



**Genuine and durable partnerships for Small Island Developing States| Promoting the well-being of indigenous peoples| Accelerating development agenda top priority for ECOSOC**

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## Feature Articles

### Genuine and durable partnerships for Small Island Developing States

*2014 will be a big year for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Both the United Nations Conference on SIDS taking place in Apia, Samoa, from 1 to 4 September, and the International Year of SIDS, to be launched on 24 February, will draw the world’s attention to these states and promote actions aimed at achieving their sustainable development.*



The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in Samoa will seek a renewed political commitment to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS by focusing on practical actions. Building on assessments of previous commitments (such as the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation), the Conference will aim to identify and address new and emerging challenges and opportunities for sustainable development of SIDS, particularly through the strengthening of partnerships between these islands and the international community. Many issues that will be addressed at the Conference are also central to the post-2015 development agenda.

#### Why focus on SIDS?

“We need to bring more attention to the problems that Small Island Developing States face,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said while addressing SIDS leaders at an event in September last year. “Many of your countries are isolated. Your markets are too small to realize economies of scale. All small island developing states are exposed to high risks from environmental threats, especially climate change,” said the Secretary-General. He added that the world had not paid enough attention to the issues that the people of small island States, often on the frontlines, have had to face alone.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, in June 2012 had also acknowledged that SIDS remained a special case for sustainable development. This is a consequence of their unique and particular vulnerabilities, including their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, and exposure to global environmental challenges and external economic shocks, including potentially more frequent and intense natural disasters. Countries also felt that

SIDS have made less progress than most other groupings, or even regressed, in economic terms, especially in terms of poverty reduction and debt sustainability.

### The world can learn from SIDS

But, as reflected in the tagline of the Conference – Island voices, global choices – the fortunes of SIDS are not only a concern for these States themselves, but for all States. And the world can learn from SIDS' experiences. Traditionally dependent on expensive, shipped-in fossil fuels to meet energy needs, and under duress from climate change forces, island countries are pioneering sustainable solutions such as wind farms and ocean preserves. Periodically devastated by typhoons, hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes, their people show the capacity to bounce back, even though each disaster might abruptly take away 100 per cent of the annual GDP. These are just two of the areas in which SIDS can provide valuable experience.

### Partnerships at the heart of the Conference

Partnerships will be at the heart of the Conference, as highlighted by the Conference theme: 'Sustainable development of SIDS through genuine and durable partnerships'. SIDS anticipate that the Conference will be a springboard for meaningful collaborations. UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo, who is also the Secretary-General for the SIDS Conference, expressed his hope that the Conference will serve to strengthen ties between SIDS and traditional and non-traditional partners, including through South-South and SIDS-SIDS partnerships, as well as those including the private sector. "While 'partnership' is a very popular word, the concept needs to be fleshed out and made real in order to be meaningful for the SIDS. No one wants the Conference to feature words alone", he said.

### Calling on stakeholders to share partnerships

In recent years, small island developing States have identified areas where they can take leadership, work together, and bring other partners on board for concrete actions on sustainable development. In particular five thematic areas for partnerships to benefit SIDS have emerged for special attention: climate change and energy, oceans and seas, waste management, sustainable tourism and natural disaster resilience. Partnerships in the area of health, especially addressing non-communicable diseases, are also being explored.

As the Conference is expected to see the launch of new innovative partnerships to advance the sustainable development of SIDS, a Partnerships Platform has been set up to allow all Stakeholders to announce new partnerships, or ideas for partnerships, and to track implementation. This Partnership Platform on the SIDS website is to encourage everyone to share ideas for the improvement of SIDS communities.

### Global preparations start this month

After meetings on the national, regional and inter-regional levels

were held in 2013, the global preparations for the Conference begin this month, with the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) to take place from 24 to 27 February. At the first meeting of the PrepCom, participants will discuss the objectives and substantive theme of the Conference and organizational and procedural matters. An informal intersessional meeting will be held from 21 to 25 April 2014, and the final meeting of the PrepCom will take place from 23 to 27 June 2014, to finalize preparations for the Conference.

In addition to traditional plenary sessions, the Conference itself will feature multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues which will focus on recognizing current successful partnerships and initiatives, launching new partnerships and initiatives involving a wide range of stakeholders, and interactive discussions on key priorities related to SIDS.

### International Year of Small Island Developing States

2014 has been declared International Year of Small Island Developing States, the first Year ever dedicated to a group of countries. The Year and the Conference preparations will be mutually reinforcing, raising the profile of the SIDS and calling attention to their challenges but also to their unique cultural heritage and their contributions in the arts, culture, innovation and natural resource management among many other areas. The global launch of the Year will take place on 24 February at UN headquarters in New York and will be webcast worldwide.

For more information:

[Website of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States](#)

[Partnership Platform](#)

## Promoting the well-being of indigenous peoples

*Higher maternal and infant mortality rates, poorer access to health services, increased vulnerability to contract HIV/AIDS and to being subjected to sexual violence and discrimination – this is part of the stark reality facing many of the world's 370 million indigenous peoples. In its continuous efforts to promote the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples worldwide, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is working to change this.*



Video available on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/1km87Ad>

On 15-17 January, the Permanent Forum arranged the first international expert group meeting on the topic of sexual and reproductive health and rights of indigenous peoples, gathering seven experts from all corners of the world. Aimed at analyzing how the UN system, member states as well as indigenous peoples and their organizations can be more responsive within this area, the meeting also represented an opportunity for knowledge-exchange.

“Reproductive health is an important issue. It is about the survival and well-being of our families, our cultures and communities, our peoples. It is not just about an absence of illness or disease,” said Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in UN DESA, as he opened the meeting.

Mr. Gass pointed to the fact that indigenous peoples often face poor access to healthcare and that a majority of them are still not fully included in the economic, political and social life of the country in which they live. “If we are to address this unacceptable gap between our aspirations and the reality on the ground, we must redouble our efforts to ensure closer collaboration between the UN system, Member States and indigenous peoples,” he said.

### High rates of sexually transmitted infections

One of the experts at the meeting was Dr. Clive Aspin, a Māori and independent public health consultant with extensive experience from public health research and with a special expertise on the impact of HIV on indigenous populations.

“The major challenge that we all face around the world is the high rates of STIs (sexually transmitted infections) within indigenous communities,” Dr. Aspin said, pointing to the challenges of how HIV and STI disparities are addressed.

“That’s going to be a challenge for health services, [...] for governments and [...] for indigenous communities,” he said, underscoring the need for sufficient means to solve these issues. “Hopefully, governments will come on board and provide us with the sorts of resources that we need to get on top of the problem,” Dr. Aspin added.

### Addressing taboos and other challenges

Dr. Mirna Cunningham Kain, an indigenous Miskita woman from Nicaragua and former member and chair of the Forum also attended the meeting as one of the experts. She described two types of challenges, relating to the organization of sexual health and reproductive programs and to internal challenges. “We have gained a lot in the recognition of the indigenous peoples in Latin America, and in some of our communities [...] we have gained autonomy,” she said, describing that the communities themselves are now to decide on how to organize health services. “At the same time, we face internal challenges and national challenges, because in some of our communities sexuality is not addressed, [...] it is seen as something that you should not talk about,” Dr. Cunningham Kain added.

She also talked about the concern over high rates of maternal mortality among indigenous women. “So on one side, we have gained rights, on the other side we are very clear that we need to organize an intercultural approach in the organization of the health care system,” Dr. Cunningham Kain said, pointing to traditional barriers affecting the way in which services are organized.

### Youth leading the way

Jessica Danforth, founder and Executive Director of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, also participated as one of the experts, bringing the youth perspective from North America into the discussion. “We are very excited that this meeting is happening,” she said, describing some of the challenges that indigenous youth face, including racism, poverty and lack of access to support and resources. “We are here to say that we are not just recognizing that those [challenges] are happening, we want to do something about it,” Ms. Danforth said, adding that

their hope is that the meeting will ultimately result in social and systemic change.

She also described the important role that indigenous youth play in making change happen. “As indigenous peoples, we are often faced with one-size fits all models for let’s say sex education or reproductive health services. And one size does not fit all,” Ms. Danforth emphasized. “The importance of centering our language, our traditions and things that make sense to us, are so integral to achieving our full wellness and well-being,” she added.

Dr. Aspin, Dr. Cunningham Kain and Ms. Danforth all expressed hopes that this meeting will help in bringing about change, advancing indigenous people’s sexual reproductive health and rights worldwide.

“If we can really include this in the global agenda, then we have an opportunity because that will give us a tool to go back to our country, to go back to our communities and say – see we have this support from the international standards,” Mirna Cunningham Kain said.

For more information:

[International Expert Group Meeting: Sexual health and reproductive rights: articles 21, 22 \(1\), 23 and 24 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

Listen to UN Radio interviews with participants at this Expert Group Meeting:

[“Top down” approach denies Indigenous people in Bangladesh access to health services | United Nations Radio](#)

[Indigenous youth promote dialogue on sexual and reproductive health | United Nations Radio](#)

[Activist calls for greater action on HIV in indigenous communities | United Nations Radio](#)

## Accelerating development agenda top priority for ECOSOC

*With the United Nations development agenda in transition – moving from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) era towards a focus not just on poverty eradication but also on the health of the planet – the newly-elected President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) pledged to continue to strengthen that body’s role as a platform for unified dialogue on sustainable and inclusive development.*



Watch video from ECOSOC event on UN Webcast: <http://bit.ly/1ficYik>

“We have a very interesting period ahead of us,” said incoming Council President Martin Sajdik, who is also the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, briefing the press on ECOSOC’s priorities for 2014, which include tackling sustainability issues as well as rising challenges such as inequality, unemployment and climate change.

“We intend to put the spotlight on the final year left to achieve the MDGs,” Mr. Sajdik said, adding that ECOSOC will play a key part as the international community transitions from the MDGs to Sustainable Development Goals and a UN development agenda post-2015, he noted.

Partnerships are the only way to pursue sustainable development, he said, announcing that he and General Assembly President John Ash will host a two-day thematic debate and dialogue in April on the role of partnerships and their contributions to the post-2015 development agenda.

Highlighting the importance of including the views of young people in the new agenda, Mr. Sajdik said he plans to work with the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi, on

mobilizing young people to come to the UN. Among his plans is a two-day Youth Forum to be held in June in New York.

Among other issues, he noted the need to strengthen the Council's role in development cooperation – making sure that the official development assistance (ODA) flows become catalytic for sustainable development.

ODA stands at around 0.31 per cent of national income of developed countries. The target recommended by the UN is 0.7 per cent, according to ECOSOC figures.

The new President noted that this year will be the first time the newly established High-level Political Forum holds a full session.

The Forum replaced the UN's Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which concluded its work on 20 September 2013. The Commission was formed after the 1992 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, better known as the Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to generate action on a range of issues, including energy, oceans and sustainable consumption and production.

The Forum, under the auspices of ECOSOC, is to regularly follow-up and implement sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation, within the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

Its beginning will coincide with the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), to be held in July in New York, whose theme this year is "Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future."

The United Kingdom, Qatar, Thailand, Gambia, Georgia, Sudan, Kuwait, Bolivia, Mexico and the Observer State of Palestine will make National Voluntary Presentations during the 2014 AMR session, Mr. Sajdik noted.

Earlier in the day on 14 January, Mr. Sajdik was officially elected and took over the presidency from his predecessor, Ambassador Nestor Osorio of Colombia, whom he credited for lifting the UN body to a "platform for unified dialogue on sustainable and inclusive development."

Outlining the priority areas on which he also briefed the journalists, Mr. Sajdik stressed that for ECOSOC and the UN overall to make a positive difference in the world, they "must adapt to the rapidly challenging conditions and rise to the level of our Charter mandate."

Source: UN News Centre

For more information:

[New ECOSOC President Martin Sajdik](#)

[Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#)

# Global Dialogue on Development

## Open Working Group on SDGs holds final stocktaking session



*The eighth and final session of the stocktaking phase of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals will take place from 3 to 7 February in New York.*

The first two days will be dedicated to the themes oceans and seas, forests, and biodiversity. The following one and a half days will focus on promoting equality, including social equity, gender equality and women's empowerment, and a further one and a half days will be devoted to conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding and promotion of durable peace, rule of law and governance.

Briefs on these issues drafted by the United Nations Technical Support Team, as well as the draft programme for the eighth session, can be found on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. The session can be followed live via [UN Web TV](#) and [@SustDev](#), which will be live-tweeting using #OWG8.

The Open Working Group will start the second, so called consolidation phase of its work, with a meeting from 3 to 5 March.

For more information: [Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#)

## Commission for Social Development focuses on empowerment

*When the Commission for Social Development meets for its 52nd session from 11 to 21 February at UN Headquarters in New York, it will tackle the priority theme of "Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all".*



The United Nations has long held empowerment at the core of its development efforts, but the 52nd Commission will make history in explicitly and specifically targeting the issue. During the session, the Commission is expected to adopt for the first time in the United Nations history a resolution on empowerment of people in the context of social development.

"Promoting empowerment is essential not only for social development, but for all three dimensions of sustainable development. When people are empowered they are better prepared to take advantage of opportunities. They can create, build, invest and innovate. When people are empowered, they become agents of change," UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo said at the Commission's 51st Session on 6 February 2013.

### High-level panel discussions

On Tuesday, 11 February from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, a high-level panel discussion will be held on the priority theme allowing Member States, civil society organizations and other key stakeholders to engage in a substantive dialogue on policies and strategies that effectively promote empowerment and its role in facilitating other social development goals. This dialogue aims to inform national and international policy debates, including the ongoing debates on the post-2015 international development agenda and the future sustainable development goals.

A second high-level panel discussion will take place on Thursday, 13 February from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, focusing on the Family in Observance of the Twentieth Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, 2014. The panel will present regional achievements in family policy development and their contribution to overall development efforts. It will also reflect on how to anchor family policy development in the post-2015 development agenda.

A third panel discussion on emerging issues will be held on Friday, 14 February from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, taking aim at the social drivers of sustainable development. The panel will engage in an interactive dialogue with Member States to explore ideas and exchange views on which social policies should be enhanced to strengthen the linkages among the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development.

### Special Rapporteur on Disability to address Commission

The Special Rapporteur on Disability, Mr. Shuaib Chalklen will address the Commission on Thursday, 13 February. As Special Rapporteur, Mr. Chalklen establishes a direct dialogue with Member States and with local non-governmental organizations and experts, seeking their views and comments on issues affecting persons with disabilities in the context of social development.

Also on the Commission's agenda is the consideration of matters relating to social groups and review of various reports of the Secretary-General, including on promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all, review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on ageing, policies and programmes involving youth, mainstreaming disability in the development agenda towards 2015 and beyond and the preparation and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

### Bringing together civil society actors

A Civil Society Forum will be convened on Monday, 10 February under the theme "The Role of Civil Society: Empowerment for Inclusive and Transformative Development," as it relates to the priority theme of the Commission, as well as to the discussions related to preparation of the post-2015 development framework. Held a day prior to the opening of the Commission, the Forum has set a tradition of bringing together prominent civil society actors, representatives of Member States and officials of the United Nations to reflect on a key issue relevant to the work of the current session. It will present its conclusions to the Commission at its opening session. In addition, more than 30 side-events, covering a range of relevant topics in regard to social development, will be organized during the Commission.

Established in 1946, the Commission is a functional body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Its 46 members are elected for terms of office of four years on the following basis: 12 from the African States; 10 from the Asia-Pacific States; 5 from the Eastern European States; 9 from the Latin American and Caribbean States; and 10 from the Western European and other States. As a result of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the mandate of the Commission was reviewed and its membership expanded from 31 to 46 members in 1996.

The Commission has been the key United Nations body in charge of the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Each year since 1995, the Commission has taken up key social development themes as part of its follow-up.

For more information:

[Fifty-Second Session of the Commission for Social Development \(CSocD52\)](#)

## ECOSOC explores changing development landscape



*The first operational activities for development segment in the new ECOSOC cycle will take place on 24-26 February at UN headquarters in New York focusing on the theme "The changing landscape: what does it mean for the UN system?"*

The segment aims to start a forward-looking dialogue on how to adapt the UN system to important changes taking place in the broader development landscape. In the view of many stakeholders, the UN development system is at an inflection point. As a result, the UNDG has recently launched an internal dialogue on how to make the UN development system fit-for-purpose. Member States are also deliberating on a new development agenda with focus on sustainable development. The upcoming operational activities for development segment, provides an opportunity for Member States, UN leaders and other stakeholders to discuss the inter-linkages between these important processes.

Many of the changes in the global development cooperation environment are well-known. For example, there is a large number of new public and private actors in both developed and developing countries engaged in development cooperation; official development assistance (ODA) is under stress due to budget constraints in a number of donor countries; and new technologies and knowledge are enabling fresh solutions to long-standing development problems. Even more importantly, the capacity of developing countries has significantly increased in the recent decade and the geography of poverty has changed in a major way, with an estimated 75 per cent of poor people now living in middle-income countries.

The past two decades have also seen the intensification of global challenges such as sustainable development which require collective action. Responding to these and other global challenges may call for a shift away from fragmented projects to greater emphasis on strengthening the catalytic and normative role of the UN system.

The past decade has also seen increasing number of social upheavals and multiple natural disasters and humanitarian crises in many developing countries that needed quick response and significant resources.

The reforms initiated in 1997, including the establishment of the UNDG and UNDAF and the strengthening of the UN resident

coordinator system, among others, have contributed to improved coherence of the UN system. Recently, UNDG has developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for countries adopting the delivering-as-one approach with a view to enhancing system-wide coherence and reducing transaction costs for Governments, other national stakeholders, development partners and UN country teams. The SOPs provide an integrated package of guidance on programming, leadership, business operations, funding and communications.

Against this backdrop, the 2014 operational activities for development segment of ECOSOC aims to contribute to an understanding among Member States, UN leaders and other stakeholders of the need to rediscover the spirit of adapting to change. Within this in mind, the segment will, inter alia, attempt to address questions such as the following: how can the UN system be fit-for-purpose in a post-2015 era with focus on sustainable development? How can the specialized agencies exploit more effectively their comparative advantage in norm- and standard-setting in a post-2015 era? What are the lessons learned from issue-based alliances within the UN system and what is their potential as a future business model for the Organization? How can the UN system improve its effectiveness, efficiency and results in countries in transition from relief to development? Are the SOPs likely to lead to sufficient simplification and harmonization of business practices and reduction of transaction costs and efficiency gains at the country level?

For more information:

[Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#)

## Social inclusion integral to sustainable urbanization



*“The world is rapidly urbanizing, and so cities are where the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost,” said Ambassador Korosi, Co-Chair of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, as he summarized one of the key messages that had come out*

*of the Group’s seventh session which took place on 6-10 January.*

Deliberations of the session had focused on sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change and disaster risk reduction.

The Ambassador presented the Co-Chairs’ draft summary, in which the Co-Chairs outline some of the main arguments made during the five days of discussion. Cities were acknowledged to be large consumers of energy and materials. While they can achieve agglomeration of economies, making available more jobs and affordable network infrastructure services, such as water, transport, and ICT, they also concentrate pollution and waste.

“Cities are home to a large share of the wealthy and middle class, and therefore have relatively high use per capita,” the Co-Chair said. It was noted that social inclusion is an integral part of sustainable urbanization.

The importance of sustainable transport was also underlined, with many Delegates calling for future SDGs to ensure access to safe, affordable and environmentally friendly transport for all.

### Sustainable consumption and production

The cross-cutting nature of sustainable consumption and production was well recognized during the meetings on this issue, but there was no consensus on whether there should be a stand-alone goal on it. However, there were proposals for targets to decouple economic growth from resource use.

It was also acknowledged that a mix of policies will be needed to promote sustainable consumption and production, including fiscal instruments, education and awareness raising, voluntary certification schemes, and regulations, standards and legislation. Some Delegates argued for a life-style approach, which would involve different styles of inhabiting the planet, in harmony with nature.

### Climate change

Stressing the urgency of action on climate change that had been highlighted in the course of the session, Ambassador Korosi said that “climate change poses a real and immediate threat to sustainable development, putting at risk developing gains of recent decades.”

There was support for addressing climate change as a cross-cutting issue in the SDGs framework, while respecting the negotiating role of the UNFCCC and not prejudging its process.

Members of the Open Working Group also suggested that strong action on climate change mitigation and adaptation are among the most effective means of reducing disasters. Without such actions the frequency, intensity, and vulnerability to disasters would only increase through decades.

More information on the seventh session of the Open Working Group, including a short version of the Co-Chairs summary, can be found on the [Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#).



## Trends and Analysis

### Addressing challenges for meeting the MDGs and sustaining development gains



UN DESA's Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in close cooperation with other UN system partners are organizing an e-discussion on the theme of

*“Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future” to be held from 3 February to 16 March.*

The purpose of the e-discussion is to engage experts, practitioners and policy-makers from various regions and stakeholder groups in a global dialogue on specific aspects of the theme of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) through the mechanism of an electronic discussion. Since 2008, UN DESA has held, in collaboration with UNDP, e-discussions on the respective AMR themes.

With the 2014 theme for the AMR being “Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future,” the e-discussion on the same theme will provide ECOSOC with constructive inputs and policy recommendations for strengthening efforts towards achieving the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the MDGs by 2015, and for sustaining and continuing development gains in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

The e-discussion provides a unique opportunity for the broader development community to formulate critical policy messages and an action agenda for the AMR. Contributions made by e-discussion participants will be channeled into various parts of the AMR, particularly the Report of the Secretary-General on the AMR theme, but also through the regional preparatory meetings and the National Voluntary Presentations.

To participate in the e-discussion: [E-discussion: Addressing challenges for meeting the MDGs and sustaining development gains.](#)

### “My Forest – Our Future” photo exhibit opens in New York

*As UN delegates discuss Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an exhibit celebrating the multi-faceted connections of forests and people is being opened. Co-organized by the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat and the Gabarron Foundation, the exhibition is on view from 5-28 February at the Carriage House of Arts in New York City.*



The exhibit features 21 evocative images, finalists from the first UN International Forest Photograph Awards. An opening reception will take place on Wednesday, 5 February from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. To attend, please RSVP to [forests@un.org](mailto:forests@un.org) and [RSVP@gabarron.org](mailto:RSVP@gabarron.org) by 3 February 2014.

Forests are at the heart of sustainable development and the photographs highlight the many faces of forests – from a portrait of tree planting by Kenyan local communities to scenic vistas in Turkey and Indonesia, and from urban escapes in Ukraine to stunning indigenous beauty in Colombia.

In total, 426 entries from 39 countries competed to win the first-ever International Forest Photograph Award. Young students vied with professional nature photographers to showcase personal and often extraordinary perspectives of their local forests. An international jury of lauded photographers and industry experts announced the top 21 photographs in recognition of the first International Day of Forests on 21 March 2013.

The 6 winning photographs are by Atakan Baykal of Turkey, Eka Fendiaspara of Indonesia, Riccardo Gangale of Italy, Olga Lavrushko of Ukraine, Prasetyo Nurramdhan of Indonesia, and Pablo Pro of Spain. The jury further awarded 9 Honourable Mentions and 6 Special Acknowledgments.

All 21 images can be viewed on the [UN Forum on Forests website](#)

For more information regarding the exhibit: [The Gabarron Foundation](#)

## Monitoring the Millennium Development Goals



*The 25th Meeting of Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG-MDGs) will be organised by UN DESA's Statistics Division on 26-27 February in New York.*

The Meeting will discuss how to prepare the 2014 global MDG monitoring report and related outputs. During the Meeting, the outcome of the informal meeting of the Open Working Group on measuring progress and its implication to the IAEG-MDGs will also be reviewed.

The meeting will be preceded by a half day meeting by the Task Team on Lessons learnt from MDG monitoring and a half day meeting by the sub-group on Use of Administrative Data for Monitoring Development Goals and Targets on 25 February 2014.

For more information:

[Events Calendar of UN DESA's Statistics Division](#)

## Capacity development

### Supporting national statistical systems



*Seminars on Developing a Programme on Integrated Statistics in support of the Implementation of the 2008 SNA and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting 2012 (2012 SEEA) in the Caribbean will be held in Castries, Saint Lucia on 3-5*

*February.*

The seminars are organized back-to-back by UN DESA's Statistics Division, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, Caricom Secretariat, Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the Saint Lucia Government Statistics Department.

The first seminar is organized to strengthen the capacity of participating Caribbean countries in formulating national and regional strategies for the implementation of the integrated economic statistics programme in support of the implementation of the 2008 SNA for improved policy making. It is expected that this initiative will lead to a multi-year national statistical programmes to improve data quality, and cost-effectiveness and lower response burden of the statistical production process from basic statistics to national accounts, which fully meets the user needs for evidence based policy and decision making.

The objective of the second seminar is to inform the participating Caribbean countries on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting as an important statistical tool for developing integrated information systems on the environment and its relation with the economy. The seminar will discuss the global regional and future sub-regional implementation strategy for the SEEA Central Framework on the basis of policy priorities and statistical development. It is expected that this initiative will lead to the progressive adoption of the SEEA 2012 Central Framework by both the statistical and policy community. A multi-year statistical programme should support the production of a coherent core set of timely and comparable economic and environmental statistics based on selected environmental-economic accounts and environmental-economic indicators, which fully meets the national policy priorities as well as complies with the international standards.

The seminars bring together senior managers from national

statistical offices and senior representatives from government agencies producing and using economic and environmental information for policy setting from countries in the Caribbean. The seminars will also provide a forum 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 Caribbean.

For more information: [Developing Programmes for Implementing the 2008 SNA, the SEEA and Supporting Statistics in the CARICOM Region](#)

### Experts gather to discuss international arrangement on forests

*The first Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting on International Arrangements on Forests (IAF) is scheduled to take place in the United Nations Office in Nairobi, Kenya from 24 to 28 February.*



At its tenth session, held on 8-19 April 2013, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) adopted a resolution establishing an open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group (AHEG) as part of the intersessional preparatory activities for the review of the international arrangement on forests (IAF) at the eleventh session of the Forum in May 2015.

The AHEG is tasked to review the performance and effectiveness of the IAF as well as the attainment of the multi-year programme of work. To this end, AHEG will review the inputs provided by various stakeholders, as well as the outcome of the work of the independent assessment of the IAF, and based on this review will put forth a set of recommendations providing a strategic direction on the function and institutional arrangements of the IAF for the period beyond 2015 to the eleventh session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF11).

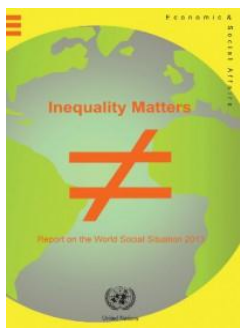
The AHEG will hold no more than two meetings prior to UNFF11, subject to the availability of extra-budgetary resources. This event was decided by the UNFF11 Bureau During its recent meeting in Vienna, Austria and it also agreed that second meeting of AHEG will be held in New York towards the end of 2014 or early 2015.

For more information: [UN Forum on Forests](#)

## Publications and Websites

### Technical reports

#### Report on World Social Situation 2013: Inequality Matters



Published by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of UN DESA, the report places special focus on policy and disadvantaged social groups, in addition to examining the consequences of high inequality. “Much can be learnt from those countries that managed to reduce inequality even under an uncertain and volatile global environment,” said Mr. Wu Hongbo, UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General. “The international community

can play a role in providing support to policies that help reduce inequality.”

A unique contribution of the report is that it brings special attention to the disparities that are experienced by five specific social and population groups – youth, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities and migrants – and also illustrates how such disparities intersect with and reinforce one another.

The report illustrates that growing inequalities can be brought to a stop by integrated policies that are universal in principle while paying particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations. It reminds world leaders that, in addressing inequalities, policy matters.

- [To download](#)

#### Launch of the 2013 World Youth Report “Youth and Migration”



The Division for Social Policy and Development in UN DESA is holding a launch event of the 2013 World Youth Report: Youth and Migration, to be held on 14 February from 1:15 to 3:00 pm, at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium at UN

Headquarters in New York. The event will depict the lives of young migrants through different art forms, including poetry, dance, acting, film and music etc. You are invited to the event!

If you are from outside the UN and interested in attending the event, please send your name, organization name and email address to [youth@un.org](mailto:youth@un.org) before 7 February, 2014. However, the Focal Point on Youth will not bear any cost incurred in relation to your attendance to this event. Should you need further information, please contact [sarwarg@un.org](mailto:sarwarg@un.org).

#### Social Inclusion of Youth with Mental Health Conditions

Encompassing more than one billion, today’s generation of youth is the largest the world has ever known. For some of them, mental-health conditions are the leading causes of adjustment problems, affecting their integration into society and employability. A new report has just been released by UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) to shed light and raise awareness on this issue.

The main objective of the report is to make use of available research on this topic to raise awareness and to start a global dialogue on how to address mental-health conditions among young people. There is often still considerable social stigma around such conditions and it is hoped that this paper can start a dialogue to discuss and consider how to best address these issues in an open format. The ultimate goal is to ensure that youth are fully integrated in society.

The report presents some key findings including that there is considerable burden and disability associated with mental-health conditions, particularly among those for whom the conditions start during youth. It also states that these conditions have a significant impact on youth development and that a public-health approach with preventive interventions is instrumental in addressing this issue at a global level.

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## Statistical compilations

### Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online



finance.

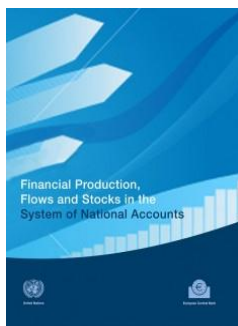
The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics presents current economic and social statistics for more than 200 countries and territories of the world. It contains over 50 tables of monthly and/or bimonthly, quarterly and annual data on a variety of subjects illustrating important economic trends and developments,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

### Vol. LXVII – No. 12, December 2013

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 and 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.

- [More information](#)

### Handbook of National Accounting: Financial Production, Flows and Stocks in the System of National Accounts



The Handbook is a joint product of UN DESA's Statistics Division and the European Central Bank (ECB). It provides practical guidance on measuring the contribution of financial corporations to a country's gross domestic product and issues related to the compilation of financial assets and liabilities in accordance with the SNA. These measurements are also supporting the identification of domestic and cross border economic and financial vulnerabilities. This Handbook is important because it enhances the statistical capacity of national accounts compilers to provide a more accurate picture of the contribution of the financial sector to the economic performance of a country enabling more informed decisions on economic policies.

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A large number of national statistical offices, central banks and international organisations made valuable contributions to the Handbook in the course of a consultation procedure coordinated by the Statistics Division and the ECB.

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## Outreach material

### Sustainable Development in Action – Issue 1, Volume II

The latest issue, published by UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development, highlights among others, the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals and the "High-level Expert Group Meeting for the Global Sustainable Development Report 2013 – Engaging National Assessments" that took place in Beijing. The newsletter aims to feature the work carried out by Member States, United Nations system, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing sustainable development and leading the way to the Future We Want.

- [Read full issue](#)

## Discussion papers

### Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 62

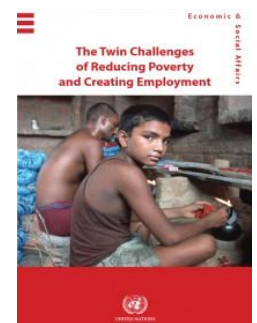
Published by UN DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division, the January issue reveals that global economy is expected to grow at a pace of 3.0 per cent in 2014 and 3.3 per cent in 2015, compared with an estimated growth of 2.1 per cent for 2013, however unemployment rates will remain a major challenge.

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## Meetings records

### The Twin Challenges of Reducing Poverty and Creating Employment

This e-publication is based on papers presented at two Expert Group Meetings, jointly organized by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) in UN DESA and the International Labor Organization (ILO), that brought together specialists to undertake a review of progress in eradicating



poverty and to analyze policy responses to the global jobs crisis in different countries and regions of the world. It calls for a reorientation of macroeconomic policies from the current heavy emphasis on short-term stability to the promotion of sustained, inclusive and equitable growth. It stresses the need for the integration of social and economic policies to enable the attainment of people-centred development outcomes.

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## Working papers

### **The New Aid Paradigm: A Case of Policy Incoherence**

From around 2000 onward, donors and recipient governments embarked upon a new aid paradigm. The most important elements include increased selectivity in the aid allocation, more ownership of recipient countries based on nationally elaborated Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), and more donor alignment and harmonization via program-based approaches such as budget support. The paper assesses the theoretical merits of this new paradigm, identifying some contradictions and limitations, and then examines its implementation over the past decade and its results. The empirical results largely confirm the earlier identified weaknesses and limitations. The paper concludes with some suggestions for improving aid practices.

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## Comings and Goings

### Goings



**Shamshad Akhtar**, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, left her post on 31 January to assume her new position as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP.

Shamshad Akhtar joined the UN in July 2012. Her assignment was unique as she served concurrently as Secretary-General's Senior Advisor on Economics

and Finance and Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in UN DESA. One of her primary responsibilities was to coordinate the efforts on Accelerating the Millennium Development Goals and delineating the Post-2015 Development Agenda, involving many actors including the Secretary-General's High Level Panel, UN agencies, Member States and diverse international and national stakeholders.

As co-chair of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Ms. Akhtar backed UN DESA and the UN System's efforts to deliver as "ONE". She also supported the execution of the department's analytical, policy, normative and operational matters, leading the intellectual and technical work and the intergovernmental dialogue on different economic, social and environmental dimensions. She has provided oversight for UN DESA's role in the production of reports for both the General Assembly and ECOSOC and she has also worked closely with UN DESA divisions, launching annual flagship reports such as the World Economic and Social Prospects and the World Economic and Social Survey.

By participating in a number of international events both at and outside of the UN, such as the World Economic Forum (WEF) where she is a member of the "New Economic Thinking" Governing Council, she has fostered and supported the advocacy of UN DESA's ideas. She has also led the background work on sustainable financing and supported the intergovernmental 30-member committee of experts that has to look at diverse sources and options to ensure proper financing of the future sustainable development agenda. As the United Nations Sherpa to the G20, Ms. Akhtar has furthermore played a critical role in shaping and fostering the relationship between the UN and the G20, ensuring an effective representation and support for high priority issues of the United Nations.

*The following staff members retired in January:*

Marie O. Antoine, Senior Staff Assistant, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Mary Jane Holupka, Statistician, Statistics Division

Mahendra Joshi, Senior Programme Officer, Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

### Comings

*The following staff members were promoted in January:*

Caroline Lombardo, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Lisa Morrison, Programme Officer, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

# Calendar

## February

### **Eighth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals**

3-7 February, New York

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1680>

### **E-discussion on the theme of “Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future”**

3 February-16 March.

<https://www.unteamworks.org/amr2014>

### **“My Forest – Our Future” photo exhibit**

5-28 February, New York

<http://gabarron.org/NewYork/Exhibitions/2014/MyForest/Cover/ta/bid/2533/Default.aspx>

### **52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development**

11-21 February, New York

<http://undesadspd.org/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2014.aspx>

### **Launch of the International Year of Small Island Developing States**

24 February

<http://www.sids2014.org/>

### **First operational activities for development segment in the new ECOSOC cycle**

24-26 February, New York

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

### **25th Meeting of Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG-MDGs)**

26-27 February, New York

[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat\\_unsd\\_calendar.htm#26-27Feb2014](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm#26-27Feb2014)

## March

### **Intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing, Third session**

3-7 March, New York

### **Statistical Commission, Forty-fifth session**

4-7 March, New York

[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission\\_45th\\_session.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission_45th_session.htm)

### **Committee for Development Policy, Sixteenth session**

24-28 March, New York

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/index.shtml>

**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.**