

LEAVING
NONE
ONE
BEHIND

UN DESA is a leading voice for promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities and eradicating poverty. Throughout the year, UN DESA drew on its convening power and analytical capacity to ensure that the global dialogue included and considered the voices of all peoples, everywhere. The Department also supported the development of national actions to leave no one behind.

UN DESA...

- Led the development of the UN system-wide action plan for the implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027).
- Brought together more than 1,000 young people from more than 100 Member States to have their voices heard at the 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum.
- Convened the 18th United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, bringing together more than 1,200 representatives of indigenous peoples, Member States, academia, parliaments and the UN system.
- Produced the Disability and Development Report, the first ever on disability and the SDGs.

Leaving no one behind

The commitment to leave no one behind is a central tenet of the 2030 Agenda and a long-standing keystone of UN DESA's support to Member States. In 2018-2019, UN DESA brought the UN system together on key issues of inclusion and equality, ensuring a coherent and integrated approach to the UN's work on poverty eradication, youth development, ageing and disability inclusion. The Department continued advising countries that are preparing to graduate from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category, and worked to ensure that the special needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are effectively addressed in the global drive for a healthy and prosperous planet. The Department also supported the high-level political forum's work on the theme of inclusiveness and Sustainable Development Goal 10 on inequality.



LOOKING FORWARD

World Social Report 2020

In 2020, UN DESA's flagship **World Social Report** will carry on the Department's rich tradition of informing decision-making on development issues. Focusing on shaping the future of inequality, the 2020 report will build on decades of compelling analysis to assess the likely impact of major global trends on inequality. Discussing the impacts and potential of technological innovation, climate change, urbanization and international migration, the report will highlight the policy frameworks that can both mitigate impacts and fuel progress.

Bringing the UN system together to end poverty

2018-2027 marks the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty with the theme *Accelerating Global Actions for a World Without Poverty*. In 2018, UN DESA led the development of a system-wide action plan for the implementation of the Third Decade, bringing together the ideas of academic experts from around the globe, UN regional entities, and UN funds and programmes. The action plan's 10 basic principles will guide the collective work of the United Nations work on poverty eradication and inform the individual contributions of system entities.

Fiscal, wage and social protection for leaving no one behind

From 11 to 21 February 2019, UN DESA supported the 57th session of the Commission for Social Development – the ECOSOC advisory body that addresses the social dimensions of development. Focused on addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies, the Commission recognized inequality as a defining issue of our time. It encouraged governments to expand universal social protection and promote decent work for all. The Commission also underscored the important interlinkages between youth unemployment and inequality. It stressed the importance of realizing the social dimensions of the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) through coordinated, integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.



A construction worker hangs off the side of a building in Dhaka, June 2010. Photo: UN Photo/Kibae Park



10 basic principles of the system-wide plan of action that will guide the collective work of the United Nations system on the eradication of poverty

1. Poverty is multidimensional and new forms are emerging.
2. Development policy needs to integrate social, economic and environmental concerns.
3. Sustained and inclusive economic growth is necessary.
4. Respect for internationally agreed human rights is essential.
5. Gender mainstreaming is vital.
6. Discrimination, marginalization and exclusion must be removed.
7. Leave no one behind.
8. The UN's role is to support Member States to strengthen their capacities to develop and implement effective, evidence-based, nationally-owned development strategies.
9. Integrated system-wide action should enhance efficiency, coherence, impact and adaptability to emerging trends.
10. Inclusive and strategic partnerships are key.

**Adapted from the Report of the Secretary-General A/73/298.*



2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum closing session, April 2019. Photo: UN DESA/P. Vasić



Standing with youth protecting peace

In 2018-2019, UN DESA worked with young people and policy makers in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Kenya, Togo and Lebanon to address the links between social policy, youth development, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The initiative attracted more than \$500,000 to help ensure that national youth policies address peace and security issues and, conversely, that peace and security policies consider the needs of youth.

Ensuring young people have a seat at the table

The active engagement of youth is central to achieving sustainable, inclusive and stable societies by the year 2030, and to averting the worst, irreversible consequences of climate change. Recognizing the importance of young people's engagement, the Secretary-General launched Youth 2030: The UN Youth Strategy. As a co-chair of the Inter-agency Network on Youth Development, UN DESA played an integral role in the development of the strategy, bringing the UN system together to identify priorities for collective action. Youth 2030 aims to guide the UN system in stepping up support for the empowerment of young people, while ensuring that the Organization's work fully benefits from their insights and ideas.

Working jointly with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, UN DESA helped make the 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum one of the most successful, enabling the participation of more than 1,000 young people in this vibrant gathering held from 8 to 9 April 2019 at UN Headquarters in New York. Addressing the theme *Empowered, Included and Equal*, the Forum was a unique space for youth to voice their opinions, share ideas and interact with more than 100 Member State representatives, to discuss the critical importance of engaging young people in global development dialogue and in national policymaking. The outcome of the Youth Forum brought the unique perspectives of the young generation to the high-level political forum on sustainable development later that year.

Responding to the changing needs of a rapidly ageing world

In 2018, for the first time in history, persons aged 65 or above outnumbered children under five years of age, globally. That proportion will only continue to grow. Today, nine per cent of the world's population is over the age of 65. By 2050, that proportion will be 16 per cent. UN DESA's **World Population Prospects 2019** found that the number of persons aged 80 years or older is projected to triple, from 143 million in 2019 to 426 million in 2050. More broadly, the Commission on Population and Development, at its 52nd session in April 2019, recognized the critical importance of population dynamics for sustainable development by adopting a political declaration on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the

Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The Department also supported the 10th session of Open-ended Working Group on Ageing held from 15 to 18 April 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. Civil society organizations and national human rights institutions came together with Member States to strengthen social policy frameworks and facilitate human rights protections of older persons.



Participants at the commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons in New York October 2018. Photo: UN DESA photo



Opening of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, April 2019. Photo: UN DESA/P. Vasić



The 18th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2019 in Numbers

1,200 participants

14 government ministers

121 side events

Over **2** weeks



LOOKING FORWARD

The 19th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will be held from 13 to 24 April 2020 at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, addressing the theme *Peace, justice and strong institutions: the role of indigenous peoples in implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16*

Standing up for indigenous peoples

In 2018-2019, UN DESA continued to support the social inclusion and rights of indigenous peoples. In 2018, with support from UN DESA, the Government of Namibia validated a draft white paper on the rights of indigenous peoples. In Uganda, UN DESA has been working in collaboration with UN Women and OHCHR to support the development of an affirmative action programme for indigenous peoples.

As the secretariat to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), UN DESA supported the Forum's 18th session, which convened from 22 April to 3 May 2019. The meeting brought together more than 1,200 representatives of Member States, indigenous peoples and United Nations organizations to address the theme *Traditional knowledge: Generation, transmission and protection*. Discussions focused on the role that core international instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, the ILO Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, can play to ensure that indigenous knowledge is duly recognized and protected.



Conference of States Parties to the Convention on Persons with Disabilities, June 2019. Photo: UN DESA/P. Vasić

Enabling disability inclusion

UN DESA serves as the secretariat to the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP-CRPD), one of the largest international gatherings of disability stakeholders in the world. The 12th session of the COSP-CRPD was held on 11 to 13 June 2019, with a focus on empowerment of persons with disabilities. Participants debated technology, health and social inclusion through participation in cultural life.

The 12th session also marked the launch of the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy. This comprehensive strategy ensures that the United Nations system is fit for purpose for the practice and promotion of disability inclusion through all pillars of its work. As a co-chair of the Inter-agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN DESA played an important coordinating role in the development of the Strategy and continues to support its implementation.



178 countries have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), one of the most widely ratified international treaties to date.

The 12th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD, was the most highly attended so far with 1,200 Participants, including:

- more than **800** civil society stakeholders
- **150** Member State interventions
- **1** Vice President of State
- **1** First Lady
- **35** ministerial-level officials



Boys playing with marine algae on the beach of Tarawa, Kiribati, July 2017. Photo: Asian Development Bank

Guiding Least Developed Countries towards a sustainable future

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development. They are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of human assets. There are currently 47 LDCs in the world, with five in the process of graduating from the category. Vanuatu is scheduled to graduate in 2020, Angola in 2021, Bhutan in 2023, and São Tomé and Príncipe and Solomon Islands in 2024. In 2018-2019, UN DESA continued its support to the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), which is responsible for reviewing the status of LDCs and for monitoring their progress after graduation from the category. The Committee also provides independent advice to ECOSOC on emerging cross-sectoral development issues and on international cooperation for development.

UN DESA also provided training and advice to enhance the capacities of stakeholders in LDCs for achieving sustainable growth. In 2018, the Department launched gradjet.org – a one-stop shop with resources and useful

contacts that officials in LDCs can use to better prepare their countries for graduation. UN DESA also manages the Support Measure Portal for LDCs, an interactive platform that compiles and catalogues information about LDC-specific international support measures provided by development partners.

Supporting the unique development needs of Small Island Developing States

One of UN DESA's top priorities in 2018-2019 was preparing the High-level Mid-Term Review of the SAMOA Pathway. This included producing the Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, facilitating the work of the Co-Chairs and supporting intergovernmental negotiations in the lead-up to the September 2019 event. An interregional meeting on the SAMOA Pathway reviewed and analysed the conclusions of three SIDS regional meetings held earlier in 2018. UN DESA facilitated and supported all of these meetings. UN DESA has continued to provide support to SIDS in strengthening their public institutions' capacities to promote policy coherence and to implement the SDGs. UN DESA also provides comprehensive information on



High-level political forum on sustainable development - Panel discussion with UN Assistant Secretary-General Elliott Harris in the Digital Media Zone.
Photo: UN DESA/P. Vasić

the digital readiness of SIDS and policy guidance on how e-Government can support transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies through its UN E-Government Survey.

Building the resilience of Middle-Income Countries

Middle-Income Countries (MICs) are home to 73 per cent of the world's poor and face significant challenges to achieving sustainable development. UN DESA provided substantive support to the first High-level Meeting on Middle-Income Countries and the 2030 Agenda, convened by the President of the General Assembly in December 2018. A key objective was to highlight the improved coordination that the United Nations Development System, international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders can extend to MICs. The discussions generated action-oriented and solutions-based recommendations that will support MICs to build their capacity and resilience towards the attainment of the SDGs.

MICs need access to better technologies, research and innovation and better management practices. UN DESA is actively engaged in supporting innovation through analytical work and multi-stakeholder engagement.



LOOKING FORWARD

The high-level meeting to review progress on addressing the priorities of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway took place on Friday, 27 September 2019, at UN Headquarters in New York.

The Review was an opportunity for the international community to thoroughly assess the progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway over the last five years and to agree on the next steps to address the vulnerabilities of SIDS.