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Creating visibility for forests worldwide

As the International Year of Forests 2011 draws to a close in February 2012, the Director of UN Forum on Forest Secretariat, Ms. Jan L. McAlpine, shares her thoughts about an eventful year. Thanks to the year, she says a clear message has been conveyed that “all 7 billion people on earth have their economic, spiritual and physical health tied to forests.”



In an interview with DESA News, Ms. McAlpine, who leads the work of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, talks about the highlights of the year and the work of the Secretariat promoting the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests around the world. She underscores “that people play a critical role in ensuring the well being of the forests that sustain us everyday,” and the need for a cross-sectoral and cross-institutional strategy to achieve sustainable development.

When you look back at the International Year of Forests, are you pleased with the year and how the importance of forests has been showcased?

“The International Year of Forests (Forests 2011) is truly a testament to the rising visibility of forests in global policy discussions. Increased awareness of our relationship to forests and trees is reshaping the landscape at the policy level and in the public consciousness. I am most grateful for the support given to the Year by Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, who has pointed out the importance of using Forests 2011 to turn interest in forests into action.

Throughout history forests have had a direct impact on the lives of forest-dependent communities, but the Year has sent a clear message that we can no longer ignore: all 7 billion people on earth have their economic, spiritual and physical health tied to forests.

Forests provide livelihoods to more than a quarter of the earth’s population, home for 300 million people around the world and account for a third of wood and non-wood products. Where

forests are sustainably managed and utilized, they can contribute significantly to alleviating poverty and creating forest-based enterprises and services.

I often like to point out that forests are a cornerstone of the entire landscape, including wetlands, agriculture, mountains, drylands, rivers, biodiversity and people. In order to achieve sustainable development, we need to utilize an approach which integrates these diverse parts of the landscape in a cross-sectoral, cross-institutional strategy.”

Do you have any personal highlights from the year that you would like to share?

“Inspiring projects celebrating the Year have come from UN Member States from all corners of the world, driving actions from policy makers to consumers, NGOs, civil society, businesses, youth, and scientific community to promote sustainable forest management.

One inspiring initiative that stands out as a true highlight is Rwanda’s announcement at the launch of Forests 2011, of its plan for achieving border-to-border landscape restoration. Speaking as an official emissary of President Paul Kagame, H.E. Mr. Stanislas Kamanzi, Minister of Environment and Lands, Rwanda, announced Rwanda’s commitment to achieving country-wide restoration over the next 25 years.

We’re talking about restoration of degraded soil, water, land and forest resources in small central African country whose environment and people were devastated by civil war in the 1990s. By the year 2015, Rwanda and its partners, which include the UNFF Secretariat, IUCN and GEF, will have designed a plan to achieve sustainable agricultural production, low carbon economic development, adequate water and energy supplies and new opportunities for rural livelihoods. Such a bold commitment to reverse deforestation and forest degradation will no doubt inspire surrounding countries to follow suit.

Another personal highlight was the unprecedented collaborative spirit that made this year a truly collective effort. The year would not have been possible without the efforts and support of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF).

What kind of message do you hope that people around the world will carry with them as a result of the International Year of Forests?

“The most important message that anyone can take away from Forests 2011 is that people play a critical role in ensuring the well being of the forests that sustain us everyday, from the freshwater we drink, to the clean air that we breathe. Forests are a mirror of evolving human needs, one that is dynamic and ever-changing. While we often use statistics to convey the magnitude of forests’ significance for humanity, the true value of forests will be understood in the context of the impact they have on the lives of

real people. From mitigating climate change to providing medicine, homes, raw materials and ensuring the livelihoods of billions of people around the world, forests are at the center of our existence.”

In your travels this year, have you come across any forest initiatives that you would like to highlight as good practice?

“As I went around the world this year, I was repeatedly confronted with the dynamic relationship of people with their forests. Throughout the year we’ve been focusing on people as a great way to introduce environmental and social issues that brought to light the stories of indigenous peoples and forest dependent communities in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia and Sao Paulo, Brazil. These are the people who are most marginalized by the world economy. Forests act as a safety net for the rural poor, and thus play a key role in reducing poverty.

In May, I traveled to New Zealand for the Pacific forestry conference, ANZIF 2011, where I was honoured with a Maori welcome, followed by the official opening by Sir Tumu Te Heuheu, paramount chief of Ngati Tuwharetoa. It was a privilege to be the guest of the New Zealand government and Ngati Tuwharetoa in Rotorua, New Zealand. I got to see firsthand the way people integrated their cultural and spiritual beliefs into their lives, which epitomizes the concept of sustainable development. There, I saw a society that had defined and internalized this concept for hundreds of years.”

Both the International Forest Film Festival and you personally, have been recognized with prestigious awards. Can you share some more details about them?

“In September this year the German Forest Association presented me with the Fernow Award at a commemorative event in the historic town hall of Aachen. The award was in recognition of the work of the UNFF Secretariat and our activities related to the Year, as well my own three decades of work in environmental, trade and social issues. The award recognizes outstanding achievements in international forest issues and is reflective of the success of the Secretariat and the promising paradigm shift that we’ve facilitated on behalf of forests.

When Lisa Samford, Executive Director of Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival (JHWFF), and I conceived of the first ever International Forest Film Festival, we never anticipated the response we would receive: 165 film submissions from over 30 countries. It was with Samford’s creativity and the tremendous support of JHWFF that we were able to bring forest issues to a global audience through the powerful medium of film.

The winner of Best of Festival, “The Queen of Trees,” is one I always come back to when I consider my favorites. The film offers an intimate portrait of the symbiotic relationship between

a sycamore fig tree and the fig wasp. It is a tale of sacrifice and rebirth from within the microcosm of a single tree, whose influence is felt throughout the African bush, impacting hundreds of other plant life, animals and people.”

I would also single out “Hope in a Changing Climate” about a barren landscape in China’s Loess Plateau that is brought back to life. The film has been instrumental in shaping the way people think about their role in land management and its benefits.

On 5 June, the International Forest Film Festival was awarded the International Association for Environmental Communication’s (AICA) prize in the category “Communicating with citizens improves the environment.” I was invited to CinemAmbiente, Europe’s leading environmental film festival, to accept the prize which was previously awarded to Participant Production for Al Gore’s documentary “An Inconvenient Truth.”

There is also an ongoing art contest for children carried out in partnership with the Gabarron Foundation, what are your hopes with these efforts?

“Our Secretariat’s collaboration with the Gabarron Foundation and Queen Sofia’s Children’s Art Museum in Spain for the 2011 International Children’s Art Contest is a unique opportunity to communicate a message of hope for forests, by looking at them through the eyes of children. The theme is “Celebrate the Forests,” and we believe that art, and especially children’s art, is an important medium to reflect this vision.

The artwork from this contest will undoubtedly help to inspire children and adults alike to conserve forests for present and future generations. Winners will be announced in February 2012.”

Can you tell us a little bit about the Forest Heroes Programme and Awards?

“From an oyster fisherman’s discovery of the positive role of forests in maintaining clean water for his oyster beds to two young girl scouts mounting a campaign that requires the source of palm oil for girl-scout cookies be only from sustainable sources, global actions have reshaped the way we think about forests.

The International Year of Forests is all about people’s actions to present the bigger picture of what forests have to offer. We launched the first International Forest Heroes Programme and Awards to identify and honor the countless individuals, who are dedicating their lives to nurturing forests in quiet and distinctly heroic ways.

The Secretariat received ninety nominations from forty-one different countries across five geographic regions: Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America. Fifteen finalists were short-listed for the award, and five winners – one from each region – will be announced at the

International Year of Forests 2011 closing ceremony in February 2012 at UN Headquarters in NY.”

When working to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests around the world; what do you find rewarding and where do you see main challenges? What are your hopes for the future of forests and is there any message that you would like to convey to UN Member States?

“One of the key challenges is figuring out how to integrate poverty alleviation and food security in the way we treat policy and address issues on forests. You’ve probably heard us state, on several occasions, the overwhelming fact: 1.6 billion people rely on forests for their livelihoods, food and multitude of wood and non-wood products they provide. We are constantly rediscovering the extent to which forests contribute to national development, poverty reduction and food security. What is missing is a cross-sectoral, 360 degree perspective on forests, one that factors in the simple truth that forest priorities will always come down to the crucial relationship between forests and people.

Strategies to enhance the contributions of the world’s forests to social development, livelihoods and poverty eradication are vital at a time when unsustainable practices and economic crises continue to threaten healthy forests and the people who depend upon them. Yet, sustainable forest management is not “one size fits all.” It is a multilayered and evolving concept, carried out through diverse methods and strategies. As the Year comes to a close, the challenge will be to go beyond business as usual and develop a plan of action for a sustainable future for all.”

About the UN Forum on Forest Secretariat

The UNFF Secretariat is a world body with a facilitative and catalyzing role in engaging and strengthening cross-sectoral linkages with various partners within the UN system, and outside. Since its creation in 2000, the UNFF has promoted a 360-degree perspective of all things forests, recognizing the need to widen the debate on forests well beyond the deforestation and afforestation, to a broader sense of its economic, environmental and social values.

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

For more information:

International Year of Forests 2011:

www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011

Bio of Ms. Jan McAlpine: www.un.org/esa/forests/director.html

Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF):

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/cpf/en/>

Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival:

<http://www.jhfestival.org/forestfestival/index.htm>

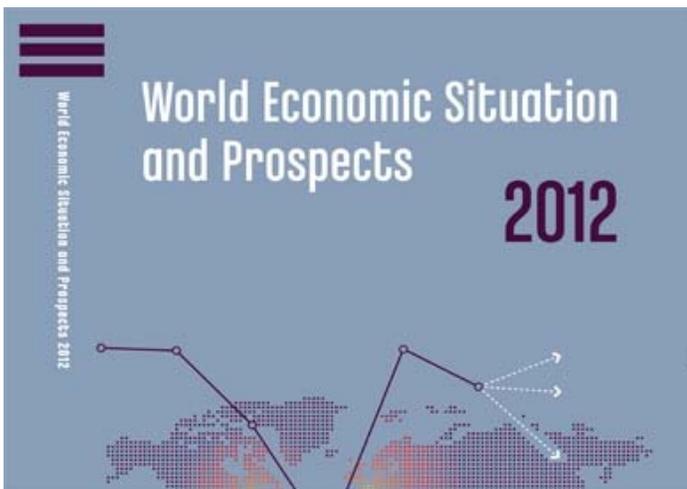
United Postal Union: <http://www.upu.int/en.html>

The World Future Council: <http://www.worldfuturecouncil.org>

Queen Sofia Children's Art Museum/The Gabarron Foundation:
<http://qscam.gabarron.org/QSCAM.aspx>

Report warns of heightened risk of new recession

On 17 January, the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2012 (WESP) will be launched in multi-city locations around the world. The first chapter of the report on the "Global economic outlook", pre-released on 1 December 2011, reveals that persistent high unemployment, the euro area debt crisis and premature fiscal austerity have already slowed global growth and factor into the possibility of a new recession.



The forecast has been significantly downgraded compared to six months ago and predicts that the global economy will “muddle through” with the growth of world gross product (WGP) reaching 2.6 per cent in the baseline outlook for 2012 and 3.2 per cent for 2013, down from 4.0 per cent in 2010.

2012 is projected to be a make-or-break year in terms of proceeding with slow economic recovery or falling back into recession. “Failure of policymakers, especially those in Europe and the United States, to address the jobs crisis and prevent sovereign debt distress and financial sector fragility from escalating, poses the most acute risk for the global economy in the outlook for 2012-2013,” states the report.

“The developed economies are on the brink of a downward spiral enacted by four weaknesses that mutually reinforce each other: sovereign debt distress, fragile banking sectors, weak aggregate demand and policy paralysis caused by political gridlock and institutional deficiencies.”

Slower growth in developed countries affects developing countries

Developing countries and economies in transition are expected to continue to stoke the engine of the world economy, growing on average by 5.4 per cent in 2012 and 5.8 per cent in 2013. This is well below the pace of 7.1 per cent achieved in 2010. And even as economic ties among developing countries strengthen, they remain vulnerable to economic conditions in the developed economies. From the second quarter of 2011, economic growth in most developing countries and economies in transition started to slow notably.

Persistent high unemployment in the US at a rate of more than 9 per cent and low wage growth are further holding back aggregate demand and, together with the prospect of prolonged depressed housing prices, this has heightened risks of a new wave of home foreclosures, especially in the US.

Growth in the euro zone has slowed considerably since the beginning of 2011 and the collapse in confidence displayed by a wide variety of leading indicators and measures of economic sentiment suggest a further slowing ahead. Even with an optimistic assumption that the debt crisis can be contained within a few countries, growth is expected to be only marginally positive in the euro area for 2012.

Japan was in another recession in the first half of 2011, caused largely, but not exclusively, by the disasters of the March earthquake. Among the major developing countries, growth in China and India is expected to remain robust, however. Brazil and Mexico are expected to suffer more visible economic slowdown. Low-income countries have experienced only a mild slowdown.

A 64 million jobs deficit

The rate of unemployment averaged 8.3 per cent in developed countries in 2011, still above the pre-crisis level of 5.8 per cent recorded in 2007. Almost 1/3 of the unemployed in developed countries had been without a job for more than one year, affecting about 15 million workers. Prolonged unemployment tends to have long-lasting detrimental impacts on both the affected workers and the economy at large, as skills of unemployed workers deteriorate, leading to lower earnings for affected individuals and lower productivity growth.

In developing countries, the employment recovery has been much stronger. For instance, unemployment rates are back to pre-crisis levels or below in most Asian developing countries and in Latin America employment has recovered in most countries. However, developing countries continue to face major challenges owing to the high shares of workers that are underemployed, poorly paid, have vulnerable job conditions and lack access to any form of social security. At the same time, open unemployment rates remain high, at well over 10 per cent in urban areas.

The UN estimates that there was an employment deficit of 64 million jobs worldwide in 2011. This is the number of jobs needed in order to restore pre-crisis employment levels and absorb the new labour entrants.

Fiscal austerity part of the problem

The harsh fiscal austerity measures implemented in developed countries and elsewhere in response to relatively high levels of fiscal deficit and public debt are further weakening growth and employment prospects, making fiscal adjustment and repairing financial sector balance sheets more challenging.

The sovereign debt crises in a number of European countries worsened in the second half of 2011 and further weakened the balance sheets of banks sitting on these assets. Even bold steps by the Governments of the euro zone countries to reach an orderly sovereign debt workout for Greece were met with continued financial market turbulence and heightened concerns of debt default in some of the larger economies in the euro zone; Italy in particular.

The possibility of failure of the bipartisan “supercommittee” of the US Congress to reach agreement on medium-term budget cuts was already contemplated in the baseline assumptions of the UN forecast. Downside risks have heightened, however, in particular what could happen with regard to two stimulus measures expiring on 1 January 2012, namely, the 2 per cent payroll tax cut and emergency unemployment benefits. If not extended, GDP growth in the US would slow further in 2012.

The EU and the US form the two largest economies in the world and they are deeply intertwined. Their problems could easily feed into each other and spread into another global recession. Developing countries, which had rebounded strongly from the global recession of 2009, would be hit through trade and financial channels.

More vigorous, concerted policy responses needed

Existing national policies and the Cannes Action Plan of the G20 do not add up to a scenario of stronger employment growth and do not sufficiently address the downside risks.

The WESP calls on developed country governments not to embark prematurely on fiscal austerity policies given the still fragile state of the recovery and prevailing high levels of unemployment. Even with high levels of public indebtedness, many countries still enjoy very low borrowing costs and have fiscal space left for additional fiscal stimulus.

The report further recommends more forceful international coordination of additional stimulus measures across countries and refocused policies to stimulate more direct job creation and investment in infrastructure, energy efficiency and sustainable

energy supply, and food security, paving the way for unwinding indebtedness and enacting needed structural reforms over the medium run.

Read the first chapter of WESP 2012 on the “Global economic outlook”, pre-released on 1 December 2011:

[World Economic Situation and Prospects 2012 – Pre-release](#)

For more information:

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

International Day of Persons with Disabilities commemorated

“Raise your voices, share your ideas, and reach for your goals. They are our goals too. Together we can realize them,” said Deputy Secretary-General Dr. Asha-Rose Migiro, calling on the international community of persons with disabilities as the international day was officially commemorated in New York on 2 December.



The theme for the day was “Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development” and the Director of UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development, Daniela Bas urged, “To ensure people with disabilities do not remain invisible, we must strengthen the foundation of development policies at all levels.”

The event featured a vocal performance by students from the New York Institute for Special Education, two panel discussions on the themes “Towards inclusive development: improving data and statistics on disability” and “Mainstreaming disability in the global development agenda: experience in other development issues”, and the United Nations Enable Film Festival.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1561>

Global Dialogue on Development

ECOSOC NGO Committee meets

The 19 members of the ECOSOC Committee on Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) will gather for its 2012 Regular Session on 30 January – 8 February and on 17 February at UN Headquarters

The agenda will include reviewing 348 applications from NGOs from both developing and developed countries for consultative status. The areas of focus embrace a wide range of expertise including health, education, environment, human rights and gender issues, among others. As part of its monitoring role, the Committee will also review 375 quadrennial reports from NGOs in special and general consultative status to assess their contribution to ECOSOC.

In accordance with ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, the Committee is tasked with considering applications from NGOs worldwide for consultative status with the objective of enabling NGOs to: (i) contribute to the ECOSOC agenda; (ii) participate more effectively in the work of the ECOSOC including through attendance in meetings, consultations and contributions to the Secretary General's reports; and (iii) disseminate the work of the Council, including at the country level.

To enhance the role of civil society as important partners in development, the work of the Committee is intended to strengthen their participation in the intergovernmental process and thereby facilitate the substantive contribution of civil society to the work of the United Nations and in the implementation of the UN development agenda.

For more information: <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=14>

Putting spotlight on cooperatives

2012 has been designated as the International Year of Cooperatives to highlight the importance of cooperatives under the theme "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World"

Programmes during the Year seek to encourage individuals, communities and governments to recognize the agency of cooperatives in contributing to sustainable socio-economic development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Cooperatives are business enterprises owned and controlled by the members that they serve. Their member-driven nature differentiates them to other forms of business into taking decisions

balanced by the pursuit of profit with the needs and interests of members and their communities.

The Netherlands-based Rabobank has earmarked \$200,000 to help finance activities during the International Year of Cooperatives focused on promoting the role of cooperatives in sustainable development.

"Historically, cooperatives have found their genesis in times of economic hardship," said Sha Zukang, UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of Rio+20, the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. "This is a testament to their capacity to alleviate the effects of such crises. In fact, in the wake of the 2008-2009 global financial and economic crisis, financial cooperatives proved to be more resilient than their investor-owned counterparts."

A 2009 study by the European Association of Co-operative Banks, a non-profit organization with 79 million members with a market share of 20 per cent, found that commercial banks, and some public banks, were responsible for more than 95 per cent of bank write downs registered worldwide. Recapitalization (in particular State aid) was also massively directed towards commercial banks and some public banks.

Besides banking and credit, cooperatives are spread across a spectrum of sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries, housing, insurance, services and travel. In its 2008 Global 300 report on the largest cooperatives in the world, the International Co-operative Alliance, a non-profit group with 260 member organizations from 96 countries representing some 1 billion individuals, indicated that the top 300 cooperatives alone had an aggregate turnover of \$1.1 trillion, comparable to roughly one tenth of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the United States.

Most of the 300 largest cooperatives are found in the developed economies of France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands and the United States, with 30 per cent engaged in the agriculture and food sectors, 23 per cent in retailing, 22 per cent in insurance and 19 per cent in banking.

In developing countries, cooperatives play a prominent role. In 2009, Brazil's agricultural cooperatives exported \$3.6 billion worth of produce. Cooperatives also play an important role in peacebuilding and bridging ethnic divides. In Rwanda, a credit union system was rebuilt by the World Council of Credit Unions without regard to ethnicity and there are currently 149 credit unions with an estimated 400,000 members.

The UN General Assembly declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives, in recognition of the contribution of cooperatives to socio-economic development, especially with regard to poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration. The objectives of the year are to: expand public awareness of the role of cooperatives, particularly in relation to the fulfilment of internationally agreed development goals, such

as the MDGs; encourage the growth of cooperatives worldwide; and establish a policy and legal environment conducive to the strength and stability of the cooperative movement.

For more information
International Year of Cooperatives (IYC):
<http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>

UN launches Year of Cooperatives with spotlight on development:
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40262&Cr=cooperatives&Cr1=>

Preparing for the future we want

2nd Intersessional Meeting of Rio+20 was held in New York on 15-16 December

“Let us not for a moment lose sight of the gravity of the task before us. There are high expectations for Rio+20. We must resolve to deliver. Failure is not an option. At Rio+20 we must chart a clear course to the future we want,” said Rio+20 Conference Secretary-General and DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang as the 2nd Intersessional Meeting of Rio+20 opened.

The two day meeting focused on the compilation document and the structure and format of the outcome document. The first day, participants discussed “Compilation document: comments and guidance for the zero draft outcome document,” and on the second day, they addressed “Structure and format of the zero draft of the outcome document.”

At the opening session, Conference Secretary-General Sha Zukang introduced the compilation document to delegates, which was followed by statements from political groups including the European Union and the Group of 77 and China.

Based on a call for submissions to contributions to the compilation document, with the 1 November 2011 deadline, Members States and other stakeholders submitted over 672 contributions to this process. These will serve as a basis for the preparation of zero draft outcome document.

“We need to decide how ambitious we want to be at Rio. The Secretary-General and I have reiterated many times that for the United Nations this is a hugely important Conference. At stake is no less than the effectiveness of multilateralism in addressing humanity’s common future,” Mr. Sha stated further.

“We all know that we face huge sustainable development challenges in the coming decades. Thanks in no small part to Rio 1992, the international community has processes underway to address some of the most pressing challenges – the climate change,

biodiversity and desertification conventions; the forest principles and the permanent forum on forests, to name a few.” Mr. Sha urged for governments to be ambitious and to aim high at Rio+20. He also highlighted proposals made in the submissions, saying that “some common messages and common priorities are beginning to emerge.”

“One of the most interesting – and I dare say unanticipated – developments is the broad interest in measuring progress through a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs for short),” said Mr. Sha.

He also mentioned other priority issues with support including promoting sustainable consumption and production, energy for all, water, oceans, food security, sustainable agriculture, sustainable cities, green jobs, employment, social inclusion, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity and forests.

More information: <http://www.uncsd2012.org>

Opening remarks by Sha Zukang, Rio+20 Conference Secretary-General and DESA’s Under-Secretary-General:
<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/usg/statements/2nd-intersessional-of-uncsd.html>

66th Session of Second Committee Concluded

The Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee), chaired by H.E. Mr. Abulkalam Abdul Momen of Bangladesh, held its 66th session from 16 September to 9 December

This year’s meeting focused on a range of macroeconomic policy questions and economic development issues, such as, financing for development, sustainable development, human settlements, poverty eradication, globalization and interdependence, operational activities for development, and information and communication technologies for development.

By the conclusion of this year’s session, the Second Committee approved a total of 46 draft resolutions. The approved texts confirmed the Committee’s resolve to address the global and financial economic crisis. Also, for the first time this year, the Committee had co-hosted two high-level joint events with the Economic and Social Council — one of which had featured Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz discussing the sovereign debt crisis.

The Committee had also given a strong signal to the Seventeenth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, through its agreement on a cluster of issues under the sustainable development cluster.

The Committee added the item “People’s empowerment and a peace-centric development model” to the agenda, recognizing the interconnection between development, peace, security, and human rights.

In accordance with the on-going process of revitalization of the General Assembly, the Second Committee is engaged in updating its working methods and practices in order to improve the quality of debates and the impact of their deliberations and decisions. As in previous sessions, the Committee held a dialogue with the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions as well as schedule a number of side events as part of its programme of work.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/index.shtml>

Dialogue on financing for development

The General Assembly held its fifth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in New York on 7-8 December

The overall theme of the meeting was “The Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: status of implementation and tasks ahead”. The event included a series of plenary meetings, three interactive multi-stakeholder round tables and an informal interactive dialogue of the whole.

The Acting President of the General Assembly opened the meeting, followed by the opening address by the Deputy Secretary-General and statement by the President of ECOSOC.

Subsequently, in a series of plenary meetings, chaired by the Acting President of the General Assembly, on 7 December (morning and afternoon) and 8 December (morning), the heads of 55 delegations delivered formal statements.

On the second day, three multi-stakeholder round tables (morning) and an interactive dialogue (afternoon) were held as follows:

- Round table 1: “The reform of the international monetary and financial system and its implications for development”;
- Round table 2: “The impact of the world financial and economic crisis on foreign direct investment and other private flows, external debt and international trade”;
- Round table 3: “The role of financial and technical development cooperation, including innovative sources of development finance, in leveraging the mobilization of domestic and international financial resources for development”;

An informal dialogue was also held on the theme “The link between financing for development and achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals”.

Each of the four informal meetings, chaired by a Permanent Representative, featured presentations by 3-4 keynote speakers, followed by an interactive discussion. The main substantive points of the discussions, held during the plenary and informal meetings, were summarized in the concluding remarks by the Acting President of the General Assembly.

Overall, this fifth High-level Dialogue on FfD demonstrated renewed interest and commitment of Member States to the intergovernmental FfD follow-up process, including its strengthening, especially with the view of the post-2015 development framework. It was generally recognized that the Dialogue largely met its objective to reaffirm political commitment of the international community to the implementation of the agreements and commitments set out in the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration on Financing for Development in the context of the continued crisis and uncertainty in the world economy.

Its outcome in the form of the summary by the President of the General Assembly will be issued as an official document and is expected to provide a substantive input into the preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/hld/HLD2011/index.htm>

Looking Back at the International Year of Forests, 2011

The Year has included well over a thousand events worldwide, including conferences, publications, art and photo exhibits, field trips and contests

Many of the events have emphasized the year’s theme of “Forests for People,” conveying humanity’s reliance on forests for our well-being and survival. Indeed, the year has provided a means to bring the many voices of the forest sector together and build momentum towards future cooperation in sustainable forest management.

2011 Future Policy Award

Celebrating innovative policies was at the heart of one such event, which challenged policy makers to consider forests as providing better living conditions for present and future generations. For 2011 Future Policy Award, the World Future Council partnered with the UNFF Secretariat, the FAO and the CBD Secretariat to honour Rwanda’s National Forest Policy with the gold medal during a ceremony on 21 September.

The country implemented rigorous policies to foster biodiversity conservation, ecotourism, green jobs and increased forest cover by 37 percent, in spite of continued population and land pressures. The silver medal is shared by the USA's Lacey Act with its amendment of 2008 and the Gambia's Community Forest Policy, initiated in 1995.

"Governments are rarely acknowledged for effective policy and this is one instance in which instead of criticism, they were applauded for positive change," said Ms. Jan Mc Alpine, Director of UNFF Secretariat.

Art, writing and video competitions highlighting the year's underlying theme have presented valuable information and perspective on forests, creating an environment for dialogue and action. Notably, the call for improvement in our actions has been heeded by future generations of forest stewards in creative and thought-provoking ways.

International Letter Writing Competition

The 40th International Letter Writing Competition organized by the Universal Postal Union, prompted youth to imagine themselves as trees writing to people, advocating protection for the world's forests and their natural resources. The UPU received more than 2 million letters written by children from 60 of its member countries. This year's first place is shared by Charlee Gittens from Barbados and Wang Sa from China, for what jury members called "powerful" and "well crafted" compositions. Winners were awarded in their home countries on 9 October 2011 at ceremonies held in honour of World Post Day.

Children's Art Contest celebrating forests

The Secretariat has also partnered with the Gabarron Foundation for the 2011 International Children's Art Contest, a program of the Queen Sofia Children's Art Museum in Spain. This year's theme of "Celebrate the Forests" challenges kids between 5 and 14 years of age to use imagery to conjure the ecological services provided by forests. The initiative plays an important role in raising awareness from childhood, on the benefits and safeguarding of these valuable natural resources. Since November 2002, the Queen Sofia Children's Art Museum has created a rich legacy, collecting more than 50,000 works of children's art from all over the world. The contest will culminate with an awards ceremony and gala in New York in February 2012.

International Forest Film Festival

The first International Forest Film Festival, organized by Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival and the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat was announced in October 2010 and received over 165 submissions from more than 30 countries. Winners were selected across six categories, with "The Queen of Trees" taking the award for Best of Festival.

Book presenting articles of 75 authors published

The UNFF Secretariat collaborated with Tudor Rose publishing to produce a fully-illustrated book *Forests for People*. It offers articles

from over 75 authors, many of them senior forest leaders and environmental ministers from around the world, relating their work in sustainable forest management. Their stories draw upon global experiences, reflecting how people are changing their interaction with forests to conserve and replenish its resources. The book will be available at the start of 2012.

The International Forest Heroes Programme and Awards

Worldwide, everyday people are sustainably managing natural resources in passionate, innovative and strategic ways. Pioneered by the UNFF Secretariat, the International Forest Heroes Programme and Awards honours and celebrates the efforts of "unsung" heroes dedicating their lives to nurturing forests.

Fifteen short-listed finalists were announced at Forest Day 5 alongside the UNFCCC COP17 in Durban on 4 December. They were selected in a personal capacity by a jury panel consisting of Frances Seymour of Centre for International Forestry Research, Eduardo Rojas-Briales of the Food and Agriculture Organization, Jan A. Hartke of the Clinton Climate Initiative, Emmanuel Ze Meka of the International Tropical Timber Organization and Jan McAlpine of the UNFF Secretariat.

Short-listed finalists are listed in alphabetical order:

Africa: Million Belay (Ethiopia), Mphatheleni Makaulule (South Africa) and Paul Nzegha Mzeka (Cameroon)

Asia: Panut Hadisiswoyo (Indonesia), Shigeatsu Hatakeyama (Japan) and Sulaymonbek Saidbekov (Tajikistan)

Europe: Karl Peter Hasenkamp (Germany), Anatoly Lebedev (Russia) and Mika Vanhanen (Finland)

Latin America and Caribbean: Paulo Adario (Brazil), Monica Hinojosa (Ecuador) and Felipe Milanez (Brazil)

North America: Fred Pinto (Canada), Rhiannon Tomtishen (USA) and Madison Vorva (USA)

Winners from each region will be announced and awarded at the Forests 2011 closing ceremony in February 2012. Their stories and work will be featured on the Forest 2011 website to continue to inspire the work of current and future heroes.

None of these initiatives would have been possible without the support from the following donors: Austria, Croatia and Norway.

For more information:

International Year of Forests, 2011:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/>

Centre for International Forestry Research:

<http://www.cifor.cgiar.org>

Trends and Analysis

Combating violence against indigenous women and girls

International expert group meeting will take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 18 to 20 January

This Expert Group Meeting is being organized following a recommendation of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), approved by ECOSOC and which authorizes a three-day international expert group meeting on the theme “Combating violence against indigenous women and girls: article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”.

It has been requested that the results of the meeting be reported to the Permanent Forum at its eleventh session, to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-sixth session in 2012. The meeting will discuss the way in which the UNPFII should address its mandate under Article 22 of the Declaration.

It will be attended by indigenous experts and UNPFII members as well as interested Member States, UN Agencies and Indigenous Peoples’ Organizations.

For more information:

[International expert group meeting on combating violence against indigenous women and girls: article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

Publications and Websites

Technical reports

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2012



On 17 January, the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2012 (WESP) will be launched in multi-city locations around the world. The first chapter of the report on the “Global economic outlook”, pre-released on 1 December 2011, reveals that persistent high unemployment, the euro area debt crisis and premature fiscal austerity have already slowed global growth and factor into the possibility of

a new recession.

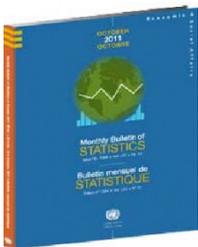
The forecast has been significantly downgraded compared to six months ago and predicts that, at best, the global economy will “muddle through” with the growth of world gross product (WGP) reaching 2.6 per cent in the baseline outlook for 2012 and 3.2 per cent for 2013, down from 4.0 per cent in 2010. 2012 is projected to be a make-or-break year in terms of proceeding with slow economic recovery or falling back into recession.

For more information:

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

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 annual and quarterly 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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This month, the following tables, which are featured in the MBS on a quarterly or annual basis, are presented along with the regular

recurrent monthly tables: Earnings in manufacturing, by sex; Total exports and imports by regions: volume and unit value indices and terms of trade; World exports by commodity classes and by regions.

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

Meeting records

Newsletter on the Fifth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, which took place on 7-8 December in New York, and published by FfDO/DESA, is now available. The two-day event included a series of plenary meetings chaired by the Acting President of the General Assembly, at which ministers and high-level officials were able to make formal statements.

View full issue at:

[Fifth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development – Newsletter November 2011](#)

View more documents from [Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(UN DESA\)](#)

Outreach material

Rio+20: Making it Happen

As disasters threaten lives and development efforts, the latest issue of Rio+20: Making it Happen focuses on disaster risk reduction and sustainable development, one of the seven priority issues that the Conference will address. It also highlights the Fifth Meeting of the Secretary-General’s High-level Global Sustainability Panel and a Workshop on Partnerships for Rio+20, both held in New York. The newsletter also announces the publishing of “Issues Briefs” on “Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience Building” and “Regional, National and Local Levels of Sustainable Development.”

[Rio+20: Making it Happen – Volume 2, Issue 23, 15 December 2011](#)

View more documents from [Department of Economic and Social Affairs \(UN DESA\)](#)

For more information:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=40>

United Nations Youth Flash

The November issue is now available featuring the story “The Time of Now” by Benson Saulo, an Australian Youth Delegate. The newsletter is a service of the UN Programme 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, funds and programmes, and from youth organisations around the world.

View full issue at: <http://social.un.org/index/Youth.aspx>

DESA NGO News

The newsletter, which is a monthly service of the DESA NGO Branch of the UN, includes a brief summary of news and upcoming intergovernmental meetings of interest to NGOs. The latest issue highlights that preregistration and accreditation to the Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio +20, is now open. It also provides details on the procedures for ECOSOC NGOs requesting annual UN ground passes. Other news featured include on the UN’s first report on the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and on the discussions that have begun on the Rio+20 outcome.

View full issue at: <http://csonet.org/?menu=124>

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in December:

Michelle Alves De Lima-Miller, Team Assistant, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Martin Kraus, Senior Programme Officer, Capacity Development Office

Jeanne Santamaria, Forest Policy Officer, Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Goings

The following staff members retired in December:

Manuel Montes, Chief of Unit, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Rosalinda Sanchez, Meetings Services Assistant, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Calendar

January

2012 Regular Session of ECOSOC Committee on Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)

30 January – 8 February; 17 February, New York
<http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=80>

International expert group meeting on combating violence against indigenous women and girls

18-20 January, New York

<http://social.un.org/index/IndigenousPeoples/tabid/70/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/91/International-expert-group-meeting-on-combating-violence-against-indigenous-women-and-girls-article-22-of-the-United-Nations-Declaration-on-the-Rights-of-Indigenous-Peoples.aspx>

February

Commission for Social Development

50th Session, New York, 1-10 February

<http://social.un.org/index/CommissionforSocialDevelopment/Sessions/2012.aspx>

Statistical Commission

43rd session, New York, 28 February – 2 March

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission.htm>

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.