



Protecting the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples

Indigenous communities play a vital role as custodians of our planet, possessing vital knowledge that will support global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But despite progress to protect their rights, many of the world's 370 million indigenous peoples face discrimination and threats to their livelihoods and ancestral lands. To tackle these challenges, more than 1,000 representatives of indigenous people's organizations, Members States and UN agencies will gather for the 17th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues taking place at UN Headquarters on 16-27 April 2018.

A sustainable way of life

Indigenous peoples have deep spiritual, cultural, social and economic ties with their lands, territories and resources; this is vital to their identity and existence. "Nature is part of us, you cannot separate indigenous peoples from nature," said Jane Meriwas, Executive Director and Secretary to the Board of the Samburu Women Trust, an organization that works to uphold the human rights of women and girls in pastoral communities in Kenya.

Ahead of the Forum, which this year will focus on indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and resources, UN DESA Voice spoke with Ms. Meriwas and Chandra Roy-Henriksen, Chief of the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development. Both described this special bond to the environment, and how it contributes to our joint efforts to make this world more sustainable.

“When you look around the world today and you look at the areas which are green, those are the areas where indigenous peoples live,” said Ms. Roy-Henriksen. She also described the sustainable lifestyle of indigenous communities, which follows the principle that you only take what you need from nature. “It’s not something that you really take as yours forever. You borrow it and you pass it on to the next generation.”

Indigenous peoples’ tradition of collective rights to lands and resources is often in sharp contrast with dominant models of individual ownership, privatization and development. There is growing recognition that advancing indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and resources does not only contribute to their well-being but also to the greater good of the world by tackling problems such as climate change and loss of biodiversity.

Challenges remain to realize rights to lands, territories and resources

Significant progress has been made in international human rights standard-setting for indigenous peoples’ collective rights to lands, territories and resources, following the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. A number of countries have recognized those rights through constitutional or legal protections or adjudication, constructive agreements and administrative programmes. Many States, however, have yet to recognize and ensure these rights and a wide gap remains in realizing them, even in countries where they are recognized.

Even where indigenous peoples have obtained legal protection or title deeds to their lands and resources, those are often violated by development projects; mining or logging concessions, bio fuel plantations or other business operations; or designation of conservation areas. In addition, indigenous peoples are often caught in the middle of conflicts taking place on their ancestral lands and territories.

Despite increasing jurisprudence of national and regional courts and other human rights mechanisms for protection of indigenous peoples’ rights to lands, territories and resources, a major challenge is the effective enforcement of these judgments. The implementation gap between law and practice is wide and indigenous peoples continue to face serious abuses against their rights to lands, territories and resources daily.

Reports of grave human rights violations have been heard from every corner of the world, most often perpetrated against indigenous human rights defenders protecting their rights and their lands, territories and communities. Forced evictions and dispossession of lands have particularly severe impacts on indigenous women, who often face additional violence and discrimination based on gender and identity.

International platform to find solutions

At the 2018 session, the Permanent Forum will build on its continuing work to provide the space and platform to identify opportunities for concrete action to recognize and strengthen the indigenous peoples’ rights to lands, territories and resources. The Forum will facilitate discussions among indigenous peoples, Member States, UN agencies and other stakeholders around good practices and challenges and recommend effective strategies to realize those rights.

“We hope that the end result will have a positive impact on those communities who have been agitating when you talk about issues on land,” said Jane Meriwat. “We hope even that the recommendation can reach the relevant government and [...] be effectively implemented [...] and disseminated to the communities that are affected.”

The Forum will also follow up on the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, prepare for the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, and hone in on the realization of the 17 global goals, leaving no one behind.

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has given indigenous peoples a certain level of expectation,” said Ms. Roy-Henriksen, explaining that as the world moves

forward towards 2030, there is hope among indigenous communities that their priorities, concerns and rights will be recognized.

For more information: 17th session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

HIGHLIGHTS



Sustainable cities – gateways for people on the move

The world is on the move, and today an estimated 258 million international migrants are living outside their country of birth. While global population movements grab headlines, a quiet revolution tiptoes in the background, dramatically changing our world – the great migration of humanity into cities. From just 746 million in 1950, the world’s urban population has ballooned to over 4 billion today. The movement of people from rural to urban areas, between cities

of different sizes and from one country to another will continue to affect the distribution of the global population within and across national boundaries.

The UN Commission on Population and Development will open its 51st session on 9 April 2018. With a theme of “Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration”, the session will include a discussion of the intricate linkages between migration and urbanization and the role they play in sustainable development.

Well-managed urbanization promotes sustainable development

More than half of the world’s population lives in urban areas today, and that share is expected to increase further. By 2030, six of every 10 people will be an urban inhabitant. By 2050, it may be two out of three. Urbanization promotes development through economies of agglomeration and specialization, efficient service delivery and greater productivity of labour.

Well-managed urbanization can improve access to education, health care and housing, increase productivity and expand opportunity. Governments should adopt strategies for future urban growth that reap the benefits of economies of agglomeration while minimizing the environmental and other adverse impacts of urban growth.

Migration is a powerful driver of global economic development

The number of international migrants globally continues to rise and reached 258 million in 2017. Since the 1990s, migration has been the primary source of population growth in the developed regions as a whole. Migration contributes to rejuvenating the populations of destination countries and helps to postpone population decline in countries with very low levels of fertility.

Migration also promotes economic growth in countries of origin through remittances, diaspora investments and return migration.

For the benefits of international migration to be maximized and widely shared, countries should introduce regulations and policies to facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration.

Cities are gateways for international migration

Many immigrants settle in large metropolitan areas or “global cities”, which serve as “immigrant gateways.” International migration is often a key driver of city growth, and migrants make important contributions to work, entrepreneurship and cultural diversity in their host communities. However, migration also poses challenges for cities, especially if accompanied by high levels of spatial segregation and a lack of integration.

Urbanization policies should reflect the linkages between migration and urbanization. At the same time, policies aimed at integrating foreign residents should reflect the fact that most migrants tend to settle in gateway cities and metropolitan areas. Given that the drivers and impacts of migration are felt most strongly at the local level, city and local governments have important roles to play in managing migration.

Data gaps hinder a deeper understanding of the topics under review by the Commission

Accurate and timely population data disaggregated by age, sex, geographical location and migratory status are needed for planning and decision-making on sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration. Such data enable governments to anticipate needs, determine the impact of public policies and confirm the pace of progress toward sustainable development.

For more information: 51st session of the Commission on Population and Development

HIGHLIGHTS



Putting the money where the goals are: ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development

While estimates vary, it is safe to predict that the bill for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) worldwide will be in the trillions of dollars. The current upturn in global economy increases our chances of footing that bill, but steady sources of funding over the next 12 years – come rain or shine – must be guaranteed to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Finance ministers and other high-level officials from around the world will meet in New York between 23 and 26 April to find ways of securing stable funding for the 2030 Agenda. This will be the third UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Forum on Financing for Development.

The ministers will present progress made in their countries towards implementing the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* – the milestone 2015 agreement on financing of the Global Goals. Representatives of multilateral organizations, international financial institutions, development banks, civil society, the business community and local authorities will also share their views and actions.

During an interactive dialogue, Permanent Representatives of UN Member States will have a unique opportunity to engage the Executive Directors of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on policy coherence in the areas of disaster risk and resilience, and taxation of the digitalized economy.

The Forum will build on the 2018 report by the *Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development*. The report emphasizes the need for integrated national sustainable development strategies and financing frameworks that inform policies, plans and project pipelines. “This report addresses a fundamental question – to what extent the global economy is supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,” said Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA. The 10 “*Doha Messages*” agreed in November last year during a high-level conference in Qatar will also contribute to the Forum’s discussions.

Led by the Ambassadors of Jamaica and Portugal, Member States will use the Financing for Development Forum to negotiate concrete actions in the seven areas of the *Addis Agenda*. The outcome of their discussions will inform the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July.

The Forum will be preceded by the *SDG Investment Fair* on 22 April, which will make the business case for investing in sustainable development and stimulate dialogue between the world of business and governments. Energy, agriculture, infrastructure and financial innovation will be center stage at the Fair.

For more information: [ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development](#)

GET INVOLVED



It’s not business as usual: Partnering to deliver the global goals

While national governments are at the helm of our journey towards a sustainable future, the private sector also plays a vital role in our efforts to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, the successful implementation of these 17 transformative goals, requires us all – from governments, civil society, the private sector, to academia,

philanthropic organizations and private citizens – to work together. It is our blueprint for a better future for our planet and for generations to come.

This year’s ECOSOC Partnership Forum, taking place on 4 April, will bring together business leaders to shed a light on the contributions of the private sector to the global

goals, with a special focus on the theme “Partnering for Resilient and Inclusive Societies: Contributions of the Private Sector.”

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, nations across the globe have made a solemn promise: to leave no one behind. To be able to keep that promise, partnerships will be crucial, since the goals cannot be achieved by isolated efforts. This is also the reason why the agenda’s last and 17th goal specifically targets global partnership for sustainable development. Take goal 10, which aims at eliminating all forms of inequalities for example. This goal requires different parts of society to work together to ensure the rights and inclusion of all people, and especially from different vulnerable groups.

Discussions revolving around the private sector’s unique contribution to the goals and to our commitment to leave no one behind will take center stage at this year’s Forum. More than making profits and boosting the economy, the private sector can spur innovation, make long-term investments in sustainable infrastructure, contribute to equal pay between men and women, and create more decent jobs and opportunities for young people, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples.

While the morning session of the Forum will put a spotlight on innovative business models that will help increase the inclusion of vulnerable groups, real-time and big data generated by the private sector will be in focus for the afternoon session.

Follow this event and get inspired by innovative partnerships between the private sector and other actors. The event will be streamed live via [UN Web TV](#). We welcome our online audience to engage via Facebook and join the live broadcasts that we plan for that day on [UN DESA’s Facebook page](#). Follow UN DESA on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates on these live broadcasts.

Have you forged a new partnership or initiative to mobilize action for the SDGs? Then register this on our [SDGs Partnership Platform](#) to inform, educate and inspire others! Partnerships and initiatives for the SDGs can be registered [here](#).

Photo: Lakshman Nadaraja/World Bank

For more information:

[2018 ECOSOC Partnership Forum](#)

[Partnerships for the SDGs](#)

[Join the 2018 ECOSOC e-Discussion \(26 March – 8 April\) – From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities](#)



Detecting inequalities from space

Everything that happens, happens somewhere. From deforestation, to urbanization, to gender inequalities, our social situations are conditioned or even determined by geographical circumstances. Satellites, big data analysis and other new technologies allow us to pinpoint statistical data on the map, painting for us an entirely new picture of our world. During the recent meeting of the UN Statistical Commission, Vice President of Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and

Geography (INEGI) Paloma Merodio explained the new possibilities.

What is geospatial data and why is it useful for sustainable development?

“Geospatial data, in its purest form, involves information that can be located in space on Earth, and thus contains geographic elements (coordinates, physical addresses and the like). In a broader sense, it may also encompass Earth observation data, such as that acquired through satellites or other remote and direct sensing devices.

Its potential for sustainable development is enormous, particularly as technology and processing/analytical power increases, and more statistical geo-referenced, and geospatial information is gathered and used in more systematic fashion.

The possibility to associate occurrences or statistics with their geographic location allows for a clearer visualization, and provides a way to identify and address gaps, inequalities and other issues on the territory. This gives decision makers powerful tools to better design and monitor policies, as well as international agreements, such as Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

Can you give us some examples of cutting-edge projects that use geospatial data for achieving the SDGs?

“In Mexico, one of two countries to integrate statistics and geography in a single institution, geospatial information is used to complement official statistics, such as the population and housing, and the economic censuses. Dozens of social, economic, environmental and government information layers are then uploaded onto the [Digital Map of Mexico \(MxSIG\)](#), a free online platform created and maintained by INEGI, where diverse data can be viewed together, and used by government, academic and private users for better analysis and decision-making.

Similarly, geospatial and satellite data is used before, during and after extreme events and disasters for a more effective response and monitoring, using an online platform known as the Collaborative Site for Disaster Attention (SICADE).

In addition to geospatial and Earth observation data currently being used for regular updating of Mexico's official cartography, efforts are underway involving inter-institutional cooperation and international partners, in order to use geospatial resources in ways that

can allow for a more precise, frequent and effective monitoring of the SDGs and their indicators. Apart from the geo-referencing of key statistical indicators, and the use of satellite imagery for monitoring of vegetation cover/land use changes and deforestation (SDG 15), geospatial information and Earth observation can be readily used for a more effective monitoring of urban development (SDG 11), water resources (SDG 6), biodiversity (SDGs 14, 15) agricultural production (SDG 2), infrastructure (SDG 9) and disaster risk management (Sendai framework). Ultimately, it can help address broader issues such as inequalities, including gender inequality and related institutional gaps.”

There is a lot of talk about integrating regular statistical information with geospatial information. What new possibilities could this bring?

“The integration of statistical and geospatial information gives us many possibilities. For instance, we can geo-reference relevant social, economic, environmental and government statistics, starting with the population censuses, revealing patterns and gaps that would not be evident using statistics alone. That is how, for example, the World Bank can geo-reference houses around the world where population in extreme poverty, or other surveyable circumstances, live. Also, the identification, mapping and monitoring of potential areas for the generation of clean energy... the possibilities of using integrated information in favour of sustainable development and to improve the living conditions of the world population are enormous.

Another example of one of those possibilities that integration of statistical and geospatial information could bring us could be the fight against insecurity by geo-referencing crimes, as well as other valuable data related to administrative records.”

What role does geospatial information play in surveys of populations?

“Geospatial information plays a very important role when carrying out population censuses around the world, since the integration of statistical and geographic information in this exercise can give us potentialized results, which are very useful for decision makers.

An example of its scope could be the monitoring of the growth of cities, and the access to services over time.

As geospatial data is systematized over time, it will be possible not only to measure and analyse changes in demographics, economics and other factors, but also their evolution in space over time. This can be particularly useful in the monitoring of migration patterns, or of local and regional population trends after major disasters. More importantly, when diverse information layers can be analysed spatially, patterns emerge that can help explain and address issues affecting population dynamics which otherwise would have been hidden if living in tables and charts alone.”

For more information: [UN-GGIM](#)

Watch: UN Statistical Commission event: “Integrating statistical, geospatial, and other big data to leave no one behind”



#EveryDrop counts – a new agenda and a decade for water action

A High Level Panel on Water consisting of 11 Heads of State and a Special Advisor has issued a New Agenda for Water Action calling for a fundamental shift in the way the world manages water so that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG6, can be achieved. This follows a 2-year

mandate to find ways to accelerate solutions to the urgent water crisis.

“Making Every Drop Count: An Agenda for Water Action” presents many recommendations as part of an Outcome Report from the Panel, which was convened in January 2016 by the United Nations Secretary-General and the World Bank Group President.

“World leaders now recognize that we face a global water crisis and that we need to reassess how we value and manage water,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres. “The panel’s recommendations can help to safeguard water resources and make access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation a reality for all.”

The Panel’s report found that the water crisis has many dimensions. Today, 40 percent of the world’s people are affected by water scarcity, with as many as 700 million people at risk of being displaced by intense water scarcity by 2030. More than two billion people are compelled to drink unsafe water and more than 4.5 billion people do not have safely managed sanitation services.

Women and girls suffer disproportionately when water and sanitation are lacking, affecting health and often restricting work and education opportunities. 80 percent of wastewater is discharged untreated into the environment and water-related disasters account for 90 percent of the 1,000 most devastating natural disasters since 1990.

“The ecosystems on which life itself is based – our food security, energy sustainability, public health, jobs, cities – are all at risk because of how water is managed today,” World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim said. “The work of this panel took place at the level of heads of state and government because the world can no longer afford to take water for granted.”

As part of the recommendations to address these challenges, the Panel is advocating for evidence-based policies and innovative approaches at the global, national and local level to make water management and water and sanitation services attractive for investment and more disaster-resilient. The Panel also calls for policies that will allow for at least a doubling of water infrastructure investment in the next five years.

The Panel’s report sets forth a new approach to catalyze change and build partnerships and cooperation, outlining why an integrated and inclusive approach that draws in sectors like agriculture, and other stakeholders, such as city mayors, is needed. The

report makes the case that ways of working between, for example, governments, communities, the private sector and researchers, are essential.

In an Open Letter, the members of the panel conclude: “Whoever you are, whatever you do, wherever you live, we urge you get involved, and contribute to meeting this great challenge: safe water and sanitation for all, and our water resources managed sustainably. Make every drop count. It’s time for action.”

Water Action Decade

Also in March, the UN launched a [decade for action on water](#) that seeks to forge new partnerships, improve cooperation and strengthen capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Most directly linked to [Sustainable Development Goal 6](#), safe water and adequate sanitation are indispensable for healthy ecosystems, reducing poverty, and achieving inclusive growth, social well-being and sustainable livelihoods – the targets for many of the 17 Goals.

For more information:

[The High Level Panel for Water](#)

[The International Decade of Action on Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028](#)

[World Water Day 2018](#)

Economic boom for whom?



To end poverty, we must share economic gains more equally

On paper, we have every reason to be optimistic. After years of turbulence, the global economy is back on track with a healthy 3 per cent growth, extreme poverty has declined dramatically over the past 20 years and unemployment is falling in many parts of the world. Yet, large parts of the global population will struggle to see similar advancements in their personal financial situation.

In developing and developed countries alike, the global economic rebound has been slow to translate into higher wages and lower poverty. One reason behind this is the deepening income inequality. Evidence from several developed countries suggests that the recent growth in wages is benefitting primarily the high-earners. This is particularly true for the United States, where many analysts have linked growing inequality to the popularity of inward-looking policies.

Developing countries have equally experienced a sharp spike in income inequalities. In 1980, the 10 per cent of highest earners in India accrued just over 30 per cent of the national income. In 2016, it was already 55 per cent. In 2014, more than one in every five rupees of the national income went to just one per cent of the population – a record high for India.

Similarly, the top one per cent of South Africans earns one fifth of all the wages paid out, while the bottom 50 per cent only receive 12 per cent. Gender inequalities are equally prevalent. In Tanzania, 42 per cent of female employees receive less than two-thirds of the median hourly wage.

But wage disparities only tell part of the story. For decades, wage and salary earners as a whole have been seeing their slice of the national income shrink, in favour of their employers and shareholders, and to satisfy production costs. This has further fuelled the rise of global inequalities to today's unsustainable levels.

Governments are far from defenceless, however. Rising inequality calls for more effective labour market policies, including more progressive tax systems, better social protection and a review of minimum wages.

None of these policies are easy to implement, but without urgent action to narrow the growing gap between the rich and the poor, ending poverty by 2030 will become impossible.

Every month UN DESA's World Economic Situation and Prospects Monthly Briefing brings you the latest in the global economy. You can find the latest, April issue, [here](#).

For more information: <http://bit.ly/wespbrief>

Readying public institutions for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals



With year three of the 2030 Agenda implementation well underway, countries around the world are transforming their public institutions to make them fit for the purpose of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Committee of Experts on Public Administration will meet in April to discuss how public institutions can improve to effectively implement the SDGs.

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration will meet from 23 to 27 April for its 17th session. The 24 members of the Committee will discuss the readiness of institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda; building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions and supporting the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies by enhancing and equipping institutions.

The Committee will discuss key issues related to the implementation of the SDGs, such as improving coherent public policies, effectively allocating resources, combating corruption, promoting innovative public services and improving public servants' competencies.

The new members of the Committee have been appointed by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to provide independent advice on governance and public administration matters critical to achieve sustainable development.

The Committee will adopt an input to the High-level Political Forum and a draft resolution for ECOSOC.

More information: [Committee of Experts on Public Administration](#)

Playing for Global Goals – the role of sports in development



From Jesse Owens defying racial stereotypes to win four golds at the 1936 Berlin Olympics to Team Refugees demonstrating the strength of human spirit in Rio, to the two Koreas marching together at the recent winter games in Pyeongchang – there is nothing that brings humanity together quite like sports.

Although there is limited comparable data to prove the impact of sport on peace and development, the inspiring stories of compassion, cooperation, fair play and respect for the opponent are an undeniable proof of the power that sports hold over our hearts and minds.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes this power, describing sport as an important enabler for sustainable development, contributing to the promotion of tolerance, respect, empowerment of women and youth, health, education and social inclusion.

Each year, on 6 April, the world International Day of Sport for Development and Peace encourages the citizens of the world to learn, innovate and promote the ways, in which sport can help their countries and communities to live peaceful, prosperous lives.

This 6 April, UN DESA will launch an online campaign, [#PlayforGlobalGoals](#), inviting individuals and organizations to take to social media and share pictures of the “power of sport to promote peace, unity and social inclusion”.

For more information: [International Day of Sport for Development and Peace](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

4 April, New York	ECOSOC Partnership Forum
9-13 April, New York	51st Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD51)
16-27 April, New York	17th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
23-26 April, New York	ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up
23-27 April, New York	Committee of Experts on Public Administration, 17th session

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