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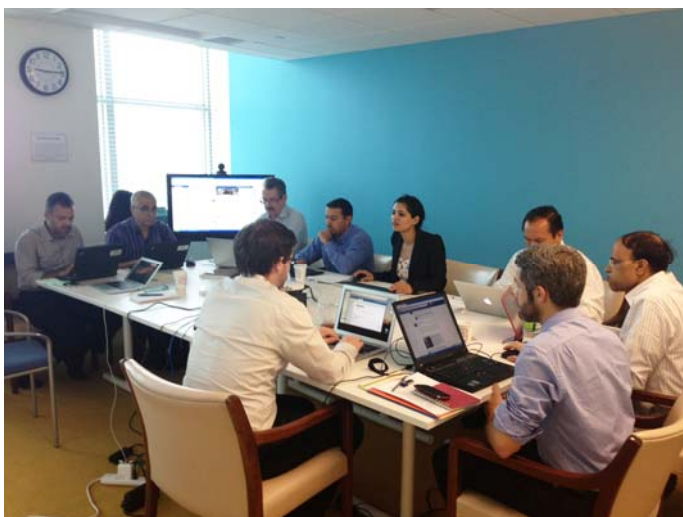
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Feature Articles

Food, Energy and Cities discussed online with DESA experts

As a way to bring United Nations reports closer to the general public, eight experts from DESA held a Facebook chat on 25 July to promote the recently launched World Economic and Social Survey 2013. Here are some of the questions and issues raised from all around the globe and an overview of the report.



During two hours, on 25 July, eight experts from the Development Strategy and Policy Analysis unit (DSP) of DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD) sat in a Conference room at UN Headquarters in New York with an unusual goal: discussing with the public online about the recently launched *World Economic and Social Survey 2013*. The event enabled the team to reach a wider audience, and to get a sense about the thinking and understanding of sustainable development issues across a wide and varied non-specialist audience.

Survey seeks to promote innovative strategies

The *World Economic and Social Survey 2013* (WESS 2013) is the annual United Nations survey of global development issues. This year it focuses on three major challenges that will have to be addressed to achieve sustainable development, in particular food and nutrition security, energy transformation and the sustainability of cities. For each of these challenges, particular solutions were identified to achieve sustainable development.

According to the *Survey*, the vision of promoting economic and social wellbeing while protecting the environment has not been achieved. This is due to gaps and shortfalls in development partnerships, rapid growth of population and urbanization, rising inequality, climate change and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption leading to environmental degradation.

The WESS 2013 establishes that letting things go as they are now in those three areas is not an option. Formulating and

adopting a comprehensive but focused set of sustainable development goals (SDGs), as currently debated in the General Assembly's Open Working Group on SDGs, will be a critical first step towards addressing the challenges.

For example, to address rapid urbanization will require multilevel planning and cooperation at local and national levels and partnerships to mobilize public and private resources. Without innovative strategies to integrate economic, social, and environmental aspects, there is a serious risk that the number of people living in slums and lacking access to basic infrastructure and services such as sanitation, electricity, and health care may dramatically rise from one billion now to three billion by 2050.

Innovative strategies will be needed to attract the major investments to promote sustainable development. "We have to take actions now that will enhance the benefits of cities, while reducing the threats to sustainable development", said Wu Hongbo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs at the time of the launch of the WESS 2013.

Facebook brings participants from diverse backgrounds together

The panel of experts comprised the members of the WESS 2013 core team: Willem van der Geest, Chief DSP and Nazrul Islam, Nicole Hunt, Alex Julca, Marco Sanchez-Cantillo, Oliver Schwank, Sergio Vieira and Eduardo Zepeda. The WESS 2013 team engaged with a total of 315 people from across the globe.

Participants were from very diverse geographical and professional backgrounds: young professional from developing countries, seasoned professionals, university students and researchers, and civil society organizers and activists. The team engaged with young professionals, typically in their mid-twenties, from Kenya, DRC Congo, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Thailand and elsewhere. Seasoned professionals, sometimes presenting their own publications and research results, were online from India as well as across Europe and North America. University students and researchers were online from Europe, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Canada and elsewhere. Civil society organizers and activists were the most varied group, ranging from those advocating training for young women in Africa, to a school teacher from Zambia, to a women's network in New York.

Issues raised remained largely within the confines of the pre-identified topics (environmental sustainability, food and nutrition security, energy transformation, sustainable cities, sustainable development in general) and included pertinent questions about the relation between MDGs and SDGs, plans and programmes for Africa, the proposed approach to the global commons and desertification, the scope for sustainable development in conflict-zones, and energy transformation. Some participants provided comments and opinions, and even answers, rather than questions.

How does the UN address sustainable development?

Regarding sustainable development, Nahid Khan from Dhaka asked "Bangladesh is a developing country and it has many sustainable problems like transportation, food security, and energy transformation. How does the UN address these problems?"

The experts recognized the challenges that this country is facing in terms of sustainability, and showcased ways in which the UN can help: "One way is by providing ideas and suggested policies that can be helpful. The second way is by providing fund and project implementation expertise through UN funds and agencies such as UNDP. For example, UNDP financed the "Sustainable Environment Management Project (SEMP)" in Bangladesh. It is a big project in support of Bangladesh's pro-environment efforts".

Reducing waste or increasing productivity?

João Saraiva Gomes from Portugal was worried that the goal to boost by 70% the agricultural production before 2050 might only partially be achieved. He wanted to know more about the role of food waste as a tool to reach food security "technically what is easier to do: reducing waste or increasing productivity?"

The experts answered that "reducing waste and increasing agricultural productivity are both important. Addressing only one of these two issues would not be sufficient and may not be recommended. For example, reducing food waste at the household level will require important consumption changes that may take some time. You are totally right, changing market quality standards and conservative expiration dates are some of the measures to reduce food waste".

Youth employment as a sustainable development goal?

On youth unemployment Sayeed Mohammed (from Qatar) asked youth unemployment which is going to remain a pivotal issue. He noted that "...ILO is pushing to make employment and livelihood security as one of the sustainable development goals. How do you see, it is happening?"

The experts noted that "There is widespread agreement that employment is absolutely critical for development. It is the most successful and proven way to reduce poverty. So it is very likely indeed that there will be a strong focus on employment generation, especially for youth – in a post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs."

Can sustainable development start at home?

On sustainable development in their own region Badmus Quam from Africa asked:

“What plan, policy and social/economic framework do you have for Africa?”

The experts explained that “In our World Economic and Social Survey 2013, we take a global perspective and do not focus on countries or regions specifically. But the challenges for sustainable development that we address are all extremely relevant for Africa – in urbanization, food security, or energy. At the same time, Africa has a socio-economic framework for itself, in the form of NEPAD (the New Partnership for Africa’s Development) under the African Union.”

On sustainable cities, Berta Polo Lorenzo, from Spain, asked a very to-the-point question to the team: “how can citizens improve sustainable development in their home towns?”

The experts answered that “initiatives led by community organizations can be more effective than individual initiatives. But it can start at home and then move to the community level in dialogue with neighbors. Community gardening, reducing and classifying waste, are examples of micro initiatives”. The experts guided Berta to find successful experiences in this area in the journal “Environment and Urbanization”, available online for free.

Understanding the public’s concerns

For Sergio Vieira, “the opportunity to answer interesting questions from people all over the world was both fun and informative. It was helpful to understand their concerns and their motivation in participating in local activities that can contribute to sustainable development.”

“A Facebook chat is teamwork. Answering hundreds of questions in two hours requires true coordination, to make sure that each is addressed by the right person”, said Willem van der Geest.

The full Q&A can be read on Facebook, available from <http://on.fb.me/1dABucQ>.

Related information

- [More information about the WESS 2013](#)

A new statistical standard to measure sustainable development

The System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), an international standard on statistics, was recently agreed among UN Member States, and is currently being implemented. The aim of this standard is to report on the interrelationships between the economy, the environment and the society through clear, concise and coherent statistics and indicators.

The SEEA became a statistical standard in 2012. It is the second existing statistical standard, after the System of National Accounts (SNA).



One of the main aims of a statistical standard is to provide an agreed set of definitions and concepts for use in collection, compilation, and analysis of data. A benefit of using such a standard is the ability to develop internationally comparable indicators, (e.g., GDP in the case of the SNA).

Information compiled using the SEEA framework relates the environment to the economy, bringing together statistics of supply and use of resources in physical and monetary terms. Policy relevant indicators can also be derived from the SEEA framework. Examples of such indicators include natural resource use intensity by industries, emissions to air, and water use intensity.

Countries that adopt the SEEA and use it in their statistical production processes are able to consistently monitor environmental-economic interactions. The outputs of this monitoring can better inform policy-makers considering initiatives related to the economy and environment.

Implementation of the SEEA does not require a large amount of data; on the contrary, most countries already collect enough data for the compilation of accounts at an aggregated level.

A revolution in statistics

“It is a revolution in statistics! This system is the only one that takes into account the link between economic and environmental statistics (...) and that integrates a perspective of sustainable development while focusing on areas of economics, environment and human activities”, says Alessandra Alfieri, Chief of the Environmental and Economic Accounts Section of DESA’s Statistics Division.

For example, the environmental protection expenditure accounts provide information on all goods and services directed toward environmental protection, such as expenditure on waste management by government and expenditure on protection of biodiversity of non-profit organization.

Change the mindset

The “Global Implementation Programme for the SEEA” International Conference held in New York on 17-19 June showcased experiences from countries that are already working on the SEEA implementation in order to assist countries that are starting or continuing the implementation of this new statistical standard. Representatives from 35 countries attended the Conference, which was chaired by Peter Harper, Chairman of UN Committee of Experts on Environmental Economic Accounting and Deputy Australian Statistician.

Since the SEEA is a new standard, the conference discussions highlighted the need to build the statistical infrastructure and to train people to produce standardized statistics. “The challenge is also to change the mindset, from isolated statistics work to collaboration and integration”, pointed out Alessandra Alfieri. In the past, the integration of economic and environmental data was not possible in many countries due to the lack of a coherent conceptual framework. Different agencies in a country are often, for example, collecting data on water, yet are using different concepts and definitions. One of the major goals of the SEEA implementation, and a point stressed during the conference, is fostering of institutional arrangements for the production of integrated statistics.

Address the countries’ needs

Another major point raised at the Conference was adjusting the SEEA to the regional approach, thereby serving the countries’ and regions’ needs. Country policy priorities and progress towards meeting those priorities have to be evaluated in global processes such as the post-2015 development agenda.

The participating countries emphasized the need to build South-South and North-South cooperation partnerships, in order to let the countries that are most advanced in the SEEA implementation guide their neighbors. For example, some of the regional leaders like Colombia (for the Andean region), Brazil (rest of South America), Mexico (for Central America) and Jamaica (for the Caribbean region) have offered to lead the implementation of the SEEA in their particular regions. On the other hand, Australia plays a significant role in North-South cooperation by helping countries all over the world.

Bring together statistics producers and users

Participants also discussed the role of governance in the implementation process and how to include relevant international,

regional and sub-regional agencies in coordination with local governments. “It is important to bring together producers and users of statistics” Alessandra Alfieri said. Results from the work on the SEEA implementation also need to be communicated to provide decision makers with relevant, accurate and comparable statistical information. This critical communication can allow them to implement better public policies. Similarly the general public and media should receive information about the SEEA and its implementation to allow a better understanding of the importance of standardized statistics.

The multidimensional nature of the sustainable development agenda requires an integrated and balanced information system covering economic, environmental, social and human aspects that employs clear, concise and coherent statistics and indicators for monitoring and reporting. The SEEA is one of the fundamental tools that can aid in properly measuring progress towards sustainable development, informing users of the interactions between the economy and the environment.

What’s Next?

Peter Harper, Chair of UNCEEA and deputy of Australian Statistics, said that the next steps would be to “turn the plan that we have been discussing together into action, and reach a better implementation of SEEA while progressing in its results”. Integrated information allows for more comprehensive analysis and gives policy makers the necessary tools for improved policy making.

The participating countries agreed to produce and share training material with the less advanced countries, and a document summarizing conference outcomes will provide the basis for the formulation of recommendations to the UN Statistical Commission at its 45th session in March 2014.

Related information

- [More information on Environmental-Economic Accounts](#)
- [SEEA Briefing notes](#)

Young migrants, between opportunities and risks

International Youth Day is commemorated every year on 12 August 2013. This year the theme of the International Youth Day is Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward. To better understand this issue, watch the interview of Daniela Bas, Director of Division for Social Policy and Development.



In 2010, there was a staggering 27 million international migrants aged 15 to 24 in the world. Young people compose a significant share of overall international migrant numbers. While migration of young people can often offer valuable opportunities, it can also pose risks and lead to unacceptable situations, including exploitation and discrimination.

For young people, the decision to migrate is often related to their transition to adulthood. Internal or international migration can have a positive impact on young people by opening up new opportunities, a path to participate in higher education, a decent job, a chance to gain professional experience or to pursue personal development.

Vulnerabilities and livelihood struggles

However, for some young people, especially young women and those with unclear administrative situations, the migration process confronts them with particular challenges and confers to them certain vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities can include: discrimination based on gender, migration status, ethnicity or religion; poor working conditions; lack of access to basic social services; risks associated with sexual and reproductive health; and lack or loss of social protection once the migration status of the young migrant changes (from student to graduate, for example).

Despite the plethora of risks and challenges associated with migration, very little is known about the livelihood struggles and opportunities that migration presents for young migrants, leaving the policies and measures needed to address these opportunities

and challenges often ill informed or lacking. As such, awareness-raising of the situations of young migrants is needed so that good practices, policies and measures can adequately address the specific needs of young migrants.

In our interview, Daniela Bas explains us about the different kinds of young migrants, what the UN is doing to help them, how the economic crisis affects them and what have young migrants from developing and developed countries in common.

Commemoration event of IYD 2013 in UN headquarters

The commemoration of the International Youth Day will be held at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 12 August 2013. Similar to previous years, the United Nations Focal Point on Youth will celebrate the International Youth Day 2013 with activities that involve youth and youth-led organizations to dialogue on issues that affect their lives. This year the event is being co-organized with the International Labour Organization with support from the MDG Achievement Fund.

The International Labour Organization launched the Youth Employment Video Contest: youth labour migration “Reaping the benefits, minimizing the risks” to promote decent work for young migrants. The contest invites videos from around the world to feature activities promoting decent work for young migrants. In the commemoration event, the winners of the contest will share their experiences on the contributions they make to their community.

To better highlight the situations youth migrants are facing, the official United Nations event will feature presentations from UN entities on latest research and experiences, screen videos on youth migration and organize an interactive panel discussion where experts, representatives from UN entities, and young people/migrants will discuss various aspects of youth migration.

International Youth Day (IYD) was established by the United Nations in 2000 as a mean of raising awareness on issues affecting young people around the world.

Related information

- [Interview with Daniela Bas, on Youtube](#)
- [More details about the event in UNHQ and the programme](#)
- [International Youth Day 2013 – events around the world](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

The importance of honouring treaties

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples will take place on 9 August in New York. The theme will be "Indigenous peoples building alliances: Honouring treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements".

An interactive dialogue will take place on Friday, 9 August at 3:00 pm, in Conference Room 1 of the UN Headquarters. The event will feature remarks by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, DESA's Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo and Paul Kanyinke Sena, Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



The commemoration aims at emphasizing the importance of honouring treaties and agreements, as frameworks for them living in proximity and entering into peaceful and constructive relationships.

The panel members will address the following key issues:

- 1) The importance of honouring treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements between States and indigenous peoples;
- 2) The importance of living up to the terms of the agreements, as instruments outlining a political vision of different sovereign peoples living together in friendship, cooperation and peace on the same land;
- 3) The central role of the recognition and implementation of the principle of development with culture and identity, characterized by inter-culturality and environmental sustainability for enhancing holistic visions of harmony between human being and with nature, in recognition of the spiritual, cultural and historic relationship between indigenous peoples and their lands and natural resources;
- 4) The impact of initiatives at grassroots level to revive the shared history and the commitment of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples to live together in friendship, peace and coexistence, and the influence on Governments to live up to such commitments;
- 5) The importance of strengthening partnerships and building alliances between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples towards

the achievement of common goals, for example respecting values such as *buen vivir*, which can be universally applicable as a step towards developing other options such as treaties, agreements, or other constructive arrangements. The notion of *buen vivir* The concepts of *sumac kawsay* in Kichwa, *suma qamaña* in Aymara, and *buen vivir* (living well) in Spanish have been endorsed in the constitutions of Bolivia and Ecuador and they point out the relevance of culture for life and of living together in security and peace. (living-well) means more than just multi-culturality – a simple coexistence or juxtaposition of different cultures. It introduces the concept of inter-culturality, whereby different cultures interact in dialogue and in practice for the promotion of an alternative development in which the objectives of economic growth make way for considerations of wellbeing of the individual in the social context of a community and in a unique environmental situation.

Videos on local experiences of cooperation between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples will be screened during the event.

In recognition of the first meeting of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations held in Geneva in 1982, the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was first proclaimed by the General Assembly in December 1994.

The event will be broadcast live via UN Webcast starting at 3:00 pm EST (TBC). Please follow us on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UN4Indigenous>

For more information: <http://www.un.org/indigenous>

Every development success has drawn from innovating



Gathering world leaders and UN agencies and holding a record number of side events, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has worked hard for the past month focusing on some of the most pressing challenges facing the world today. The Council's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR)

focused on "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals".

High-level Segment (1-4 July) – A need for innovation to advance on MDGs

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon joined the President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Néstor Osorio, Permanent Representative of Colombia, in welcoming numerous ministers, high-level government officials, prominent innovators

from academia, civil society and the private sector, as well as UN system partners, to the Council's High-level segment taking place in Geneva on 1-4 July.

Delivering his opening remarks as a contribution to the Council's Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) on "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals", the Secretary-General said, "Every development success has drawn in large measure from absorbing knowledge, technology and ideas and adapting them to local conditions... In other words, by innovating". He continued by pointing to the need for innovation to drive a two-pronged approach to progress within the UN development system, recognizing the need for advancement on the Millennium Development Goals, while simultaneously laying the foundation for the post-2015 development agenda.

This year's high-level segment reinforced the role of ECOSOC as a key platform for countries and development partners to discuss, review and make recommendations on policies for overcoming the key sustainability challenges of our time. National voluntary presentations were given by four countries—France, Nigeria, Peru and Viet Nam—offering country-based information on success factors in working to embed science, technology, innovation and culture into national development strategies.

The launch of the Global Innovation Index (GII)—presented jointly by its co-authors the World Intellectual Property Organization, INSEAD and Cornell University—and organization of the ECOSOC Innovation Fair contributed to the international dimension of the theme and deliberations. Both events presented tangible proof of the importance of international collaboration and partnerships in driving innovation, as well as the links between policymaking, norms and evidence-based decision-making.

During this year's High-level segment, the Council introduced an innovation in its working methods, through the inclusion of a session called the Implementation Forum. The Forum served as a space for the announcement of concrete initiatives, as well as brainstorming around future areas of collaboration for the Council and its key stakeholders, such as the promotion of online educational resources and better linkages between youth and global science initiatives.

The High-level segment concluded with the Thematic debate, which focused on the fulfilment of ECOSOC's mandate in relation to shaping the post-2015 development agenda and integrating the three pillars of sustainable development. In addition to the outputs provided by the aforementioned components of the segment, several crucial priorities for ECOSOC's attention were mentioned, including rising inequality, off-track MDGs and building a sustainable future.

The adoption of the Ministerial Declaration remains pending due to lack of agreement on language regarding the right to self-determination of people living under foreign occupation. Apart

from this, the Declaration reflects consensus on many issues concerning the importance of science, technology, innovation and culture as potential solutions to many global development challenges.

Coordination Segment (5-9 July) – Decent work for all

The Coordination Segment of ECOSOC, that took place from 5 to 9 July, reminded us that today's challenges require the United Nations system to work in a more coordinated and coherent manner to increase the impact of its work. The Council focused on the implementation of the 2012 Ministerial Declaration on "Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals", including through two panel discussions. The Segment highlighted ways in which United Nations inter-agency collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders, including the private sector, promote productive capacity, employment and decent work. Discussions on the use of human rights instruments and ILO standards and recommendations to achieve decent work for all demonstrated that our challenge is not just about creating jobs. It is about creating decent work for all and applying the rule of law in the economic and business spheres to protect the rights of individuals.

The Segment also focused on Financing for Development, including through a panel on financing for sustainable development. The panel explored options for a coherent strategy for financing sustainable development in the context of Financing for Development follow-up process, implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and in support of accelerating progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and advancing the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

The Segment provided an opportunity to have a dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions on the regional perspectives on the post-2015 development agenda. The key activities of the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2012 to enhance coherence and coordination on policy, operational and management issues of system wide concern were also discussed.

Operational Activities Segment (10-12 July) – QCPR implementation

The 2013 Operational Activities Segment, held from 10 to 12 July in Geneva was the first since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/226, known as the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). The Segment aimed to assess the progress in and provide further guidance for the implementation of the landmark QCPR resolution. The Council was in particular expected to review the framework to monitor QCPR implementation and consider several policy documents,

for example, on independent system-wide evaluation, a new funding modality for the RC system as well as the modalities to approve common country programme documents at country level.

The Segment featured the most significant representation of senior policy makers from capitals in the recent past. 12 countries were represented by ministers and Director-Generals in charge of finance, development planning and development cooperation, which helped to ensure that ECOSOC deliberations were grounded in country-level realities.

Member States engaged in a dialogue on a range of issues relating to QCPR implementation as well as the future role of the UN system. Several key messages emerged from the deliberations.

Firstly, the development context is changing and so must the UN development system. Addressing issues such as access to modern energy services, demographic change, inequality and youth employment is high on the agenda of every government. This changing nature of development challenges warrants serious reflection on what should be the role of the Organization in the new development environment.

Secondly, moving upstream, or in other words, shifting from being primarily a project-based organization to one that is focused on strengthening the capacity of national institutions, is another high priority on the agenda of the UN development system.

Thirdly, while the attention of Member States and the UN system is increasingly shifting towards the post-2015 development agenda, any unfinished business of the MDGs must be completed. In line with the QCPR, poverty reduction should therefore remain a core task of the UN development system.

Fourthly, as development challenges become increasingly global and interconnected, the principle of system-wide coherence should provide the overall direction for reform of the UN development system.

And, fifthly, Member States need to ensure that decision-making processes in capitals work, in a coordinated manner, to advance QCPR implementation. It is particularly important in this regard to ensure that the specialized agencies approach the implementation of the QCPR with the same level of commitment as the funds and programmes.

The dialogue with the Executive Heads of the funds and programmes also revealed that the UN development system has taken a number of steps to implement the QCPR resolution.

While noting progress made in the early implementation of the QCPR resolution, Member States also called for stepped-up action in several areas, including: strengthening of national institutions and capacities; simplification and harmonization of business practices; simplification and harmonization of country

programming documents of UN entities and the UNDAF; full implementation of the delivering-as-one approach; improved reporting on financial expenditures at the country level; a streamlined and harmonized system for results reporting by UN entities, with a view to enable effective reporting on the results of the system as a whole at the country level; furthering of joint resources mobilization to reduce unnecessary competition for funds at the country level; and strengthening of the role of the UN resident coordinator.

The Council noted that the quality, relevance and vision of the QCPR resolution do not guarantee its implementation. Indicators, targets and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are an integral part of the QCPR implementation process. The monitoring framework, underpinned by the analytical work of DESA, will be further refined to ensure that it is comprehensive and evidence-based, while also cost-efficient.

The Segment concluded with the adoption of a resolution, which called for strengthening the role of ECOSOC in monitoring QCPR implementation.

Humanitarian Affairs Segment (15-17 July) – A resolution to reaffirms the importance of access

“The future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness.” was the theme of the Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) on 15-17 July. The objective of this year’s HAS was to look forward to how humanitarian actors – as the UN, governments, the private sector, affected communities, and other new partners – can collectively adapt and better respond to the changing humanitarian landscape. Over these three days, this topic was discussed in various fora: two high-level panels, a general debate, a record number of side-events and the first humanitarian trade fair.

This year expanded the number of side-events, with 20 of them focusing on themes such as resilience, preparedness, capacity building, innovation, financing, humanitarian aid effectiveness, and how to improve response in conflict settings. The new addition of the humanitarian trade fair helped to raise awareness and knowledge of what humanitarian innovation can look like, and demonstrate what each actor can contribute to improving humanitarian preparedness and response. Side-events and booths were organized by various partners ranging from governments, UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement to the private sector, civil society and the volunteer tech community.

The main outcome of the HAS was the adoption by consensus of a resolution which reaffirms the importance of access, introduces new language on protection and condemns attacks on medical personnel, vehicles and facilities. This resolution also recognizes the crucial role of women in decision-making and the importance of education in emergencies for girls and boys.

Member States acknowledged the Secretary-General's initiative for a World Humanitarian Summit, noting that it provided an opportunity to improve the coordination, capacity and effectiveness of humanitarian response.

One of the objectives of this year's HAS was to ensure the voices of people affected by crisis were heard and that the innovative work being done by communities themselves was showcased. This was particularly successful in the two high-level panels, organized by OCHA, where representatives of communities affected by crises joined panelists from governments, UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and academia. Chaired by the ECOSOC Vice-President, Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan, and moderated by Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, these high-level panels were held on two themes: "reducing vulnerability and managing risk" and "promoting humanitarian innovation for improved response".

Key highlights of the panel on reducing vulnerability and managing risk included the presentation by Pak Sukiman from the Jalin Merapi on his community's initiative to use social media and radio to develop an early warning and response system for the Merapi volcano. Muhammad Idrees, from Pakistan's National Disaster Management Agency, also gave a compelling case for multi-hazard risk analysis and improved joint planning, and shared concrete experiences on how Pakistan has moved towards a more proactive risk management approach. Claus Sorensen from ECHO and Dr. Nick Bostrom from Oxford University contributed to this discussion highlighting the need to continue to reorient the humanitarian efforts around managing the risks of humanitarian crises, rather than simply responding to their impact, an effort that will require the humanitarian and development actors to work more closely together, with governments and local communities.

During the innovation panel, Mohamed Osman, Managing Director of Star FM (radio station that broadcasts humanitarian information programs to Somali refugees), presented on the importance of communication and information with people affected by crisis and demonstrated the positive agents of change that people can be in their own communities, using innovation such as social media and radio. A live feed with young Somali refugees training to be journalists in Dadaab Camp shared their experiences with using media as a tool to improve humanitarian response in their community. Elisabeth Rasmusson from WFP and Wendy Harman from the American Red Cross also sent a clear message that the humanitarian community needs to foster a culture that recognizes and supports innovation within the humanitarian sector and promote more exchange of ideas and better partnership with governments and the private sector.

General Segment (18-25 July) – South Sudan and Haiti

The Council's General Segment took place from 17 to 25 July. The Council reviewed the work of its subsidiary bodies and, in addition to the texts contained in their reports, adopted 16 stand alone resolutions on a wide range of development issues.

In addition to official consideration of these reports, several panel discussions were organized in cooperation with UN entities, which increased substantive interest to and visibility of the segment. For example, an exchange of views was organized with Prof. Jose Antonio Ocampo and Prof. Stephan Klasen, also a member of the Committee on Development Policy on the post 2015 development agenda. A special panel enabled the Council to focus on the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the relevance of their work also in the post 2015 context. In addition, a panel discussion on the implementation of the UN system wide action on gender equality and the advancement of women (SWAP), featured representatives of UN Women, OHCHR, ILO and UNV.

On the connection between peace and development, the Council reviewed the situation in South Sudan and debated lessons learnt from peacebuilding experiences that could be relevant to the country's development process. The Council also considered the report of its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, which highlighted tangible progress made in the country and presented recommendations for further progress in aid effectiveness (document E/2013/91). The mandate of the Group was extended for another year. The economic and social situation and assistance to the Palestinian people, including Palestinian Women, was also addressed by the Council.

As mandated by Rio+20, the 10 Year Framework Programme for Sustainable Production and Consumption, whose secretariat is hosted by UNEP, reported to the Council during a special panel that featured the Minister of Environment of Indonesia as well as high level representatives from Switzerland and South Africa (for information on progress made in the implementation of the 10 YFP, see E/2013/CRP.3).

Among the numerous decisions taken, the deferred consideration of the graduation of Tuvalu from the list LDCs to 2015, after the CPD reviewed it another time, or the change of mandate of the UN task force on tobacco control, to which UN DESA is a member, into a task force on non communicable diseases, which continues to be serviced by WHO, received particular attention. The Council also adopted resolutions on the work of UNAIDS, UN Habitat as well as UN research and training entities, among others.

High-level Segment:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/index13.shtml>

Coordination Segment:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/cs2013.shtml>

Operational Activities Segment:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/oa2013.shtml>

Humanitarian Affairs Segment:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/oa2013.shtml>

General Segment:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/gs2013.shtml>

A High-level Political Forum to boost sustainable development



On 9 July, UN Member States, through the General Assembly, established a new High-Level Political Forum to boost efforts to achieve global sustainable development.

The new High-Level Political Forum aims at improving people's economic and social well-being while protecting the environment. The decision by the General Assembly follows up on a key recommendation of 'The Future We Want', the outcome document of last year's Rio+20 Conference in Rio de Janeiro.

The Forum will convene annually at the ministerial level under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years, it will bring together Heads of State to provide added momentum for sustainable development.

"Establishing the Forum marks a major step forward in implementing 'The Future We Want'", said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. "The Forum can provide the political leadership and action-oriented recommendations we need to follow up on all the Rio recommendations and meet urgent global economic, social and environmental challenges. Countries must do their utmost to realize the Forum's potential."

"We are simply not doing enough to meet the fundamental challenges of our time: to end extreme poverty in this generation and significantly narrow the global gap between rich and poor, without inflicting irreparable damage to the environmental basis for our survival," said UN General Assembly President Vuk Jeremić. "The new Forum must be more than just a meeting place—it must be the place where countries and civil society generate the momentum for change."

"This is a great opportunity to advance the sustainable development agenda", said Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. "There is so much that we need to do in concert—to accelerate action on the Millennium Development Goals, to eradicate poverty and promote prosperity, to ensure that everyone has a chance for a better life, while addressing important environmental challenges that threaten progress, such as climate change and biodiversity loss and developing a new set of sustainable development goals."

The High-Level Political Forum will replace the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. The Commission, formed after the 1992 Earth Summit, helped generate action on a range of issues that led to international agreements or treaties. The Commission

was also in the forefront in promoting the involvement of civil society in its work. However, governments and civil society actors came to share a belief that a higher-profile body was needed to guide sustainable development towards the Future We Want.

The Forum will review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental – focus on themes consistent with the post – 2015 development agenda and ensure that new sustainable development challenges are properly addressed.

The General Assembly resolution stresses the need to enhance the role and participation of major groups of society and other stakeholders, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum. The first meeting of the Forum will be held in September, during the Assembly's forthcoming 68th session.

For more information:

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1556>

Trends and Analysis

Identifying gaps in human rights of older persons



The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, established to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older persons, will hold its fourth session on 12-15 August 2013 in New York.

The working group, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/182 aims at considering the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and identify possible gaps and how to best address them, including by considering, as appropriate, the feasibility of further instruments and measures.

The fourth session is open to representatives of Member States of the United Nations, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, which have been accredited.

A programme of work, an agenda and a list of speakers will be posted on the Open-ended Working Group's website before the meeting commences. In addition, a compilation of existing international legal instruments, documents and programmes that address the human rights situation of older persons, inputs from Member States, the UN system and civil society organizations as well as modalities for participation of NGOs can be found on the website.

The Open-ended Working Group's session will be in a similar format than the previous sessions. Interactive expert panel discussions will be followed by an interactive dialogue. It will take place at UN headquarters in conference room 3.

For more information: <http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/fourthsession.shtml>

Geospatial experts to share best practices



The 10th UN Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas (UNRCC-A) will be held from 19 to 23 August at the United Nations Headquarters in New York

The theme of this conference will be "United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management and the Americas, addressing global challenges through geospatial information". This meeting provides a regional forum where government officials, planners, scientists and experts from the Americas and other regions meet to address their common needs, problems and experiences in the field of surveying and mapping, cartography, hydrography, remote sensing, land and geospatial information systems.

The objectives of this conference are numerous. First, it aims at receiving reports on the work being done to advance geospatial information management and assess the status of the resolutions adopted at the Ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas. It is also an opportunity for conference delegates to share experiences, knowledge and best practices on geospatial information management (GIM) at all levels. It will allow representatives from Member States to gain greater understanding of the relevance and work of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) Committee of Experts, GIM issues being addressed in addition to the strategic direction and related program of work. Finally, it will help Member States and supporting stakeholders to identify existing and new opportunities for increased regional and global collaborations aimed at advancing GIM for sustained economic development of the Americas.

Speakers from 16 Member States and eight international geospatial information organizations will be addressing the following topics: strategy, policy, economic and institutional issues; spatially enabling government; geospatial data collection, management and dissemination; best practices and applications; and climate change and disaster risk reduction.

For more information: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/RCC/unrcca10.html>

A strategy to best mobilize resources for sustainable development



The Intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing will hold its first meeting from 28-30 August at UN Headquarters in New York.

At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20) in June 2012, Heads of State and Government recognized the need for significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and the effective use of financing, in order to give strong support to developing countries in their efforts to promote sustainable development.

They agreed to establish an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly, to assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks, and evaluate additional initiatives, with a view to preparing a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy. The strategy is to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives.

An intergovernmental committee, comprising 30 experts nominated by regional groups, with equitable geographical representation, has been tasked to implement this process, concluding its work by 2014. The committee is expected to draw on technical support from the UN system, and to conduct its work in open and broad consultation with relevant international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

The committee was established on 21 June 2013 with the adoption of General Assembly decision 67/559 which defines the membership of the committee.

For more information:

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1557>

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Capacity development

Strengthening national statistical systems

Seminars on Developing Programmes for the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) and Supporting Statistics and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012 (2012 SEEA) and Supporting Statistics in the Pacific region will be held in Apia, Samoa, from 20 – 23 August.

The seminars are organized by DESA's Statistics Division, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Samoa Bureau of Statistics, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre, and Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

The 2008 SNA seminar is organised to assist participating Pacific countries with initiating the formulation of a national strategy and implementation programme for the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) and supporting socio-economic statistics with the objective of strengthening the national statistical system in support of improved policy making. It is expected that this initiative will lead to a multi-year statistical programme helping countries to change over to the 2008 SNA with a view to producing timely comparable national accounts statistics and short-term economic indicators which fully meets the user needs as well as complies with the international standards.

The objective of the SEEA seminar is to assist Pacific countries with developing an implementation strategy for the SEEA Central Framework on the basis of policy priorities and statistical development as well as to develop a sub-regional implementation strategy. It is expected that this initiative will lead to a multi-year statistical programme assisting countries to assist in the adoption of the SEEA 2012 Central Framework with a view to producing timely comparable economic and environmental statistics based on selected environmental-economic accounts and environmental-economic indicators which fully meets the user needs as well as complies with the international standards.

The seminars brings together senior managers from national statistical offices and senior representatives from government agencies using economic and environmental information for policy setting from countries in the Pacific region to discuss the development of an regional and national implementation strategy for the 2008 SNA and the SEEA 2012 Central Framework. The aim is also to share experiences among countries in the region and facilitate cooperation amongst the neighbouring countries as well as north-south and triangular cooperation in support of the SNA and SEEA implementation strategy in the Pacific region.

Publications and Websites

Technical reports

World Economic and Social Survey 2013



The world is faced with challenges in all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. For instance, more than 1 billion people are still living in extreme poverty, income inequality within and among many countries has been rising and, at the same time, unsustainable consumption levels and production patterns have

resulted in huge economic and social costs and may endanger life on the planet.

The World Economic and Social Survey 2013 contributes to the deliberations on addressing sustainable development challenges with a focus on three important cross-sectoral issues identified for action and follow-up at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: sustainable cities, food security and energy transformation.

For more information and to download in other languages:
<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/index.shtml>

Voluntary Commitments and Partnerships for Sustainable Development



An impressive list of commitments made by Governments, the private sector and philanthropies at the Rio+20 and other international forums have galvanized a wide range of interests into action on sustainable development. Issued by the Division for Sustainable Development, DESA, the report found that an array of thematically driven action

networks, particularly on health, education, energy, transport, cities and green-economy policies, have proved useful in driving commitments, inspiring new partnerships, building capacity and aligning common goals in the drive towards “The Future We Want”, to which the outcome document from the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development aspires.

“I am encouraged by the more than 700 concrete commitments registered at the Conference, from Governments, business, industry, financial institutions and civil society groups, amongst others,” said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social

Affairs, stressed: “Voluntary commitments and partnerships are important contributions that are strengthening the implementation of sustainable development everywhere by allowing people from all parts of society to contribute.” He added: “Partnerships and voluntary commitments complement but do not substitute for Government responsibilities and inter-governmentally agreed commitments.”

A new Sustainable Development in Action registry launched to catalogue the 730 commitments made at the June 2012 Rio+20 Conference has now reached 1,382 commitments, valued at about \$636 billion. The report says that while many of them are for projects that will take several years to realize, the commitments represent a sizable amount in global terms and are equivalent to nearly 1 per cent of the gross world product of about \$70 trillion.

To download :
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1645>

The Sustainable Development in Action registry:
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1533>

A Guidebook to the Green Economy Issue 4: A guide to international green economy initiatives



In this Issue 4, the focus turns to the various international initiatives that are supporting countries and stakeholders to implement the green economy worldwide by providing a range of services including information exchange, data management, capacity building, finance, and technology services. In doing so, it provides a resource guide to the various existing international green economy platforms, partnerships, programs, funds and other initiatives.

Published by the Division of Sustainable Development of DESA, the guidebook also aims to map out many of the key actors involved in implementing and supporting the various green economy initiatives, the key services that they provide to countries, and the geographical reach of these initiatives which are now spreading the green economy across the globe. The intent is to provide useful information to practitioners, countries and stakeholders which may assist with coordination and coherence and help countries find the support they need. As with the previous guidebooks, the review focuses on green economy and the related concepts of green growth and low-carbon development.

To download:
<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=916&menu=35>

Statistical compilations

Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online



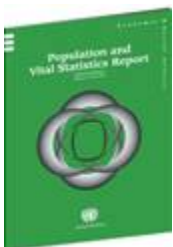
The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics presents current economic and social statistics for more than 200 countries and territories of the world. It contains over 50 tables of monthly and/or bimonthly, quarterly and annual data on a variety of subjects illustrating important economic trends and developments, including population, prices, employment and earnings, energy, manufacturing, transport, construction, international merchandise trade and finance.

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In addition to the regular recurrent monthly tables, this issue includes the quarterly and bimonthly tables: Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials; Earnings in non-agricultural activities, by sex; Fuel imports, developed economies: unit value indices, volume indices and value; Indicators on fuel imports, developed economies; External trade conversion factors; Manufactured goods exports: unit value indices, volume indices and value; Selected series of world statistics.

For more information: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mbs>

Population and Vital Statistics Report



The United Nations Statistics Division issued the Population and Vital Statistics report in hard copy. This report, in this format, is published once a year, while the electronic version is updated every two weeks at the UNSD website. The report presents data on total, female and male population counts from the most recent population census, population estimates and number and rates of vital events – births, deaths and infant deaths – for all the countries of the world. These data are presented as reported by national statistical authorities to the United Nations Demographic Yearbook.

For more information:
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/vitstats/>

World Statistics Pocketbook, 2013 edition



The World Statistics Pocketbook, 2013 edition is an annual compilation of key statistical indicators prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Over 50 indicators have been collected from more than 20 international statistical sources and are presented in one-page profiles for 216 countries or areas of the world. This issue covers various years from 2005 to 2012. For the economic indicators, in general, three years – 2005, 2010 and 2011 – are shown; for the indicators in the social and environmental categories, data for one year are presented.

The topics covered include: agriculture, balance of payments, education, energy, environment, food, gender, health, industrial production, information and communication, international finance, international tourism, international trade, labour, migration, national accounts, population and prices. The technical notes contain brief descriptions of the concepts and methodologies used in the compilation of the indicators as well as information on the statistical sources for the indicators. Reference to primary sources of the data is provided for readers interested in longer time-series data or more detailed descriptions of the concepts or methodologies.

Note: The present World Statistics Pocketbook, 2013 edition (Series V, No. 37) is an update of the previous edition which was released in 2012 and entitled World Statistics Pocketbook 2011 (Series V, No. 36).

For more information: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pocketbook/>

Outreach material

DESA NGO News

The July issue is now available online highlighting, among others, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The monthly newsletter is published by DESA's NGO Branch, providing the most up-to-date information on news and upcoming events of interest to civil society at UN headquarters in New York, Geneva and elsewhere.

Read full issue: <http://csonet.org/content/documents/jul13e.htm>

Enable Newsletter

Prepared by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCRPD) within DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development, the June issue is now available. The newsletter features input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and civil society.

Read full issue:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/newsletter/june2013.doc>

Youth Flash Newsletter

June issue is now available featuring an article on Indigenous Youth. The newsletter is published by DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development Focal Point on Youth to keep the public informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. It is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, and from youth organizations around the world.

Read full issue at:

<http://social.un.org/index/Youth/YouthFlashNewsletter/2013/June.aspx>

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 55

Published by DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division, the July issue highlights the global financial turmoil, the significant capital outflows and sharp depreciation of domestic currencies in developing countries as well as the struggle of Western Europe to move out from recession. The briefing states also that large emerging economies will continue to face domestic vulnerabilities.

Read full issue:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_mb/wesp_mb56.pdf

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff member was promoted in July:

Leah Lagunda, Human Resources Assistant, Executive Office

Calendar

August

International Day of the World's Indigenous People

09 August

<http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/>

International Youth Day

12 August

<http://www.un.org/en/events/youthday/>

Fourth session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

12-15 August, New York.

<http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/fourthsession.shtml>

First meeting of the Intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing

28-30 August, New York.

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1557>

September

68th session of the General Assembly

17 September, New York

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>

Disability and development : "The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond"

23 September, New York

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/disability.shtml>

First meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly

23 September

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1649>

DESA News is an insider's look at the United Nations in the area of economic and social development policy. The newsletter is produced by the Communications and Information Management Service of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with DESA Divisions. DESA News is issued every month. Please click [here](#) to send inquiries.