLANET...

...for present and future generations

Through its support to the High-level Dialogue on Energy, the Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference and the United Nations Forum on Forests, among others, the Department contributed a global narrative of interlinked key messages and recommendations for protecting our planet through sustainable use of natural and capital resources and climate action.

UN DESA...

- Co-convened a series of webinars on Harnessing Climate and SDGs Synergies highlighting the benefits of integrated climate and SDG action.
- Continued implementation of the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014-2024, and the preparatory process of the High-level Dialogue on Energy.
- Launched the Global Forest Goals Report 2021.
- Drew on the Climate, Land, Energy and Water systems (CLEWs) tool to deliver capacity development in support of policy coherence.

05

Protecting our planet

Commitments on combatting climate change and protecting our planet's essential ecosystems have increased in an encouraging way in recent months across the world, but at the global level they still fall way short of what is needed to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. Policy makers need to urgently address the interrelated major challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental protection and the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic simultaneously. Today, synergistic and integrated policymaking and action are more important than ever before.

Harnessing Climate and SDGs synergies

UN DESA in collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) co-convoked a series of webinars on the theme, *Harnessing Climate and SDGs Synergies*, highlighting the benefits of integrated climate and SDG action and a variety of options for synergistic policy interventions in different sectors, including issues related to capacity development, financing strategies, monitoring and reporting. Hundreds of experts and practitioners from developing countries joined to share their experiences and learn how countries and stakeholders are advancing synergetic implementation

of climate action and SDGs as they recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. UN DESA, together with UNFCCC and UNITAR, launched an on-line eLearning course on the topic of harnessing Climate and SDGs synergies in the margins of the HLPF 2021, together with the synthesis reports of the 2020-2021 webinar series. The eLearning course is available to the public and was accessed by more than 207 users within 6 weeks of the launch.

Accelerating universal energy access and net-zero emissions

UN DESA serves as secretariat for the High-level Dialogue on Energy in 2021, supporting the preparatory



© UNICEF/UN0418635/Pouget

process. The Department supported the 30 Member State ministerial-level global champions and multi-stakeholder Technical Working Groups composed of 160 experts, to produce a set of recommendations towards the achievement of SDG7 and net zero emissions. The Ministerial Thematic Forums for the Dialogue, supported by UN DESA in June 2021, were attended by 50 ministers, 500 speakers, 2,000 participants, and reached an online audience of 100,000 through social media and newsletters.

As the Secretariat of UN Energy, UN DESA also supported the development of a new strategic focus, including a pledge to assist countries in their efforts on the following

objectives by 2025: providing 500 million people with access to electricity, 1 billion people with clean cooking, and establish 100% renewables targets in 100 countries. UN-Energy facilitated the development of a series of 'Energy Compacts,' including USD 1 billion commitments from philanthropies to increase energy access through renewable energy in developing countries. Around 40 Energy Compact workshops were organized ahead of the September Dialogue, with more than 1,000 participants joining from all stakeholder organizations including member states, sub-national authorities, private sector, NGOs, and civil society groups. UN DESA launched the online platform for Energy Compacts as part of SDG Acceleration Actions.

Convened by UN DESA, the SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group, developed the SDG 7 Policy Briefs, which are released annually in support of the deliberations at the High-level Political Forum, contributing also to the High-Level Dialogue on Energy in September. The Briefs are developed in collaboration with 40 experts from Governments, UN, international organizations, and other stakeholders. This year, the compilation of Policy Briefs places a special focus on the interlinkages of SDG 7 with all other SDGs.

UN DESA supported a capacity-building project in Bangladesh on solar microgrids, with some 50 grids now completed. UN DESA also continues to strengthen the links between energy and health as well as energy and water. As one of the co-conveners of the Health and Energy Platform of Action, together with WHO, UNDP and the World Bank, UN DESA has intensified its efforts to ensure universal access to reliable electricity for health-care facilities and universal access to clean cooking, with UN DESA Under-Secretary-General Mr. Liu Zhenmin joining the High-Level Coalition on Health and Energy. The UN DESA-facilitated multi-stakeholder Sustainable

Water and Energy Solutions Network, supported by ITAIPU Binational and 20 other institutions, convened a series of capacity development seminars and analysis, to share knowledge and data promoting integrated sustainable water and energy solutions that address climate change.

Promoting Water for Sustainable Development

UN DESA supported the World Water Day 2021 campaign to celebrate water and raise awareness for the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. This year's theme, *Valuing Water*, is about what water means to people, its true value and how we can better protect this vital resource. The value of water is about much more than its price – water has enormous and complex value for our households, culture, health, education, economics, and the integrity of our natural environment.

This year's campaign generated a global, public conversation on social media about how people value water for all its uses. The aim is to create a more comprehensive understanding



© Gallery DS on Unsplash

of how water is valued by different people in different contexts so people can value and safeguard this precious resource for everyone.

Protecting our oceans

UN DESA supported the High-level Thematic Debate on the Ocean and Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water, convened by the President of the General Assembly on 1 June 2021. This event provided a platform for the international community to take stock of the progress and challenges related to the implementation of SDG14 and raised ambition ahead of the 2nd UN Ocean Conference to be held in Lisbon in 2022.

As part of the Task Force, UN DESA contributed substantively to the narratives on the state of the ocean, Sustainable Blue Economy, global implementation of SDG14 and how to leverage the synergies and interlinkages between ocean, biodiversity, and climate change. Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin served as a panellist, calling for enhanced coordination and collaboration among UN ocean processes and wider participation of stakeholders especially through registering Voluntary Commitments to

transfer commitments to tangible actions in the lead-up to the 2nd UN Ocean Conference. UN DESA continues to share knowledge and build capacity on ocean related issues through webinars, substantive reports and providing support to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean.

Protecting our forests

UN DESA continues to lead global efforts to promote sustainable forest management and the international forest policy dialogue. This includes supporting countries to strengthen their capacity to monitor progress towards sustainable forest management and in mobilizing forest financing. The Department's work directly supports the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 and the UN Forest Instrument and is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant global agreements.

The **Global Forest Goals Report 2021** (GFGR 2021), launched by UN DESA in April 2021, is the first stocktaking report on progress towards the six Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030. It shows that



© UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



© Cassiano Psomas on Unsplash

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Promoting integrated approaches to sustainable development: Climate, Land, Energy and Water Systems

UN DESA is collaborating with UNDP to deliver a capacity development programme to support the adoption of integrated approaches to policy formulation for sustainable development by countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including countries in special situations. In 2020-2021, Bhutan, Mongolia and Nepal participated in the programme and began use of the Climate, Land, Energy and Water Systems (CLEWS) tool in support of policy coherence in these areas. The inherent flexibility of CLEWS, as a quantitative modeling tool, facilitates adaption and tailoring of the analysis to the unique situation, priorities and circumstances of each country.



© Jeremy Zero on Unsplash

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Institutional arrangements in support of integrated approaches to global climate, land, energy and water strategies

UN DESA is helping Member States to establish effective institutional arrangements that promote coordination and cooperation among national stakeholders for formulating coherent sustainable development policy and strategy.

In 2020-2021, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Namibia received assistance to strengthen national mechanisms to adopt integrated approaches to policy formulation with specific focus on the areas of food, energy and water security and their vulnerability to climate change. The capacity development programme combines support for institutional integration with quantitative assessments using the CLEWS tool.

progress is being made in increasing global forest area through afforestation and restoration, expanding protected forests, and increasing forest carbon stocks. Asia, Europe, and Oceania appear to be on track to reach one of the key targets of the Global Forest Goals of increasing forest area by three percent by 2030. But there are growing concerns that some of those gains could be at risk due to the devastating socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the escalating impacts of the global climate and biodiversity crises.

UN DESA provided effective support to the intergovernmental discussions at the 16th Session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF16) through the preparation of six notes by the Secretariat, as well as six regional studies which gave an initial assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on sustainable forest management, and a background paper on the impacts of disasters on forests, in particular forest fires. In April 2021, UNFF16 successfully adopted the Forum's programme of work for the period 2022-2024. The session included a High-Level Round Table where senior officials highlighted the critical importance of preservation, conservation and restoration of forests including in the

context of preventing infectious and zoonotic diseases, and offsetting many of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other global challenges. The session featured the launch of the GFGR 2021 report as well as the launch of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network online clearing house, which shares practical information on funding opportunities, learning materials, lessons learned, and best practices related to forest financing.

UN DESA also highlighted the interlinkages between forest restoration, livelihoods, mitigating climate change, safeguarding biodiversity, and reducing the risk of future pandemics. It is estimated that some two billion hectares of degraded land worldwide, an area almost twice the area of Europe, have the potential to be restored. The Department campaigned on the International Day of Forests (21 March), by promoting the central theme of *Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being*. The campaign hashtag #IntlForestDay was featured in over 21,000 tweets by 13,200 contributors during the International Day, with 224 million timeline deliveries, and over 141 million accounts reached, according to estimates.



FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTION

Drawing high-level attention to biodiversity

The first United Nations Summit on Biodiversity at the level of Heads of State and Government was convened by the President of the General Assembly on 30 September 2020 under the theme of *Urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development*. UN DESA as part of the Secretariat provided substantive support to the Summit.

At the Summit, Member States and other actors demonstrated strong commitment and highlighted the need for urgent action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and moves the world toward the goal of the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, *Living in harmony with nature*.



© Astrid Hurley

DRIVING INNOVATION

Harmony with Nature

Earth-centered law has emerged in many of the United Nations Member States, linking planetary health and human well-being, and gaining visibility and momentum because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations Harmony with Nature Programme has documented and analyzed

legislation and policies on the rights of nature that have been either adopted or for which work is currently ongoing in 36 countries. It has also documented and analyzed collaboration among NGOs, civil society organizations, legislators and legislative bodies working together to draft, adopt and implement laws or policies recognizing nature as a subject of rights and/or a legal “person” protected by law. UN DESA launched an online platform of country profiles and practices that will serve as a reservoir for new initiatives.



© Dominic Chavez/World Bank

PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

Putting gender at the heart of SDG 7

UN DESA's work in the SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group brought insight on the lack of progress towards gender equality in energy access. While the impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis somewhat overshadowed efforts in this area, the pandemic has shed light on the urgency of accelerating women's engagement in the energy sector. Women play important roles in expanding and decentralizing renewable energy supply chains, both for productive and household purposes. UN DESA's work showcased how new stimulus plans can promote economies

and support greater access to energy by increasing investments in women's access to modern energy services, appliances and cooking technologies; ensuring women's participation in decision making at all levels of energy production, supply and consumption; and strengthening data, research and innovation on gender and energy interconnections. The Department highlighted areas critical to closing the gender energy gap, including gender action plans and gender responsive policies, investments to support female entrepreneurship, and more mandated positions for women in public and private sector energy management.

BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Strengthening synergies between the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Synergistic and integrated policymaking and action is more important than ever before. Policy makers seeking to advance climate action will need to identify the most economically feasible and socially acceptable solutions that also generate SDG co-benefits. Similarly, stakeholders seeking to advance economic and social progress towards one or the other SDG will need to anticipate the impacts of such action on future climate emissions. To this effect, UN DESA and UNFCCC continued their joint focus on strengthening synergies between the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda. Due to the pandemic, 2020 featured a virtual Global Synergies Consultation throughout May and June 2020. The Third Climate and SDGs Synergy Conference will take place in Japan in 2022.



© UNICEF/UN0418635/Pouget



ACCELERATING ACTION ON THE SDGs...

...moving the world towards sustainable development for all

UN DESA's work in 2020-2021 ensured that Member States had the support, information and advice they needed for effectively evaluating their progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Department continued its work to identify and share good practices of implementation, including through its analysis and by supporting peer-to-peer learning and exchange.

UN DESA...

- Provided analysis, data expertise, and related policy recommendations to support a successful 2021 HLPF.
- Led the substantive preparations and organization of the HLPF reviews of SDG implementation and on the HLPF overall theme.
- Supported Member States in conducting Voluntary National Reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (VNRs) through VNR global preparatory workshops and webinars.
- Conducted 17 VNR Labs for experience-sharing and reflection on the VNR theme and process.
- Ensured that diverse voices could be heard and spread awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through organized special events, side events and exhibitions on the margins of the HLPF.
- Supported the intergovernmental negotiations on the 2021 HLPF Ministerial Declaration, reaffirming the 2030 Agenda as a plan of action and global blueprint to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, build back better, and prevent future pandemics.

06

Accelerating action on the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to a just, inclusive and sustainable future. Most of UN DESA's work helps Member States centre their development efforts around these commitments and aspirations. A strong system of follow-up and review of progress, at national, regional and global levels is critical for identifying policies that work, spotting areas of progress, gaps, or pitfalls, undertaking course correction and securing support for accelerating implementation. The United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is central to the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. UN DESA is constantly exploring innovative ways of strengthening the work of the HLPF and its leadership, including in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Supporting the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

UN DESA supported the substantive preparations for the High-level Political Forum, convened from 6 to 15 July 2021, which focused on sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Support included review of the main theme and in-depth assessment of nine SDGs - Goals 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16 and 17 and their interlinkages. The Department prepared the Secretary-General's annual report on progress towards the SDGs and the synthesis of

the voluntary submissions by functional commissions of ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies and forums. UN DESA also coordinated with regional commissions on regional forums on sustainable development and helped the HLPF to build on the outcomes of the Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up, the STI Forum, the Development Cooperation Forum, and other intergovernmental bodies.

Ten Heads of State and Government and about 160 Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers and Vice-Ministers participated in the HLPF opening, thematic interactive panels, town hall

2021 HLPF



7

HLPF Special Events



5000+ Registrations



1 million+ Tweet Impressions



5000+ Video views

SPECIAL EVENTS

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HESI HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE SPECIAL EVENT

950+ Registrants
72 Countries Represented

SDGs LEARNING 2021 SDGS LEARNING, TRAINING AND PRACTICE

2800+ Registrants
3200+ YouTube Views

2021 HLPF SPECIAL EVENT ON SDG 6

120K+ Organic Tweet Impressions
2300+ Event Page Views

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS FORUM (LRGF)

570+ Registrants
1000+ YouTube Views

SDG ACCELERATION ACTIONS 2021 HLPF SPECIAL EVENT ON SDG ACCELERATION ACTIONS

500+ Registrants
50+ Tweets for Social Media Campaign

SDGS IN ACTION FILM FESTIVAL AWARD CEREMONY

5000+ Online Votes Received
1200+ Vimeo Impressions

2021 CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICERS FOR SDGS

300+ Registrants
13 Speakers

© UN HLPF Special Events Summary

meeting, fireside chats, and the general debate. The Heads of the UN system and other organizations were also among the participants, including WHO, IMF, WTO, UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR, UNCTAD, ITU, IOM, Regional Commissions, IUCN, and others. Participating distinguished experts included the 2019 Nobel Laureate, mayors, and local authorities. Civil society was also featured among the participants, with representatives of other major stakeholder groups, including the business sector, women, and youth.

On the margins of the HLPF, UN DESA also organised seven dedicated high-level special events, three report launches, 17 VNR Labs, 276 side events, and 12 exhibitions. These events provided great opportunities for Member States and other stakeholders to share diverse views on the theme and the SDGs under review, deepen the discussion

on the voluntary national reviews (VNRs), identify new issues, listen to all voices, and help spread greater awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at all levels.

Supporting preparation of voluntary national reviews (VNRs)

UN DESA organized three Global Workshops for countries presenting a voluntary national review (VNR) of their implementation of the 2030 Agenda in 2021, in collaboration with the Regional Commissions. The virtual workshops explained and supported the VNR process and showcased how VNR countries are incorporating the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into national strategies, frameworks and institutions. The workshops provided an opportunity for countries to share the challenges



BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Bringing diverse voices to the table: Major Groups and Other Stakeholders in the HLPF

In preparation for the 2021 HLPF, UN DESA maintained a close partnership with the Major Groups and other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism (MGoS). UN DESA worked to ensure the participation of MGoS representatives during the informal

consultations on the HLPF/HLS Ministerial Declaration and as lead discussants in the thematic official sessions of the HLPF. The Department also secured space for MGoS representatives worldwide to collaborate in submitting questions to countries presenting VNRs.

MGoS constituencies, organisations accredited with ECOSOC consultative status, and organizations on the CSD Roster submit inputs to the HLPF. These organizations can also submit applications for side events and exhibitions, participate in the VNR Labs and Special Events.



FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTION AND COMMITMENT

Building Member State capacity for an effective QCPR

UN DESA partnered with UNITAR to provide a training series for delegations in preparation for the General Assembly's 2020 quadrennial comprehensive policy review of UN system operational activities (QCPR).

The training covered the QCPR content and the repositioning of the UN development system as well as key issues related to the role of the QCPR in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while responding to the crisis during the Decade of Action. Over 170 delegates participated.

they are facing and successful policy initiatives they are implementing in support of the 2030 Agenda. There were also five regional workshops to support regional exchange of experiences and lessons learnt in implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. 42 countries presented their VNRs at the 2021 HLPF. Eight Member States presented for the first time, 24 for the second time and 10 for the third time. To date, 177 countries have presented a VNR, with 59 countries having presented more than once.

Promoting an SDG-focused pandemic recovery

Convened by the UN Secretary-General, the first SDG Moment of the Decade of Action was held virtually on 18 September 2020. UN DESA supported a digital platform with the SDG outlook for each VNR country, based on the latest data and research. The SDG Moment helped world leaders to map out a vision for the Decade of Action and recovering better from COVID-19. It highlighted plans and actions to tackle major implementation gaps. It demonstrated the power and impact of action and innovation by SDG stakeholders.

Relatedly, UN DESA supported the 2021 ECOSOC High-level segment, which focused on strengthening the ECOSOC, at its 75th anniversary, for shaping a sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, while advancing the 2030 Agenda. The Department provided analysis to support the segment that assessed medium-term, long-term and emerging socioeconomic trends and scenarios that could impact recovery from the pandemic and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The meeting underscored that, while working to recover better from the pandemic, we should also look at what we want to achieve by 2030, and beyond.



The topics covered in the webinars are very important to us because it allows us to learn about other experiences and good practices in the implementation of the SDGs.

Participant in Global Workshop for 2021 VNR Countries



The webinar helped refine our SDG financing and statistics component in the upcoming 2nd VNR.

Participant in Global Workshop for 2021 VNR Countries



Strengthening ECOSOC and the HLPF to better support the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda

UN DESA supported the 75th General Assembly's review of ECOSOC and the HLPF, co-facilitated by the Permanent Representatives of Austria and Senegal. The review aimed to improve the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level.

The review process resulted in two General Assembly resolutions, A/RES/75/290 A on ECOSOC, and A/RES/75/290 B on the HLPF. Member States introduced measures to strengthen ECOSOC, including an earlier kick-off of the work of ECOSOC, with a coordination segment and a partnership forum convened by early February each year. They broadened the focus of the ECOSOC event on *Transition from Relief to Development* to include support

to building peaceful societies and strengthened ECOSOC cooperation with the Peace-building Commission. In the resolution on the HLPF, Member States decided on the themes for the 2022 and 2023 HLPF and ECOSOC, and the SDGs for HLPF review in those two years. The resolution also provides new ideas on the VNRs and recognizes the local and regional dimensions.



DRIVING INNOVATION

Sharing innovative approaches to the VNR process

For the fourth year, UN DESA supported Member States in reflecting on innovations related to the VNRs. It organized 17 VNR Labs in the margins of the 2021 HLPF. The VNR Labs

provide an informal platform for experience-sharing and reflection on the VNR process. Some discussed issues cutting across the VNRs, such as policy coherence, the principle of leaving no one behind, data and statistics, resource mobilization and partnerships. In addition, three countries, Japan, Tunisia and Uruguay, presented their national processes in detail and engaged in longer interactions.

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Supporting the poorest and most vulnerable countries in responding to the crisis and getting on track for the SDGs:

UN DESA supported the organization of the special meeting of the ECOSOC President on SIDS and LDCs, in cooperation with OHRLLS. The special meeting contributed to the 18 June meeting of the Presidents of the General Assembly and ECOSOC, aimed at providing an input to the upcoming LDC5 Conference. Those meetings resulted in important messages on the continuing support to countries in special situations, paving the ground for an ambitious outcome at LDC5 and the continuing work to address the multi-dimensional vulnerability of SIDS.

Building country capacity for monitoring implementation of the 2030 agenda: Namibia and Cabo Verde

UN DESA provided capacity building support to national VNR processes at the request of Cabo Verde and Namibia. In Cabo Verde, UN DESA collaborated with the Resident Coordinator's Office to organize a capacity-building workshop focusing on the process, good practices and tools to support the engagement of



© Belinda Fewings on Unsplash

stakeholders in the VNR process and on how to feature the information in the report to be presented at the HLPF. In Namibia, UN DESA worked with the Resident Coordinator's Office and the National SDG Multi-Stakeholder Committee for handling the SDGs Agenda to support preparation of the country's second VNR. Before the report was produced, UN DESA participated in the discussions on improving the report, through sharing best practices and lessons learned.

Assisting Member States to review UNDS support to realizing the SDGs

UN DESA provided the analysis, data, and evidence needed to help Member States review progress in the implementation of the 2016 General Assembly Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities (QCPR) and on the repositioning of the UN development system (UNDS). As part of the process, UN DESA surveyed Governments in over 110 countries where UN country teams are supporting national development actions. The Department's analysis was presented in the report of the Secretary-General that helped inform the QCPR and the discussions at ECOSOC's Operational Activities Segment, supporting Member States to form effective guidance for improving UN-system support to implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda over the next four years.

Relatedly, UN DESA led the development of a new framework for keeping track of progress in the implementation of the QCPR. The framework uses a new generation of key performance indicators for giving greater insights to Member States on the efficiency and impacts of the UNDS support to countries' implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

Promoting gender equality and the advancement of women in ECOSOC and the HLPF

At the 2021 HLPF, gender equality and the empowerment of women were critical dimensions of measures considered for transforming economies and building more just, equal and inclusive societies in response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. UN DESA actively promoted the consideration of gender concerns in the Forum's deliberations by providing clear guidance to session organizers to mainstream gender perspectives into the discussions.

As a result, gender considerations were systematically integrated in HLPF meetings, and women's critical role in the COVID-19 response was recognized in the Ministerial Declaration adopted by HLPF and ECOSOC by consensus. The Forum agreed that gender equality and women's empowerment were fundamental for a more inclusive and just society and key for a sustainable recovery. In addition, UN DESA ensured that 47% of featured speakers were women.

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Supporting data provision for evidence-based VNRs

UN DESA helps countries to use data and statistics for supporting data-driven and evidence-based voluntary national reviews (VNRs). The Department held a workshop in January 2021 on Preparing Evidence-based VNRs, ahead of the 2021 HLPF. The workshop aimed to equip countries with tools, resources and best practice examples for assessing and including the impacts of COVID-19 in VNRs, best practices for integrating new data sources and data innovations with official statistics, data disaggregation and ways to engage data users and communicate data in the VNRs.

Feedback from country participants highlighted the usefulness of the presentations and good practice examples, and identified additional topic areas for future trainings, including data visualization, rapid evaluations for VNRs and methodologies for assessing COVID-19 impacts.

SDG 16 Conference

The SDG 16 Conference, held on 28-30 April 2021, focused on SDG 16 as a key part of the roadmap to respond to

COVID-19 and build back better. It gave the positive message that institutional and policy innovations at all levels can accelerate the implementation of SDG 16 and promote integrated approaches to tackle complex challenges.

Aware of governance challenges posed by the pandemic, experts underscored the importance of strengthening institutional capacity for a sustainable recovery that supports SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda. Institutional and policy innovations at all levels can accelerate the implementation of SDG 16 and promote integrated approaches to tackle complex challenges including conflict, increasing inequalities, gender inequality, social and economic insecurity, climate change and rapid technological disruption.

UN/INTOSAI Symposium

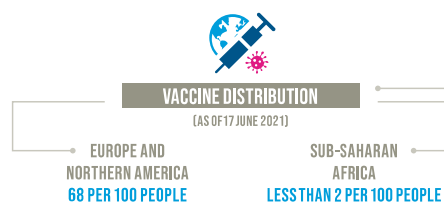
The 25th UN-INTOSAI Symposium on *Working during and after the pandemic: Building on the experience of supreme audit institutions for strengthening effective institutions and achieving sustainable societies* was held virtually from 28 to 30 June 2021. The meeting discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the operations, working methods and oversight work of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). UN DESA and partners brought together about 500 participants from 120 countries, including representatives from SAIs, the United Nations and other international organizations and resource experts. The discussions were organized around four sub-themes: (i) the impact of COVID-19 on the organization,

working methods and processes of SAIs; (ii) experiences and good practices in the external oversight of COVID-19 responses and recovery plans; (iii) innovation in enhancing transparency and accountability on COVID-19 responses, and (iv) resilient

accountability systems and institutions in the aftermath of COVID-19. Discussions underscored the dynamism and flexibility of SAIs in their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, both internally and externally and in very different contexts.

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

THE PANDEMIC IS AMPLIFYING HEALTH INEQUALITIES



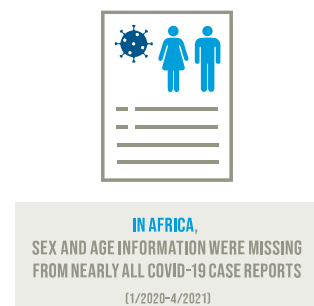
AMONG THOSE WITH DISABILITIES ONE IN THREE PERSONALLY EXPERIENCE DISCRIMINATION



THE DRASTIC DROP IN INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IS DISPROPORTIONALLY AFFECTING SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES



DISAGGREGATED DATA ARE ESSENTIAL FOR TRACKING COVID-19





BUILDING RESILIENCE AND PREPAREDNESS...

© UN Photo/Ariana Lindquist

...because our shared vision of tomorrow, requires action today

2020 and 2021 heralded unprecedented challenges. The spread of the COVID-19 virus unleashed a vicious cycle of health, social, and economic shocks in every country, as very few were prepared to cope with the direct and indirect effects of a global pandemic. But the pandemic also helped decision-makers to see what we need to do better today, to build better, fairer communities for tomorrow. UN DESA's analytical capacity was directed to help countries understand how to build greater resilience in the short run, while keeping an eye on implications for supporting people and the planet in the long-term.

UN DESA...

- Provided evidence-based analysis of the sustainable development challenges and opportunities facing the world.
- Addressed the impact of COVID-19 on development pathways, providing policy-focused analysis and recommendations to help policy makers navigate uncertainties in the height of the pandemic.
- Examined key demographic trends and their future trajectories, highlighting their likely impact on our future.
- Delivered technical assistance and capacity development support for countries on the path to graduate from the LDC category.

07

Building Resilience and Preparedness

UN DESA helped Member States build greater resilience and preparedness by monitoring and forecasting social, economic, and demographic trends, analysing their implications, and helping policy makers forge a path forward.

Examining the impact of global trends on our global goals

The UN DESA-led United Nations Economist Network (UNEN) came together to examine how five megatrends: climate change; demographic shifts, particularly population ageing; urbanization; the emergence of digital technologies; and inequalities – affect economic, social and environmental outcomes. This first joint publication by UNEN, **Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75th Anniversary: Shaping the Trends of Our Time**, demonstrated UN DESA's strength for collaborating with system partners to build and share knowledge.

Analysing links between resilience and sustainable development

The **World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021 (WESP)** analysed the interactions between resilience and recovery, highlighting that there is no sustainable development without resilience and there is no resilience without sustainable development. The report identified the long-term scarring effects of the pandemic on employment, trade, and output. It underscored that strengthening public finance and debt sustainability, improving digital infrastructures, bridging digital divides, revitalizing global trade, and combating inequality and



expanding social protection and promoting climate action and environmental sustainability, must form the cornerstones of a resilient recovery from the current crisis. The WESP continued to draw significant attention in 2021. Downloads reached 137,296 by 31 August and the report saw uptake in major media houses, with over 1,000 articles published in 67 countries and territories and 9 languages.

Translating global policy guidance into country level policy support

UN DESA in collaboration with UN DCO started a series of clinics led by the Chief Economist with the Resident Coordinators to discuss the broad range of macroeconomic, fiscal, financial and debt management issues that challenge countries' ability to build resilient and sustainable development. The objective of the clinics is to provide a platform to discuss the latest policy research and good

practices to help identify suitable entry point for the UN to promote national recovery policies that build resilience, improve inclusiveness and reduce inequality. So far Resident Coordinators from more than 40 countries have participated in these clinics, which have covered policy issues related to innovative, climate and domestic finance; fiscal space, rising debt and debt management; fiscal policies for social inclusion and poverty reduction; social protection systems; and social protection for vulnerable groups. Upcoming clinics will concentrate on economic transformation, including blue and green economy transformation, energy and digital transformation.

Promoting a better understanding of international human mobility

UN DESA worked with partners to develop the overarching conceptual framework and accompanying definitions



PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

Promoting a gender-based perspective of economic development

The need for a gender-based perspective of economic development is clear from SDG goal 5, but traditional economic development indicators, such as those that measure GDP and other economic activity, are not disaggregated by gender. Most economic measurement focuses on the market economy, where men's production predominates. Child and elder care as well as household work – typically provided without pay and mostly by women – are unmeasured. The unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work between women and men

add to women's daily work and may prevent them from participating in the labour market. UN DESA found that this gender gap had been decreasing in many countries until the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary data shows a recent diminishing of that positive trend. UN DESA and partners developed a short survey instrument to inform policy makers on impacts on time-use and developed the manual National Time Transfer Accounts: Measuring and Analysing the Gendered Economy.

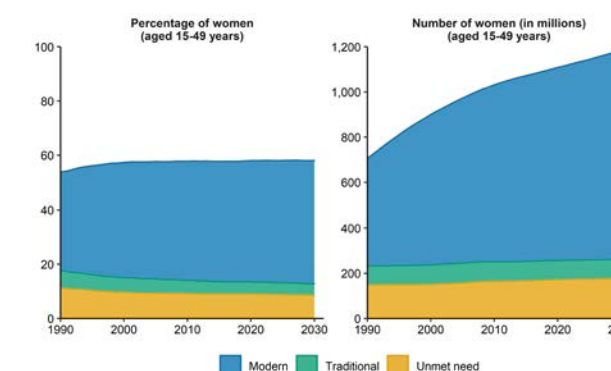
The new methodology and manual provide systematic, comprehensive and coherent methods for the age and sex disaggregation of the major components of National Accounts. This will result in an improved understanding of the gender dimension of economies through a standardized methodology that permits international comparisons and identification of best practices in support of gender equality.

for Statistics of International Migration. The framework links with data needs for policy making, covers new migration patterns and new data sources, and will be the basis for statistical capacity efforts conducted by UN DESA and partners. UN DESA prepared the report **International Migration 2020 Highlights**, showcasing the latest estimates of international migration. The number of international migrants globally has grown rapidly over the last two decades, reaching 281 million people in 2020. However, preliminary estimates suggest that disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of international migrants by around 2 million. Nearly half of all international migrants worldwide are women or girls. The United States of America remains the largest destination of international migrants, followed by Germany and Saudi Arabia. India has the largest diaspora, followed by Mexico, the Russian Federation and China.

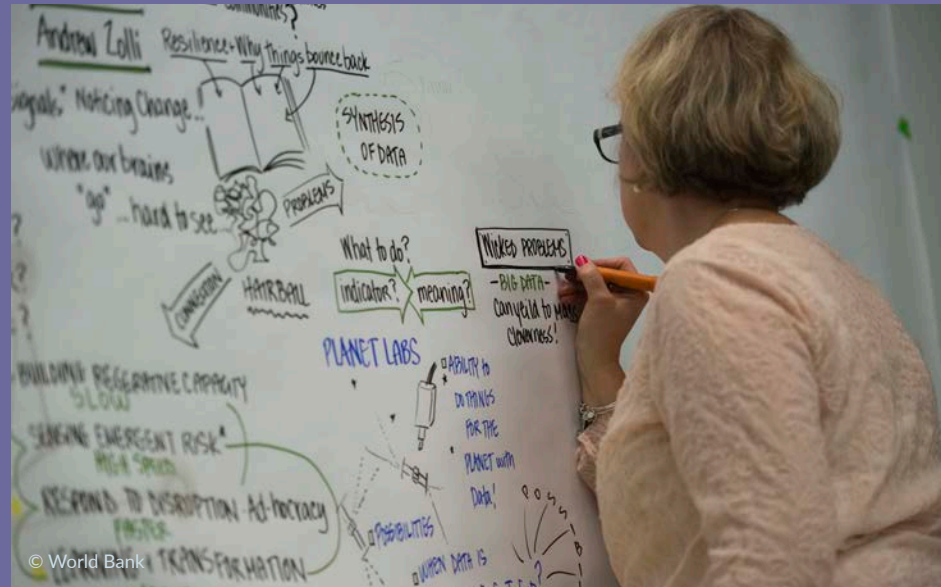
Estimating and projecting demand for family planning

Expanding access to contraception is an essential component of achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, as called for in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN DESA prepared the report **World Family Planning 2020 Highlights**, examining global and regional progress in meeting the growing demand for family planning. The report presents the latest estimates and projections of the proportion and number of women of reproductive age who use contraceptive methods or have an unmet need for family planning. The number of women with a demand for family planning has increased markedly over the past two decades, from 900 million in 2000 to nearly 1.1 billion in 2020. An additional 100 million women are projected to have a demand for family planning by 2030, with the fastest growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Future

population growth will pose challenges to countries that seek to expand reproductive health-care services in order to keep pace with these growing needs. Lastly, the report discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic has made the path towards achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services by 2030 more uncertain.



Estimates of the proportion and number of women aged 15-49 years who use modern or traditional contraceptive methods or who have an unmet need for family planning, 1990-2030



DRIVING INNOVATION

Taking a catalytic approach to data development

Through a Development Account Project beginning in March 2021, and over a four-year period, 2021-2024, UN DESA is working to improve the institutional capacity of selected countries in special situations to develop policy experimentation and regulatory sandboxes for new technologies. This innovative and catalytic approach to data development is expected to accelerate progress towards achieving the vision in the Decade of Action and delivery of sustainable development, embodied by the 2030 Agenda. Under the right circumstances,

Governments could adopt an experimental approach to policy design, using empirical data to validate theoretical and historical understandings of the impact of variations in regulations and policies. In this environment, novel digital technologies, financial products, and business models can be tested under a set of rules, supervision requirements, and appropriate safeguards. These measures bring the cost of innovation down, reduce barriers to entry, and allow regulators to collect important insights before deciding if further regulatory action is necessary, especially when existing regulations (or the absence thereof) can impede innovation. Policy experimentation and sandboxes constitute an essential component of the innovation ecosystem and institutional resilience. Policy experimentation or regulatory sandboxes can provide opportunities to study feasibility and scalability.



STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Strengthening capacities on risk-informed governance and innovative technology for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and resilience

UN DESA trained over 200 government officials from 70 countries using the Training Toolkit on Risk-informed Governance and Innovative Technology for DRR and Resilience, as part of UN DESA's Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs. During these workshops, Member States provided resounding feedback and testimonies emphasizing that:

- While climate change is compounding disaster risk and increasing the frequency and intensity of disasters, ICTs and digital government technologies provide enormous opportunities for ensuring DRR and building resilience for achieving the 2030 Agenda.
- Disaster risk management and resilience building cannot be efficient or effective without strong, inclusive, accountable, and empowered institutions based on risk-informed governance.

Robust, timely, accurate, disaggregated, evidence-based and people-centred data with access to information are key enablers for ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups in decision-making for DRR.

Latin America and the Caribbean 1 Africa 33 Asia 9 Oceania 3



Countries in the LDC category after the 2021 triennial review

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Supporting LDCs beyond graduation

UN DESA designed an LDC Graduation Support Facility to address graduation concerns by Member States. The Department piloted five of the six main service offerings of the Facility in Vanuatu, which graduated out of the LDC category in December 2020 - the first to do so in the midst of COVID-19. The Facility strengthened the capacity of government officials to prepare and engage

in trade negotiations on extending trade preferences and preferential market access for specific export commodities to Japan and China. Working with ESCAP, UN DESA helped Vanuatu to mainstream its smooth transition strategy into its national plans, fiscal budget, and monitoring and reporting processes.

“

We wish to acknowledge the invaluable backing from UNESCAP, UN DESA, UNCTAD, EU, the Government of Australia, New Zealand and those development partners who supported the development of our Smooth Transition Strategy. With their support, Vanuatu will transition smoothly beyond graduation – with new vigour, new thinking and new pathways of development and partnerships towards equality, resilience and environmental sustainability.

Excerpt from Statement by Hon. Marc Ati (MP), Vanuatu Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade, at the UN ESCAP 77th Commission Session.

Helping Member States recover better: Addressing COVID-19 response and sustainable recovery

Responding to the crisis created by COVID-19 has been the major line of activity for UN DESA during this period, as it has been the case for the rest of the United Nations family. UN DESA continued the efforts started in 2020 to take a close look at the socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic, through its dedicated series of policy briefs providing timely analysis and policy guidance to ensure that sustainable development goals remain in reach during the post-crisis decade. UN DESA briefs continued to draw the attention of a broad swath of readers, amassing nearly 1 million downloads in 2020.

To help countries in designing their responses to COVID-19 crisis in the short-, medium-, and long-term, UN DESA carried out an in-depth analysis of the experience of ten countries, including countries that have been more

successful in their responses as well as countries that found it more challenging to be successful in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This comparative analysis helped to bring out the determinants of COVID-19 response strategies across countries and the lessons that provide for countries that are struggling to bring the pandemic under control. The results of this analysis were published in the form of the UN DESA Working Paper No. 172, titled **Variations in COVID Strategies: Determinants and Lessons**. The analysis and findings presented in this working paper is proving useful for policymakers in many countries in evaluating their existing COVID-19 responses in determining ways of making them more effective.



FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

Examining risk-informed, climate-smart development cooperation

UN DESA stimulated and shaped a reimagined understanding of development cooperation – informed by risk, designed to build resilience, and strongly linked with climate action – through its support to the 2021 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). Held virtually on 6-7 May 2021, discussions at the DCF stressed the need for governments to fulfil ODA commitments and provide fresh concessional finance for developing countries, especially for LDCs and SIDS, with emphasis on grants rather than loans. The availability of concessional resources for Middle Income

Countries (MICs) was also stressed as imperative for recovery. Participants identified ways that development cooperation should do more to support recovery efforts, including to strengthen health systems in vulnerable countries, while also promoting solidarity and coordination to advance the production, supply, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. The resurgent interest and expanded engagement in the work of the DCF, as the UN platform that brings the diversity and dynamism of development cooperation into action-oriented policy discussion, underscored the essential role of development cooperation in pandemic recovery in the Decade of Action.



BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Bringing the business community to the table

With over 12,000 registered participants, the 2020 SDG Business Forum, co-convened virtually by UN DESA, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the UN Global Compact (UN GC), saw a growing recognition of the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships in our response to and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. At the Forum, UNDP, UN GC and ICC jointly announced the COVID-19 Private Sector Global Facility, aiming to mobilize a minimum of 5

billion USD in support of local business communities to enable a resilient rebuild from the pandemic. DHL, Microsoft and PwC are among the first strategic partners to join the Facility.

Mapping UN-system resources and capacities for supporting preparedness

In the context of consultations on recommendations for developing Our Common Agenda, UN DESA and UNDP coordinated a mapping exercise of existing reports, mechanisms and processes in the UN system focused on preparedness, disaster risk reduction, forecasting and other related fields. Forty-nine UN entities participated in the mapping exercise. Entities worked together to assess

assets and gaps, identify opportunities for leveraging the UN system's data and knowledge, and co-create solutions for advancing the commitment on preparedness envisioned by Member States in the Declaration adopted on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations.

The mapping yielded more than 800 submissions, addressing one or more of eight broad typologies of risk: biological risks, including epidemics/pandemics; conflict and security risks (social unrest, conflict, violence); cybersecurity risks; disaster risk, including from climate variability and change; economic and financial risk; environmental risks (technological, natech, environmental degradation); risks related to human mobility, including situations of forced displacement; and social risks (inequality, discrimination, lack of social protection, gender-based violence, or similar). The mapping helped to raise awareness of the immense depth and breadth of UN-system knowledge and operations that address multiple forms of risk in both individual and intersecting ways.

ANNEXES

- UN DESA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
- UN DESA ORGANIZATION CHART
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 75TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 76TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Mr. Liu Zhenmin

Under-Secretary-General

Mr. Liu Zhenmin was appointed as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs effective 26 July 2017. In his position, Mr. Liu guides UN Secretariat support for the follow-up processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also oversees the substantive services to many intergovernmental processes, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the annual meetings of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, including its Development Cooperation Forum, and the work of the subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC.

In addition to intergovernmental processes, Mr. Liu oversees UN DESA's policy analysis and capacity-development work. He also serves as the Convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and advises the United Nations Secretary-General on all development-related issues, including climate change, internet governance, and financing for development. In addition, the Secretary-General has designated Mr. Liu to lead preparations for a number of forthcoming development-focused global conferences, including the Ocean Conference, the Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, and the High-Level Dialogue on Energy.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Liu had been the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of China since 2013. Among his various diplomatic assignments, he served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Other International Organizations in Switzerland, from 2011 to 2013.

Mr. Liu brings to the position more than 30 years of experience in the diplomatic service, with a strong focus on bilateral, regional and global issues. For 10 years, he was deeply involved in climate change negotiations including the conclusion of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. During his tenure as USG, he has consistently advocated for strengthening multilateral approaches to sustainable development issues.

Mr. Liu holds a Master of Laws from the Law School of Peking University.



Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano

Assistant Secretary-General

Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, effective 20 December 2018.

Ms. Spatolisano has 33 years of experience in public service including extensive senior leadership in multilateral affairs. Prior to her appointment she was responsible for international organizations and development dialogue with other donors in the European Commission's Directorate General for Development Cooperation. In that capacity, she ensured the European Union's presence and developed its positions on development policy in a number of international forums, including the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Group of Seven and the Group of Twenty, where she represented the bloc in its Development Working Group.

Ms. Spatolisano served as the European Union Ambassador to OECD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Monaco and Andorra.

She was also a member of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations, serving as the Head of its Economic and Trade Section. She covered all issues related to trade, development and environmental policies in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) and in the Economic and Social Council, also serving as the European Commission representative to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

Prior to that role she served in the Washington Delegation of the European Commission and was the representative of the European Commission to the Trade and Development Committee of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Ms. Spatolisano holds a Doctorate in Law (cum laude) from Florence University. She went on to research and teach at the Florence University Law School for seven years.



Mr. Elliott C. Harris

Assistant Secretary-General
Chief Economist
Officer-in-Charge, Economic Analysis and Policy Division

Mr. Elliott Harris was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, effective 2 April 2018.

Mr. Harris brings over 25 years of international experience in the fields of international economics and development policy analysis, coupled with knowledge of the United Nations system, multilateral and inter-agency coordination processes. He has extensive experience in the design of macroeconomic policies and their application as a central instrument for the reduction of poverty and for resilient and sustained economic development. His work in the field of economics also focuses on the macroeconomic linkages with global social and environmental policies.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Harris served as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) from 2015. He joined UNEP's Senior Management Team in 2013 as Director of the New York Office and Secretary to the Environment Management Group.

Prior to joining UNEP, Mr. Harris began his career in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1988, where he worked in the African Department and the Fiscal Affairs Department. In 2002 he became an Adviser in the Policy Development and Review Department and was appointed in 2008 as Special Representative to the United Nations, in addition to serving as Assistant Director of the Strategy and Policy Review Department.

Mr. Harris holds a Bachelor of Science degree in German and political science and an advanced degree in economics. He was awarded an Advanced Studies Certificate in international economics and policy research from the Institute of World Economics in Kiel, Germany.

Intergovernmental
Support

Ms. Marion Barthélemy

Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development

Prior to her current appointment, Ms. Barthélemy was Director of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government from 2016 to 2018. From 2012 to 2016, she served as Chief of the Intergovernmental Support Branch in the Division for Sustainable Development. In this capacity, she was part of the team supporting the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda.

From 2007 to 2012, she served as Chief of the Development Cooperation Policy Branch in the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development where she supported the Development Cooperation Forum and the General Assembly's review of UN system country-level activities (QCPR).

From 2000 to 2005, she served in the Office of two Under-Secretary-Generals for Economic and Social Affairs, supported the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and served as Special Assistant to the UN Deputy Secretary-General.

At the beginning of her career, she worked as an economist in the Division for the Advancement of Women in UN DESA and later in the UN Drug Control Programme, working with the Secretary of the International Narcotics Board. She joined the UN in 1987 through the National Competitive Exam for economists and studied in the Paris Institute of Political Studies in Paris, with a focus on macroeconomic and social policies.

Social
Inclusion

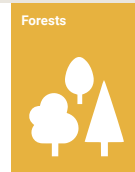
Ms. Daniela Bas

Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development

Ms. Daniela Bas specializes in international politics, human rights and social development. Prior to her current appointment, she served as Senior Consultant on human rights for the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She advised the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on anti-discrimination issues.

Ms. Bas has worked for close to 10 years for the UN as a Professional Officer in social development and human rights. She served as Special Adviser on Fundamental Rights for the former Vice President of the European Commission; and as the Italian representative designated by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the topic "Tourism for All" to the European Commission.

Ms. Bas is a Board Member of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and of the Committee to Promote non-Armed and non-Violent Civil Defence of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. She graduated in Political Science in 1985, with a major in International Politics and wrote her dissertation on The elimination of architectural barriers and the employment of people with physical disabilities. She has also worked as a journalist and broadcaster for Italian Radio and TV.

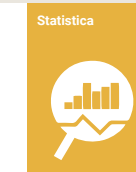


Mr. Alexander Trepelkov

Officer-in-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development Goals
Officer-in-Charge, Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests

Mr. Alexander Trepelkov leads the work of the global secretariat for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on providing substantive support, integrated policy analysis, building multi-stakeholder partnerships and capacity-development in the thematic areas such as natural resources, water, energy, climate, ocean, transport, science and technology, as well as special concerns of small island developing States (SIDS). He is also in charge of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat as the focal point for intergovernmental support, policy analysis and capacity development on all issues related to sustainable forest management and forest financing.

In 2010-2018, Mr. Trepelkov was Director of the Financing for Development Office, with primary responsibility for substantive support, promoting policy coherence and multi-stakeholder engagement at all levels in public and private resource mobilization, international development cooperation and trade, debt sustainability and international financial system for development. His previous work in UN DESA was in the areas of macro- and micro-economic and social policy analysis and public administration and finance. Prior to joining the UN Secretariat in 1989, Mr. Trepelkov was employed for 12 years in the Russian diplomatic service. He holds a PhD in International Economics from MGIMO-University in Moscow and has authored several publications.



Mr. Stefan Schweinfest

Director, Statistics Division

Mr. Schweinfest joined the Statistics Division in 1989 and has served as the substantive secretary of two intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) since 2002, and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UNGIM) since 2011.

Mr. Schweinfest supported the work of the Statistical Commission and its Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to develop the global indicator framework to monitor progress towards the SDGs. Under his leadership, the Statistics Division works on implementing this framework and ensuring countries receive capacity-building support to monitor progress towards the SDGs.

He played a key role in the negotiations leading to the 2011 ECOSOC resolution to establish UNGIM and has actively involved himself with global geospatial information management since, including the negotiations leading to a second ECOSOC resolution in 2016 that strengthens and broadens the mandate of this Committee of Experts.

He studied Mathematical Economics at the Universities of Wuerzburg and Bonn in Germany. He holds a Diplome D'Etudes Approfondies (Masters equivalent) from the University of Paris in these fields. He also conducted postgraduate research at the London School of Economics.



Mr. John Wilmoth

Director, Population Division

Prior to his appointment as the Director of the Population Division, Mr. Wilmoth served as Professor in the Department of Demography of the University of California at Berkeley. He also served in the Population Division as Chief of the Mortality Section from 2005 to 2007.

Mr. Wilmoth oversees the Department's support to the Commission on Population and Development and to intergovernmental discussions on international migration, including for the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Under his leadership, the Population Division continues to upgrade its production of internationally comparable population data, which are essential inputs to the global monitoring of progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Wilmoth served as a consultant to the World Health Organization and the World Bank from 2009 to 2012, leading the development of new global estimates of maternal mortality. He is a member of the Population Association of America and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. He also serves on the editorial boards of some leading demographic journals including *Demographic Research* and the *European Journal of Population*.

Mr. Wilmoth is the author or co-author of more than 50 scientific papers examining various aspects of population dynamics and population issues, including the causes of the historical decline of human mortality, prospects for future trends in life expectancy, the impact of population ageing on public pension and healthcare systems, popular perceptions of population growth and its consequences, and methodologies for estimating and projecting demographic trends.



Mr. Juwang Zhu

Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

Mr. Juwang Zhu leads the Division in promoting inclusive, effective, accountable institutions that are well equipped to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 16.

Prior to his current role, Mr. Zhu served as Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA from 2008 to 2013. In that capacity he advised the Under-Secretary-General on policy and management issues and coordinated the Department's substantive advice to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on development issues and on the restructuring of UN DESA's capacity-building programme.

Mr. Zhu was Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and assisted in coordinating support for the Conference. He also contributed to the Departmental support for Rio+20 follow-up. As Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals from 2016 to 2019, Mr. Zhu coordinated the Secretariat support for the HLPF, the UN Ocean Conference, and the Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

Mr. Zhu graduated from the Shanghai International Studies University in 1982 and did post-graduate studies in Beijing Foreign Studies University. He has an MSC in financial economics from University of London and an MA in international relations from Webster University.



Mr. Navid Hanif

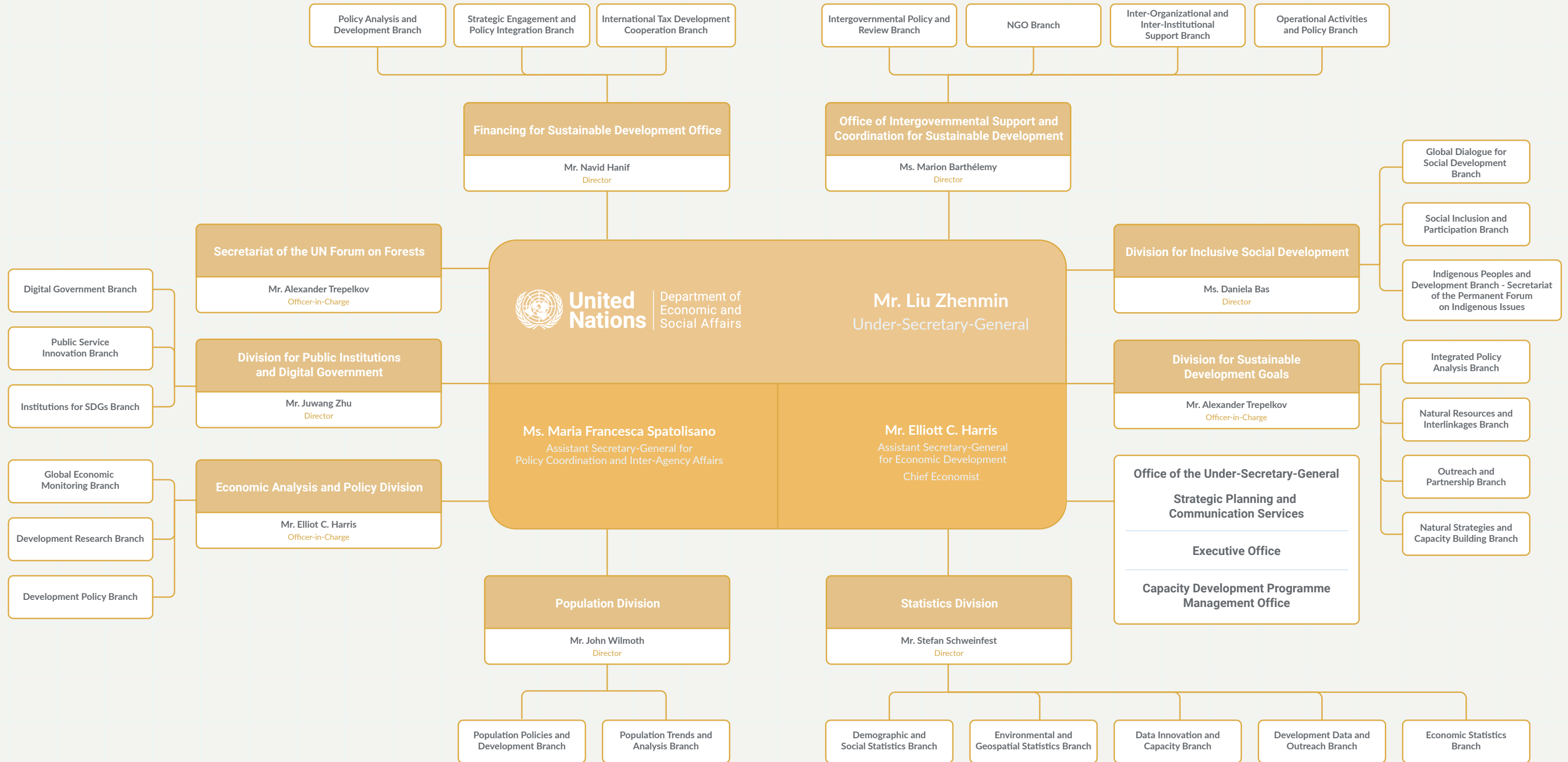
Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Office

Mr. Navid Hanif joined UN DESA in 2001; until 2003, he was Senior Policy Adviser in the Division for Sustainable Development and member of the team for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

He later joined the office of the Under-Secretary General for UN DESA and focused on departmental initiatives in various policy areas. He worked as the Chief of Policy Coordination Branch in the office for Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) support from 2004 to 2009. In 2005, he was sent on a special one-year assignment to work as a Principal Officer in the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General. He worked there as a member of the team for the 2005 World Summit. In 2010, he was appointed as Head of the newly established UN DESA Strategic Planning Unit. Most recently, Mr. Hanif served as Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, from 2012 to 2018.

Mr. Hanif holds a Master's in International Political Economy, from Columbia University, New York and a Master's in English Literature from Government College, Lahore.

UN DESA ORGANIZATION CHART



Key moments and milestones of the 75th General Assembly

ECOSOC Functional Commission (Intergovernmental) [Supported by UN DESA]	ECOSOC Advisory Bodies (Experts) [Supported by UN DESA]
High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting	Publication/Dataset Launch

Month	Key moments and milestones
September 2020	15 Opening of the 75th session of the General Assembly
	16 Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75th Anniversary: Shaping the Trends of Our Time
	17 Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The gender snapshot 2020
	18 SDG Moment
	30 World Family Planning 2020 Highlights
	30 United Nations Summit on Biodiversity
October	1 International Day for Older Persons
	1 Opening of the 75th session of the Third Committee
	5 Opening of the 75th session of the Second Committee
	15 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
	19-21 UN World Data Forum
	20 World Statistics Day
	20 The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics
	20-23, 26-29 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
	31 The World Cities Day
31 World Population Ageing 2020 Highlights	
November	2-6, 9-17 Internet Governance Forum
	19 Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission
December	1 Joint informal high-level commemorative meeting of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development
	3 International Day for Persons with Disabilities
	18 International Migrants Day
	20 International Human Solidarity Day
January 2021	15 International Migration 2020 Highlights
	25 World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021
February	1 Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and the Chairs of the Functional Commissions and Expert Bodies
	8-17 Commission for Social Development
	18 Special Meeting of ECOSOC on "Reimagining Equality: Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the decade of action for the SDGs"
	20 World Day of Social Justice
March	22-26 Committee for Development Policy
	1-3, 5 Statistical Commission
	12 State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, 5th Volume
	15-26 Commission on the Status of Women
	18, 22 High-Level Meeting on the Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda
	21 International Day of Forests
	21 World Down Syndrome Day
	22 World Water Day
25 Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2021	
April	6 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
	7-8 ECOSOC Youth Forum
	12-15 Forum on Financing for Development follow-up
	12-21 Committee of Experts on Public Administration
	16 Special Meeting of ECOSOC on "A vaccine for all"
	19-23 Commission on Population and Development

April	19-30 Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
	19-23, 26-28 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
	23 Special Meeting of ECOSOC on SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs
	26-30 UN Forum on Forests
	26 Global Forest Goals Report 2021
May	29 ECOSOC Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
	3-7 UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names
	5-6 7th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum)
	6-7 Development Cooperation Forum (deferred from 2020 session)
	11 World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2021
	15 International Day of Families
	17-25, 27 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (Regular)
	18-20 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment
	20 World Social Report 2021
	June
7 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (resumed)	
7 SDG 7 Policy Briefs and SDG 7 Tracking report	
8 World Oceans Day	
8-9 ECOSOC Management segment	
15-17 Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
15 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day	
16 International Day of Family Remittances	
21-25 Ministerial Thematic Forums for High-level Dialogue on Energy	
23 UN Public Service Day	
23-25 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment	
25 Adoption of the General Assembly resolutions on ECOSOC and HLPF Reviews	
July	2 ECOSOC Integration segment
	4 International Day of Cooperatives
	6 Sustainable Development Report and Global SDG Indicator Database
	6 Sustainable Development Progress Chart
	6-12 High-level political forum on sustainable development (ECOSOC)
	11 World Population Day
	13-16 High-level Segment of ECOSOC including the three-day ministerial segment of the high-level political forum on sustainable development
15 World Youth Skills Day	
August	21-22 ECOSOC Management Segment (continued)
	9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
	12 International Youth Day
	23-24, 27 UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
	26 World Public Sector Report 2021
	30 Aug - 10 Sep Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (Resumed)

ECOSOC Functional Commission (Intergovernmental) [Supported by UN DESA]	ECOSOC Advisory Bodies (Experts) [Supported by UN DESA]
High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting	Publication/Dataset Launch

Key moments and milestones of the 76th General Assembly

Month	Key moments and milestones
September 2021	14 Opening of the 76th session of the General Assembly
	17 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (Resumed)
	20 SDG Moment
	20 Sustainable Development Outlook 2021: From anguish to determination
	24 High-level Dialogue on Energy
	30 Opening of the 76th session of the Second Committee
	30 Sep - 1 Oct 8th Global Forum on Gender Statistics
October	1 International Day for Older Persons
	3-6 UN World Data Forum
	5 Opening of the 76th session of the Third Committee
	12 Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Development: Interagency report for second Global Sustainable Transport Conference
	14-16 Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference
	17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
	19-28 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
	31 The World Cities Day
(tbd) Adoption of the General Assembly resolution on the review of the functioning of the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, including its funding arrangements	
November	31 Oct - 12 Nov 26th Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP 26)
	(tbd) Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs
December	3 International Day for Persons with Disabilities
	6 Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission
	6-10 Internet Governance Forum
	13-15 UN Public Service Forum
	18 International Migrants Day
	20 International Human Solidarity Day
	(tbd) World Population Policies 2021 Highlights
(tbd) Megatrends report on population growth	
January 2022	24 Jan - 2 Feb Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
	(tbd) World Economic Situation and Prospects 2022
	(tbd) Megatrends report on population ageing
February	2 ECOSOC Partnership Forum
	3-4 ECOSOC Coordination Segment
	14 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
	7-16 Commission for Social Development
	20 World Day of Social Justice
	21-25 Committee for Development Policy
March	1-4 Statistical Commission
	14-25 Commission on the Status of Women
	21 International Day of Forests
	21 World Down Syndrome Day
	22 World Water Day
	29 Mar - 1 Apr Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
	(tbd) Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2021
	(tbd) Special Meeting of ECOSOC on Reimagining Equality
	(tbd) Global Climate-SDG Synergy Conference 2022

April	4-8 Committee of Experts on Public Administration
	6 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
	8 ECOSOC Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
	11-14 Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
	13 ECOSOC dedicated management meetings
	19-20 ECOSOC Youth Forum
	25-28 Forum on Financing for Development follow-up
	25-28 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
May	25-29 Commission on Population and Development
	25 Apr - 6 May Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
	5-6 ECOSOC Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs
	9-13 UN Forum on Forests
	10-13 International Migration Review Forum
	15 International Day of Families
	17-19 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment
	17-25 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
	(tbd) Development Cooperation Forum Survey Study
	(tbd) World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2022
(tbd) Megatrends report on international migration	
June	(tbd) World Population Prospects 2022
	7 NGO Committee
	8 World Oceans Day
	8-9 ECOSOC Management Segment
	14-16 Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
	15 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
	16 International Day of Family Remittances
	20 ECOSOC meeting on transition from relief to development
	21-23 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
	23 UN Public Service Day
27 Jun - 1 Jul UN Ocean Conference	
July	(tbd) UN E-Government Survey 2022
	(tbd) SDG 7 Policy Briefs and SDG 7 Tracking Report
	4 International Day of Cooperatives
	5-7, 11-12 (tbd) High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF)
	11 World Population Day
	13-15, 18 (tbd) High-level Segment of ECOSOC, including the three-day ministerial segment of the HLPF
	15 World Youth Skills Day
	25 ECOSOC Organizational Session for 2023 Cycle (July 2022- July 2023)
(tbd) Sustainable Development Report and Global SDG Indicator Database	
(tbd) Sustainable Development Progress Chart	
August	(tbd) General Assembly high-level meeting on improving road safety (mandated to be back-to-back with HLPF)
	3-5 (tbd) UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
	9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
	12 International Youth Day

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UN.ORG/DESA

FACEBOOK.COM/JOINUNDESA

TWITTER.COM/UNDESA

YOUTUBE.COM/UNITEDNATIONSDESA



**United
Nations**

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs