

UN World Data Forum ready for take-off in Dubai

The stage is set for the United Nations World Data Forum, coming up in Dubai on 22-24 October, and all signs indicate that it will be an exciting, innovative and productive event for the global data community. Data leaders from national statistical offices, NGOs, the private sector, academia and international organizations are fully mobilized to collaborate on tackling data gaps and challenges, launching new initiatives and identifying mechanisms to increase financing and support for better data for sustainable development.

The Forum will kick off with an opening ceremony featuring statements by Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General; Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates; and Jack Dangermond, the CEO of Esri, the industry leader in GIS technology used to create digital maps.

At a joint press briefing in mid-September linking Dubai and New York, Abdullah Nasser Lootah, the Director-General of the UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority, host of the upcoming Forum, stated that there are nearly 2,000 registrations from over 100 countries, showing an even greater interest than the first Forum in Cape Town, South Africa in January 2017, which already brought together a large number of data experts.

The 2018 Forum will also feature a high-level session on improving migration statistics, which will serve as a contribution towards an international conference that will adopt a global compact for migration, coming up on 10-11 December in Marrakech, Morocco, also supported by UN DESA.

"There is an unprecedented demand for migration data," said Mr. Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who will be speaking in Dubai.

“The UN World Data Forum will play an important role in helping us set new strategies for how to better track the over 258 million migrants around the world, so that governments and international organizations can ensure safe and orderly movements of people and the services they need.” SDG Advocate Alaa Murabit of The Voice of Libyan Women is also expected to speak at this gathering.

A session on financing for data and statistics, being organized by the High-Level Group for Partnership Coordination and Capacity Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda, will focus on how to fill the funding gap for data and statistics. Based on an OECD report, this gap currently is \$200 million annually. The session will explore innovative financing solutions that could provide national statistical systems with the necessary resources to monitor progress on the breadth of the 2030 Agenda.

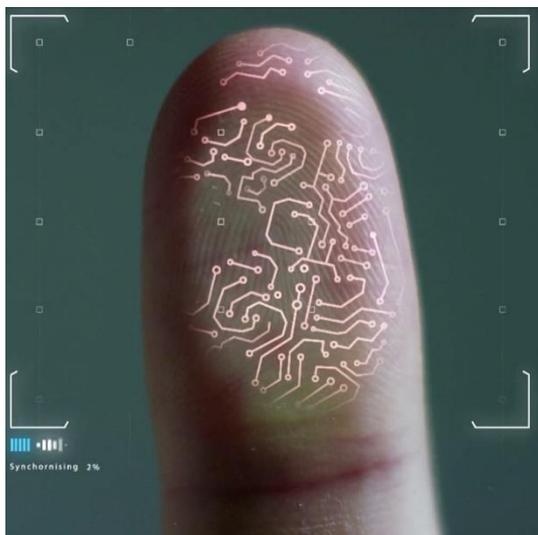
“The Cape Town Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data launched at the first Forum set the framework for what needs to be done,” said Stefan Schweinfest, the Director of the Statistics Division in UN DESA, at the recent briefing in September. “But we need implementation and financing, which will be a major focus in Dubai.” He also noted that many new projects will be put forward to produce better data by tapping into non-traditional sources, such as mobile phone data, and that hot topics such as data privacy and governance will also feature at the Forum.

“This is a really important meeting,” summed up Clint Brown of ESRI. To passionately advocate for open data; to promote data as a tool to diagnose and right injustices, especially those against women and children; to examine the human rights implications and prevent the misuse of data innovation for the SDGs; to be able to talk frankly but respectfully with data leaders from so many countries and areas of expertise – these are some of the reasons stated as to why the Forum matters. As they say, “See you in Dubai.”

For more information:

[United Nations World Data Forum](#)

[The Cape Town Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data](#)



Frontier technologies for a sustainable future

Frontier technologies are innovative and often grow fast, with the potential to transform societies, economies and the environment. In recent years, we have seen examples of this in the form of artificial intelligence and machine learning, renewable energy technologies, energy storage technologies, electric and autonomous vehicles and drones, genetic engineering, as well as cryptocurrencies and blockchains.

These frontier technologies can help eradicate hunger and epidemics, increase life expectancy, reduce carbon emissions, automate manual and repetitive tasks, create decent jobs, improve quality of life and facilitate complex decision-making processes. In other words, these technologies can make sustainable development a reality, improving people's lives, promoting prosperity and protecting the planet.

However, advances in these technologies also present ethical and moral challenges, as well as risks of unemployment, underemployment and inequality. A new report, the *World Economic and Social Survey 2018: Frontier Technologies for Sustainable Development* reviews the advances in frontier technologies and analyses their economic, social and environmental impacts.

The *Survey* identifies policy measures at the national level – striking a balance among economic efficiency, equity and ethical considerations – to both maximize the potential of frontier technologies and mitigate their risks.

The *Survey* recognizes that no nation alone can manage the impact of frontier technologies. The United Nations is in a unique position to forge a global consensus and promote international cooperation to harness the full potential of frontier technologies for a sustainable future.

Watch the launch of the Survey on 8 October at webtv.un.org. More details are available from bit.ly/UNDESASurvey



UN General Assembly kicks off work in Second and Third Committees

During the General Assembly's 73rd session, the Assembly's Second and Third Committees will continue its work to support the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Three years after the agenda's adoption, there are opportunities, yet also challenges in the international community's efforts to achieve the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As highlighted in the 2018 Sustainable Development Goals Report, there is a pressing need to move forward, and to do it faster. It is against this background that these two Committees begin their work in early October.

Chaired by Jorge Skinner-Klee Arenales of Guatemala, the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee) will during this session, deal with a range of topics related to economic growth and development including macroeconomic policy questions; financing for development; globalization and interdependence; eradication of poverty; agriculture development, food security and nutrition; information and communications technologies for development; and towards global partnerships. It will also consider issues relating to groups of countries in special situations.

The Second Committee will begin its substantive work on 4 October. UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin will then take the floor to deliver opening remarks. Homi Kharas, Interim Vice President and Director of the Global Economy and Development Program at the Brookings Institution, will join the event to share a keynote address, followed by the Committee's general debate.

The Committee will hold a dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions, organize side events and a joint meeting with the Economic and Social Council. On 17 October, the Committee will also hone in on global efforts to eradicate poverty, including the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018-2027).

In the course of its seventy-second session, the Second Committee acted on 43 draft proposals. During the upcoming session, the Committee is expected to act on a similar number of proposals.

As part of the on-going process of revitalizing the General Assembly, the Second Committee is also engaged in updating its working methods and practices to improve the quality of debates and the impact of their deliberations and decisions, as well as to further streamline the Committee's agenda and programme of work.

As the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee (Third Committee) begins its seventy-third session on 2 October, under the chairmanship of Mahmoud Saikal of Afghanistan, UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin will deliver an opening statement. Under its agenda item "Social development", the Committee will cover a range of issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities and education for all.

As part of this work, a report by the Secretary-General entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the 24th special session of the General-Assembly,” has been submitted. It focuses on trends in inequality between and within countries and proposes policies and strategies to combat inequality and eradicate poverty aimed at achieving sustainable development for all, based on the outcome of the 56th session of the Commission for Social Development (held in February 2018). A negotiated outcome in the form of a resolution is expected.

An important part of the work of the Committee will focus on the examination of human rights questions, including the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination. In addition, it will also address the advancement of women, crime prevention, criminal justice and international drug control.

During previous sessions of the General Assembly, the Third Committee has considered over 60 draft resolutions, more than half of which were submitted under the human rights agenda item. The Third Committee is expected to consider a similar number of draft resolutions throughout the upcoming session.

For more information:

Second Committee of the General Assembly

Third Committee of the General Assembly

Commission for Social Development (CSocD)



GET INVOLVED



Calling all innovative public institutions, who strive to excel in public service delivery for the SDGs!

Every year, the United Nations awards innovative public-service initiatives that support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through its United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA). The Award aims to promote and reward innovative achievements and contributions of public institutions for realizing the goals. It is open to all public organizations, including central and local governments and public institutions engaged in public-private partnerships for delivering services. The nominations for the 2019 award has just opened, and UN DESA is now calling for recommendations!

Do you know of any innovative public-service initiatives that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, its 17 goals (SDGs),

and the core principle of the 2030 Agenda of leaving no one behind? Then nominate them for the UNPSA 2019!

This year's awards will reward the achievements and contributions of public service institutions in five categories:

- Delivering inclusive and equitable services to leave no one behind;
- Ensuring integrated approaches in the public-sector institutions;
- Developing effective and accountable public institutions;
- Promoting digital transformation in public-sector institutions; and
- Promoting gender responsive public services to achieve the SDGs

Get involved and nominate your favorite initiative to win the UNPSA 2019. Apply online by 30 November 2018!

To join the discussion, search for the #UNPSA2019 hashtag on Twitter or follow us on Facebook: UNPublicAdministrationNetwork.

For more information: [UN Public Service Day and Awards](#)

EXPERT VOICES



En route to ensure safety and dignity for people on the move

Around the world, there are 258 million international migrants. This means that one out of every 30 people, has changed his or her country of usual residence. The data also tells us that 50 million are children. To ensure their safety and dignity, the international community is preparing to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration this December. Ahead of this event, we spoke to Bela Hovy, who led the work on migration data in UN DESA's Population

Division for more than a decade, about why this agreement is so critical and what role data play to ensure the safety and dignity of people on the move.

The world will soon adopt the Global Compact for Migration. Described as a landmark agreement, why is it so critical?

“As the countries become more interdependent, migration is expected to continue to increase. On the one hand, economic deprivation, armed conflict, population growth, environmental degradation and climate change will continue to compel people to leave their homes. On the other hand, strong economies and ageing populations will continue to fuel the demand for migrant labour.

Given these trends, there is an urgent need to strengthen international cooperation to regulate the flow of people. So far, few countries have implemented well-managed migration policies. The Global Compact is the first ever agreement that seeks to guide countries to regulate human mobility in all its dimensions.”

UN DESA collects, monitors and analyzes all the official data on international migration. What do these numbers tell us about people on the move today?

“First, migration has been on the rise. According to our estimates, the number of persons living outside their country of birth increased by almost 50 per cent since 2000, reaching 258 million persons by 2017. Second, migration remains relatively rare. In 2017, only 3.4 per cent of the global population was living outside their country of birth. Third, the distribution of migrants is highly uneven. In industrialized countries, almost 12 out of every 100 inhabitants are international migrants, compared to only 2 in developing countries. Fourth, more people move between developing countries than from developing to developed countries. For instance, more than half of all African-born migrants reside in Africa. Fifth, the impact of migration on the size and composition of the population is increasing. For instance, migration has been the primary source of population growth in developed countries since the 1990s.”

Why is data so crucial in the work of ensuring the safety of international migrants?

“There is much evidence that, if properly managed, migration can bring benefits for countries of origin, countries of destination and migrants alike. Unfortunately, many of today’s migration policies are inspired by anti-foreigner rhetoric rather than based on research and facts. Even more fundamentally, registration and documentation are key for the safety of migrants whether they are in transit or in countries of destination. Undocumented migrants are highly vulnerable to discrimination and abuse, including human trafficking. Data and evidence-based studies can help to improve the plight of such vulnerable migrants.”

What are some of the biggest challenges that people who need to migrate from their home countries, face today?

“One of the biggest challenges for people who feel compelled to leave their home country is the lack of channels for safe, orderly and regular migration. While there are opportunities for refugees to seek asylum, most people who seek to leave their country do not meet the strict definition of a refugee contained in international law. As a result, asylum systems become easily overburdened. Due to a lack of alternative migration opportunities, such persons often have no choice but to resort to human traffickers and migrant smugglers.”

How will the Global Compact help overcome the challenges, and improve the lives of international migrants?

“The 23 objectives of the Global Compact deal with migration in all its dimensions. First, and critically, the Global Compact seeks to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their homes.

Second, it aims to make migration safe, orderly and regular by facilitating legal migration, while at the same time combating irregular migration.

Third, the Compact aims at maximizing the benefits of migration for countries of origin, countries of destination and migrants while addressing migration challenges. A central objective of the Compact is to strengthen the evidence-base on migration to promote fact-based policy making and informed public discourse.

All these measures, from improving living conditions in home countries, to creating safe avenues for migration, and harnessing the benefits of migration are expected to improve the lives of migrants and communities.”

Oftentimes, the narrative on international migration points out the challenges. But there are many vital opportunities

and important contributions that international migration brings. Can you share with our readers?

“Migration, when properly managed, brings significant benefits. In countries of destination, migrants fill gaps in the labour market by performing critical jobs that are often shunned by citizens. Migrants, who are often entrepreneurs, create jobs, contribute to the tax base, and initiate urban rejuvenation.

In countries of origin, migrant families use the remittances they receive to improve their health and education and to invest in small businesses. Diaspora communities generate international trade and are an important source of foreign direct investment. For migrant women, migration can be an empowering experience as breadwinners.”

For more information:

[Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#)

[Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration](#)

[Explainer video: What is the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and regular Migration?](#)

[Get the latest migration data from UN DESA's Population Division](#)

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



Secretary-General launches new strategy to fund the global goals

On 24 September, UN Secretary-General António Guterres gathered global leaders from government, business and philanthropy for the High Level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda to find innovative ways to increase financing for the global goals. At the event, taking place in the ECOSOC Chamber on the

first day of UN high-level week, Mr. Guterres launched his new Strategy to support Financing the 2030 Agenda.

He was joined by Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), several Heads of State and Government, including the Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, and the Prime Minister of Barbados Mia Amor Mottley, as well as senior representatives of leading companies – including the founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates and the CEO and Chairman of BlackRock, Larry Fink – and philanthropic foundations.

The financing needs of the 2030 Agenda, said Mr. Guterres, are immense, in the order of between \$5 and \$7 trillion per year.

Whilst some progress has been made in mobilizing resources, he said that urgent action is needed to drive progress: “that means galvanizing political support across governments and local communities; building momentum for change in corporate boardrooms; and doing better in tapping resources that sit idle.”

Mr. Guterres outlined three “essential action points” for developed countries: meeting the commitments made in the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#); continued support for developing countries in creating good governance measures and fighting illicit flows of capital; and stepping up efforts in developing innovative financing and in mobilizing private investment.

The Secretary-General’s new [Strategy to support Financing the 2030 Agenda](#) builds on existing efforts and proposes urgent action to achieve three objectives: aligning global financial and economic policies with the 2030 Agenda, enhance sustainable financial strategies at the regional and country levels, and exploit the potential of financial innovations, new technologies and digitalization to provide equitable access to finance.

On this latter point, Mr. Guterres announced that he had tasked [Achim Steiner](#), head of the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, with setting up a Task Force on the Digital Financing of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Speaking on behalf of the IMF, [Christine Lagarde](#) said that the organization’s objective is sustainable development for all, “making sure that all girls and boys have a fair chance to thrive, to flourish, to develop their capacities no matter who they are or where they were born,” and that the “essence of sustainable development growth is to eradicate poverty, eliminate deprivation for a fairer world that respects the limits of nature.”



Bill Gates underlined the ways in which philanthropic organizations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, play an important role in advancing the system, using innovative tools that allow them to invest in new technologies, make innovation less risky, and address market failures, and pointing out that the development finance system is key to achieving the objectives of the SDGs.

Mr. Guterres reminded those present saying that, “by investing in the Sustainable Development Goals, we invest in the future, ensuring a world in which we strive for peace, stability and prosperity that leaves no one behind.”

Taking the stage for concluding remarks together with Deputy Secretary-General [Amina Mohammed](#), UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General [Liu Zhenmin](#), underlined that we already have the framework in place to be able to move forward successfully.

“Despite a daunting challenge, we are fortunate to have both a roadmap and vehicle for adequately financing the 2030 Agenda,” he said, referencing the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#), as well as opportunities that events like the High-level Political Forum, Development Cooperation Forum and SDG Investment Fair bring to “dig deeper into specific aspects of financing for sustainable development and the means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda.”

“In the year ahead, we will make every effort to ensure strong synergies between these opportunities and the Secretary-General’s [Strategy on Financing the 2030 Agenda](#),” Mr. Liu said.

For more information:

High-level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Closing remarks of UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin

Secretary-General's Strategy to support Financing the 2030 Agenda

Facebook live interview: Innovative financing for the SDGs – a catalyst for women's economic empowerment?

Facebook live interview: Using technology and innovation to expand financial inclusion

MORE FROM UNDESA

Reducing inequality remains a priority amidst rising trade tensions



Reducing inequality remains a priority amidst rising trade tensions

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Global measures to fight inequalities and poverty

Reducing inequality and accelerating growth of median incomes remain crucial challenges in many countries across the world. While several developing countries made progress towards reducing inequality during the commodity price boom of the 2000s, these improvements were largely cyclical and subject to volatility in global commodity markets. More significant improvements in line with the global goals targets, will require structural policy initiatives. To this end, countries are aligning their development strategies with specific SDGs targets, including SDG 1 – eradicating poverty – and SDG 10 – reducing inequalities.

Among the transition economies, the Russian Federation has recorded one of the highest levels of income inequality since the early 1990s. This can be attributed to the fast speed of transition which was accompanied by hyperinflation, and widespread wage arrears eroding incomes of those at the bottom of the income distribution. However, the recently adopted social development target to halve poverty by 2024 should contribute to declines in inequality.

In Egypt, recent policies reflect the evolving role of the government in addressing inequality and poverty. Price control measures were once applied in many parts of Africa as a key social protection policy tool to maintain stable prices of essential goods. However, these types of blanket subsidies are not the most effective tool to alleviate poverty and inequality. Recent evaluations of more targeted social protection policy measures, including conditional and unconditional cash transfers, are more encouraging for SDG 1 and 10.

Fiscal adjustments

Economic diversification remains a primary policy goal for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The introduction of a value-added tax (VAT) marks a historic milestone not only for fiscal revenue diversification but also for the social contract between the state and its citizens. The introduction of the VAT has created a valuable administrative infrastructure, which can act as a cornerstone for further economic and fiscal change in the GCC countries.

Across Latin America, fiscal pressures are creating significant policy challenges, forcing greater fiscal adjustments. The situation is particularly challenging in Argentina, which entered a Standby-Agreement with the IMF in June. To restore market confidence, the country's new austerity measures comprise both cuts to public expenditure and higher tax revenues. The new programme threatens to push the economy into a prolonged recession, which could hit vulnerable populations hard.

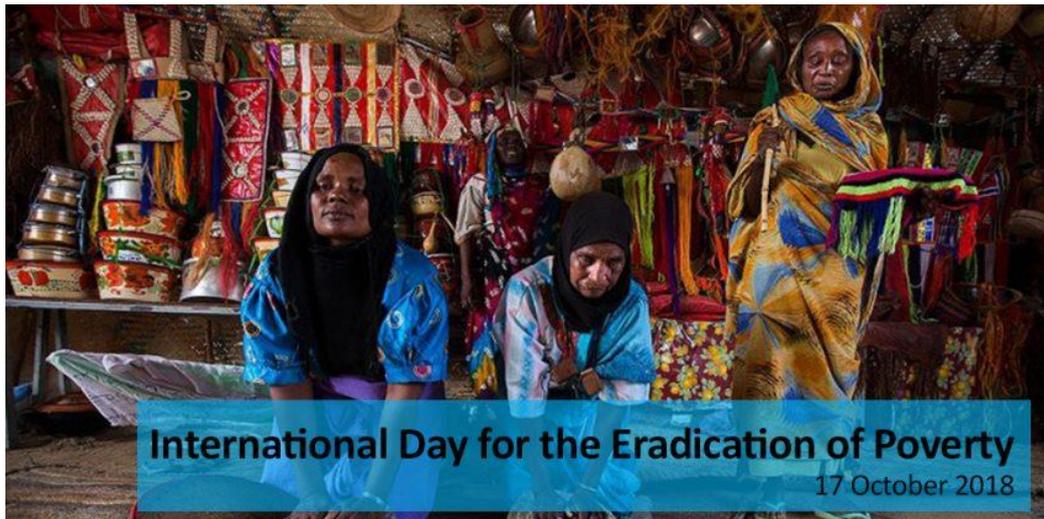
Rising tensions

In the United States, major changes in the level and structure of taxation are expected to stimulate economic growth. However, income inequality will likely increase since high-income households and corporations reap the highest levels of tax relief. Recently, the US also imposed more tariffs on Chinese goods. In response, China announced retaliatory measures along with pro-growth strategies aimed at mitigating the effects of rising trade tensions on the domestic economy.

China's plans to attract more investment into the high technology sectors is likely to lead to productivity and employment gains. The government also introduced their 'National Plan on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda,' which contains provisions to "sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average."

Learn more in the latest [World Economic Situation and Prospects Monthly Briefing](#)

Building an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity



As we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights this year, it is important to recall the important connection between inclusive development and human rights, and that people living in poverty are affected by many human rights violations.

The persistence of poverty, including extreme poverty, is a major concern for the United Nations and, at its 72nd session, the General Assembly launched the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027), under the theme “*Accelerating global actions for a world without poverty*”. It is important that the Third Decade’s inter-agency, system-wide plan of action to coordinate the poverty eradication efforts of the United Nations system includes an effective partnership with people living with poverty.

To show solidarity with people living in poverty, the United Nations will commemorate the 2018 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty at UN Headquarters in New York on 17 October. The Day reminds us that we need to include people living in poverty as partners in building inclusive societies for all, and that we need to come together to promote the values of solidarity and their concerns.

The commemoration event will be organized in partnership with the International Movement ATD Fourth World, the NGO Sub-committee for the Eradication of Poverty and UN DESA, supported by the Missions of France and Burkina Faso to the United Nations.

Towards building inclusive societies for all

Joseph Wresinski was one of the first persons to highlight this direct link between human rights and extreme poverty. In February 1987, he appealed to the Human Rights Commission to examine the question of extreme poverty and human rights and eloquently captured the nexus between human rights and extreme poverty with his profound observation: “Wherever men and women are condemned to live in extreme poverty, human rights are violated. To come together to ensure that these rights be respected is our solemn duty.”

The 2018 theme, “Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity” reminds us of the importance of the values of dignity and solidarity, as well as the call to action to end poverty everywhere.

Join the #EndPoverty global campaign

Everyone can join the campaign on social media by using hashtag #EndPoverty and promoting the call to action to connect with people from around the world who have joined the fight to overcome poverty.

In addition to the commemorative event to be held in New York on 17 October, commemorations of the international day are being organized worldwide. The online community is asked to use #EndPoverty to share messages about the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty via social media.

For more information:

2018 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
UN DPI's website on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
ATD Fourth World
Overcoming Extreme Poverty

UPCOMING EVENTS

2 October – 21 November, New York	Third Committee of the General Assembly,
4 October – 29 November, New York	Second Committee of the General Assembly
8 October, New York	Launch of the World Economic and Social Survey 2018
16-19 November, Geneva	17th Session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
22-24 October, Dubai	UN World Data Forum 2018

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