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Looking ahead at key events for development in 2014

As 2013 came full circle, DESA News got an exclusive interview with the department's Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Wu Hongbo, who shared some of the past year's gains as well as some highlights for an eventful and action-packed new 2014. "We will discharge our mandates [...] and do whatever we can to make our work a success next year," said Mr. Wu.



Watch the interview on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/1chDpBt>

During an intense and activity-filled 2013, UN DESA has worked in many different areas to promote social, economic and sustainable development worldwide. A number of important achievements have been gained and it looks like the coming year will be as busy for the department. During 2014, Mr. Wu and his staff will be involved in many key events, which will be essential as the world community moves forward preparing for a sustainable development agenda beyond 2015.

Gains for social, economic and sustainable development

"If we look back to the year 2013, it is a year full of achievements and I am very proud of the colleagues of my department," Mr. Wu said, pointing to some of the many major events carried out in the past 12 months. "First is the Forum on Forest," said Mr. Wu, highlighting the importance of this event, which took place in Istanbul on 8-19 April and which helped raise the profile of forests globally. "It is the first time that the participants in the forum actually discussed financing for sustainable forest management," he added.

Mr. Wu discussed the well-attended Internet Governance Forum (IGF), which focused on how the Internet, relevant ICTs and technologies could serve the future sustainable development agenda. He also underscored the importance of the High-level Meeting on Disability and Development, which was another successful event arranged by UN DESA in September. "That Member States are discussing disability inclusive arrangements for post-2015, is very important," Mr. Wu emphasized.

The High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development that took place in October was also organized by the department. "This is the second time, that such a high-level

dialogue on migration takes place within the framework of the United Nations,” Mr. Wu said. “Member States were discussing the implications of the international migration and the relevant suggestions relating to post 2015,” he added.

Support of GA President and inter-governmental processes

Mr. Wu also shared how UN DESA has been busy supporting the President of the General Assembly. “We had PGA’s special event on MDGs last September, it was very important in that it promoted the awareness of the Heads of State to implement further the MDG commitment,” he said, also underscoring its role in providing new ideas towards a sustainable development agenda.

“I would not do justice to our work if we do not mention the two important inter-governmental processes as a result of the implementation of the Rio+20 follow up,” Mr. Wu added, referring to the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. “These two inter-governmental processes are well under way and discussions have been very productive,” he said. Mr. Wu also pointed to the establishment of the High-level Political Forum, which held its inaugural meeting in September.

Although Mr. Wu underscored the challenge to single out a specific event or activity more memorable than others, he mentioned that the PGA’s special event on the MDGs was very important, given the remaining work on implementing the MDGs, particularly when it comes to eradicating poverty.

Important work outside of the spotlight

He also wanted to bring to the forefront, the work of UN DESA that is not always visible to the public eye. “I think I should mention some of the areas which are not in the spotlight in our work. For instance, statistics,” Mr. Wu said, pointing to the important contribution of the Statistics Division, “providing the basis for discussions for the sustainable development agenda.” Mr. Wu also described the significance of capacity building and capacity development. “We have been doing quite a lot to help the Member States and other organizations,” he explained.

Mr. Wu highlighted the analytical work and the flag ship publications issued every year by UN DESA. “They are influential; they remain high-quality and are very popular,” he said. In addition, Mr. Wu underscored the support provided by the department to civil societies during important high-level events. “We are trying to make the opportunities available as much as possible to civil societies to get involved and it has been greatly appreciated,” he explained.

Prepared for busy year ahead

Mr. Wu is well prepared for an eventful 2014, filled with many important events, among them the UN Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa in September. “As the Secretary-General for the SIDS Conference, I have been through

all the preparation processes so far and I think next year will be very busy, because the General Assembly has already adopted modality resolutions,” he said, adding that global negotiations will begin shortly.

“What I hope is that the SIDS as a vulnerable group would be able to stand up and voice their concerns. It is good timing for them to do so, because in September next year, hopefully the Open Working Group will come up with a set of sustainable development goals,” Mr. Wu explained.

Mr. Wu also shared that Member States have mandated the Secretary-General to produce the synthesis report on the post-2015 development agenda next year, summarizing our current standing as well as suggesting a way forward. “This is very heavy responsibility,” said Mr. Wu, adding that the department will soon begin gathering the views of various stakeholders.

Another upcoming event is the Summit on Climate Change, where the department will be involved in the preparations. “That summit, is not a summit for negotiations, it is designed to mobilize political wills of Heads of State, Heads of Governments, and try catalyze the actions on the ground in dealing with climate change,” Mr. Wu explained.

Moreover, Mr. Wu highlighted the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in September and the department’s continuous support of the President of the General Assembly. “We are going to have three high-level meetings and three thematic debates, one stocktaking session. So you will see every big event, in every month starting in January next year,” Mr. Wu added.

“I know the road ahead is full of challenge, and I am confident that my colleagues and I are fully prepared for the challenge. We will discharge our mandates, as given by the Member States and the General Assembly, and do whatever we can to make our work a success next year,” Mr. Wu said.

“To serve the development issues together with all my colleagues, over 500 of them [...] is a pride for me, and I think I cannot find better colleagues to work with,” he concluded. Mr. Wu and his team will now continue their work in 2014, striving towards an inclusive, prosperous and sustainable world.

For more information:

[Bio of Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs](#)

[Statements of Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs](#)

[Website of UN DESA](#)

[UN Conference on Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\)](#)

[Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing](#)

[High-level Political Forum](#)

[Development agenda beyond 2015](#)

[Climate Summit 2014 – Catalyzing Action](#)

[World Conference on Indigenous Peoples](#)

Forecast predicts increase of economic growth

“The world economy has experienced another year of subdued growth in 2013,” said Pingfan Hong, Acting Director of DESA’s Development Policy and Analysis Division, as the Global Economic Outlook for 2014 was revealed on 18 December 2013. Mr. Hong pointed to continued challenges, but he also shared some new positive trends including improvements in the Euro area and strengthened growth in the US.



Watch the interview on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/1cOeuLs>

“Most developed economies have continued struggling on a bumpy road of recovery grappling with the challenges of taking the right policies,” Mr. Hong said, as the first chapter of the World

Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2014: The global economic outlook was released on 18 December. Together with UN DESA’s Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development Shamshad Akhtar, Mr. Hong shared the latest trends and forecast for the global economy.

Global economy is improving, but remains vulnerable

While highlighting some of the remaining challenges, both Ms. Akhtar and Mr. Hong said that recent improvements have been observed. “The outlook for coming years, barring any further disruption, is set to improve, driven in part by increased demand in developed countries,” said Ms. Akhtar.

“The Euro area has finally come out of a protracted recession,” Mr. Hong said, also pointing to strengthened growth in the US, as well as to the effects of expansionary policies in Japan. “A few large economies including China and India, have managed to backstop the slowdown experienced over the past two years and started to veer upwards albeit only moderately,” he added.



The report reveals that the 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.

Inflation will remain tame, but the employment situation will continue to be challenging. While growth in international trade flows is expected to pick up moderately to 4.7 per cent in 2014, the prices of most primary commodities are projected to be flat. The report warns that international capital flows to emerging economies are expected to become more volatile.

“Our forecast is made in the context of many uncertainties and risks coming from possible policy missteps as well as non-economic factors that could stymie growth,” said Ms. Akhtar.

Regional and national trends

The report predicts that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the United States is expected to increase 2.5 per cent in 2014. Western Europe has emerged from recession in 2013, but growth prospects remain weak, as fiscal austerity will continue and the unemployment rates remain elevated. GDP in Western Europe is expected to grow by 1.4 per cent in 2014. In Japan, GDP is forecast to grow by 1.5 per cent in 2014.

Growth in Brazil has been hampered by weak external demand, volatility in international capital flows and tightening monetary policy, but is expected to rebound to 3 per cent in 2014. A slowdown in China has been stabilized and growth is expected

to maintain at a pace of about 7.5 per cent in the next few years. India experienced its lowest growth in two decades, along with large current account and government budget deficits plus high inflation, but growth is forecast to improve to above 5 per cent in 2014. In the Russian Federation growth weakened further in 2013, as industrial output and investment faltered, and is expected to recover modestly to 2.9 per cent in 2014.

Growth prospects in Africa remain relatively robust. After an estimated growth of 4.0 per cent in 2013, GDP is projected to expand by 4.7 per cent in 2014. The report emphasized the dependence of Africa's growth on investment in infrastructure, trade and investment ties with emerging economies, and improvements in economic governance and management.

More detailed regional forecasts from WESP will be released in January 2014.

Key risks for world economy

Mr. Hong highlighted some of the main hazards during the forecasted period. "One key risk for the world economy is associated with a possible chaotic exit from the quantitative easing, or QE, by the US Fed [U.S Federal Reserve]," he said. "This could trigger significant shock to financial markets and the global economy. Some emerging economies are particularly vulnerable to such a shock and could be pushed into a hard landing," Mr. Hong added.

Other uncertainties and risks include the remaining fragility in the banking system and the real economy in the euro area and the continued political wrangling in the U.S. on the debt ceiling and budget. Beyond the economic domain, geopolitical tensions in Western Asia and elsewhere remain serious risks. These and other risk factors, unfolding unexpectedly, could derail the world economy far beyond the report's projections.

Focus on recovery of jobs

"Facing this and other challenges, policies worldwide should focus more on the recovery of jobs," Mr. Hong said. "We must also increase attention to reducing the spillover effects coming from the large-scale, unconventional monetary policies adopted by major developed countries on developing countries and economies in transition, particularly when major developed countries start to unwind these policies," he added.

International policy cooperation and coordination are also needed to advance the reforms of the international financial system. Progress in financial regulatory reform has been slow, encountering growing resistance from the financial industry. The report adds that more forceful efforts are needed to address the issues of international tax avoidance and evasion, particularly through tax havens.

"We also reiterate the call for the international cooperation to ensure sufficient resources to the least developed countries," concluded Mr. Hong.

WESP is produced at the beginning of each year by UN DESA, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the five United Nations regional commissions. The full version of the report will be available 20 January 2014.

For more information:

[World Economic Situation and Prospects 2014](#)

Improving sustainable energy access for rural areas

A number of commitments to help bring modern and reliable energy services to impoverished rural communities were announced by UNDP, WHO, the Alliance for Rural Electrification and several other stakeholders at the "Global Conference on Rural Energy Access: A Nexus Approach to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication", which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 4 to 6 December 2013.



The commitments were made as a contribution to the 2014 – 2024 UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All. The main theme of the Conference, which was organized by UN DESA, in collaboration with Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All), UN-Energy and the Economic Commission for Africa, was the essential role that access to energy services has for enabling sustainable development and poverty eradication. Over 250 participants from 40 countries attended the Conference.

Links between energy and development factors

Participants agreed that lack of clean, affordable and reliable energy is at the heart of a range of interconnected problems faced by the energy poor in rural areas. Discussions therefore focused on a nexus approach to sustainable energy, which acknowledges the strong link between energy and other development factors such as education, health, gender, environment, economic growth, food security, and water, and seeks to address these in a holistic way.

In his introductory statement via a video message, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and CEO for SE4All, Mr. Kandeh Yumkella, highlighted some of these inter-linkages: "Without energy, our hospitals will not run well; without energy, our children cannot study at night; without access to energy, we cannot process food and store it long enough to deal with food security issues." He also pointed out that lack of reliable energy prevents businesses from competing and creating jobs.

Numbers confirm lack in access

The case for commitments was not only strengthened by this nexus, but also by numbers: 85 percent of the 1.2 billion people who lack access to electricity and 78 percent of the 2.8 billion who still rely on unsustainable solid biomass as fuel for cooking and heating, live in rural areas. Globally, there are close to 4 million premature deaths from household air pollution every year, 70 to 80 percent of which are women and children. Household pollution "is the number four killer in the world; it is the number two killer of women," said Mr. Yumkella.

The ensuing discussions and presentations demonstrated that successful models and pilot projects to bring sustainable energy to rural areas exist, but limited progress has been made, in particular in Africa, in translating these approaches into effective action. Exploring the reasons for this, and suggesting remedies, was another important Conference theme, in line with the Conference objective of providing an opportunity to share and strengthen capacities on policy, technical and entrepreneurial approaches to sustainable rural energy access.

Potential of improving lives of millions

Considering the numbers involved, commitments that increase sustainable energy access to rural areas have the potential of improving the lives of millions. UNDP announced its intention to create a Hub for decentralized, off-grid "Bottom Up" Energy Solutions to advance the SE4ALL Country Actions Agenda, building on two decades of experience in linking energy and sustainable development. UNDP also committed to continue its advocacy for energy as a critical component of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Alliance for Rural Electrification committed to launching two awareness raising campaigns in 2014, which will target energy decision-makers in developing countries. The first campaign will focus on the contribution of small hydro power technologies for

rural development, and the second one on hybridization of off-grid systems. Based on the good experience made with previous Stakeholder Dialogue events, the Alliance will also organize further business-matching events in Africa together with Practical Action in the context of the African EU Energy Partnership. In 2014, the Alliance also plans to launch a study to contribute to the better understanding of the financial requirements to mature nascent rural electrification markets based on mini-grid technologies.

Health benefits from home energy technologies

The WHO will contribute to SE4All by, among other things, launching the new WHO guidelines on house fuel combustion solutions, with evidence of the levels of health benefits that can be expected from different home energy technologies and fuels, clarifying remaining knowledge gaps about what are healthy home energy interventions. This should generate the missing knowledge for arriving at solutions that can be prescribed by doctors for health protection.

An innovative "Twin Schools" programme, with technical and social components, was also announced at the conference. This partnership would involve the development of inexpensive, high quality solar equipment and training systems to promote rural electrification, as well as an educational exchange linking universities and secondary schools in developed countries with universities and schools in developing countries. A team of teachers and students will be trained in the selected developing countries to install and maintain solar systems in rural communities. The programme will be initiated by UN DESA in partnership with a local government in a rural area in Bolivia, and two NGOs, the Institute for Decentralized Electrification, Education and Entrepreneurship (id-eee) of Germany and Energetica of Bolivia.

Displaying renewable energy tools

The NGO AMISTAD (Actions pour la Mobilisation des Initiatives et Stratégies d'Aide au Développement) of the Ivory Coast committed to organizing competitions on innovative approaches and applications for rural energy access, and to provide energy access to 50 Ivorian villages within the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All. Fosera Manufacturing PLC announced the launch of the local assembly Line of FOSERA off-grid lighting products in Ethiopia.

An exhibition, at which 25 organisations displayed renewable energy technologies that enable affordable, clean energy, was an integral part of the Global Conference. The exhibition demonstrated that advanced "clean" cook stoves and stand-alone electric generation systems, which are practical, reliable and durable, are both widely available and affordable.

A summary of the Conference discussions and recommendations can be found on [the Conference webpage on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

ECOSOC set to address sustainable development agenda

“Improving the quality of life of a growing population in a sustainable manner remains the most urgent development priority for the international community,” stressed UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his report on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.



The first resolution of the 68th session of the UN General Assembly (resolution 68/1), adopted on 20 September, contains the most far-reaching reforms of ECOSOC since 1991. UN DESA is poised to play a key role in implementing these reforms. The Secretary-General has been asked to make proposals to promote collaboration across the UN system, taking account of the functions of a strengthened ECOSOC, with UN DESA serving as a central hub of support for the Council, in order to better utilize existing resources of the UN system to broaden support to the ECOSOC and its Bureau. The proposals would include measures to enable the Secretariat to better support the implementation of a unified development agenda.

The new elements of the reform package adopted, mandates the Council to provide substantive leadership to the ECOSOC system through: adopting an annual theme; convening an integration segment to promote and monitor the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the work of the ECOSOC system; convening of the HLPF under the auspices of the Council; and immediately staggering the segments of the Council throughout the year, with a work programme cycle beginning in July.

The Council's meetings will be convened in New York except the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, which will alternate between Geneva and New York. The reform of ECOSOC was carried out in conjunction with the establishment of the new High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will meet annually under the auspices of the Council.

“This Forum is integral to shaping our common vision for future decades,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said.

For more information on the work of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), browse the [Council's website](#).

Addressing sustainable cities, climate change and disaster risk reduction

The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals will meet for its seventh session from 6 to 10 January. It will discuss sustainable cities and human settlements, sustainable transport, sustainable consumption and production, climate change and disaster risk reduction.



The programme for this session, including the key note speakers and panellists, can be found on [the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform \(SDKP\)](#).

The Co-Chairs of the Open Working Group will again hold meetings with Major Groups and other Stakeholders every morning of the session. Registered Major Groups can also contribute to Thematic Clusters online.

More information on the possibilities of providing input, the issues briefs prepared by the UN System Technical Support Team, as well as other information on this upcoming session, can be found on [the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform \(SDKP\)](#).

Committee on NGOs convenes for first session of 2014



The 2014 regular session of the Committee on NGOs will take place in New York from 21 to 30 January.

The session is expected to consider 220 new applications for status by NGOs as well as 219 applications deferred from earlier sessions. The Committee will also review 290 quadrennial reports of NGOs in general or special consultative status, as well as 23 quadrennial reports deferred from earlier sessions. The Committee will meet again on 7 February to adopt its report of the session. The session's

recommendations will be sent to the Economic and Social Council for its approval in July 2014.

The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations is a standing committee of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It reports directly to ECOSOC, and the two reports of its annual regular session (usually at the end of January) and resumed session (in May) include draft resolutions or decisions on matters calling for action by the Council.

The main tasks of the Committee are:

- The consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by NGOs;
- The consideration of quadrennial reports submitted by NGOs in General and Special categories;
- The implementation of the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31 and the monitoring of the consultative relationship;
- Any other issues which the ECOSOC may request the Committee to consider.

The Committee has 19 members who are elected on the basis of equitable geographical representation: 5 members from African States; 4 members from Asian States; 2 members from Eastern European States; 4 members from Latin American and Caribbean States; and 4 members from Western European and other States. The term of office of its members is four years. Current membership will end on 31 December 2014.

Members of the NGO Committee for the period 2011-2014 are the following: Belgium (Vice-Chair), Bulgaria (Vice-Chair), Burundi, China, Cuba, India, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Pakistan (Chair), Peru (Vice-Chair and Rapporteur), Russian Federation, Senegal, Sudan (Vice-Chair), Turkey, United States of America, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep).

For more information:

[Committee on NGOs](#)

ECOSOC addresses response to typhoon in the Philippines

The Economic and Social Council convened a Special Meeting on “Response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines” on 16 December as a step to follow-up on the resolution on strengthening of ECOSOC.



The event, organized by UN DESA in collaboration with OCHA and UNISDR, drew attention to the international community’s response to Typhoon Haiyan and explored ways to enhance coordination in response, rehabilitation, recovery, reconstruction and development efforts in its aftermath.

The meeting attracted high-level participation from Member States. In a keynote address, H.E. Mr. Jose Rene D. Almendras, Cabinet Secretary of the Philippines, illustrated the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan and provided an overview of the Government’s response. The UN system was represented by Ms. Valerie Amos (OCHA), Ms. Margareta Wahlström (UNISDR), Ms. Luiza Carvalho (UN Resident Coordinator) and Mr. Nicholas Rosellini (UNDP). The Council also had an opportunity to interact with a representative of the civil society (American Red Cross) and the private sector on the response to the typhoon. Quite a number of delegations participated at the Ambassadorial level during the interactive dialogue.

Both the Government of the Philippines and OCHA were praised for working closely with the international community to coordinate support and to avoid duplication of efforts. The Strategic Response Plan (SRP) of humanitarian partners, which calls for US\$791 million, covering 12 months from the date of the disaster, has been designed to complement the Government’s Yolanda Recovery and Reconstruction Plan – a 4-year-plan for \$3 billion. As of 16 December, only 30 per cent of the SRP had been funded. The Government of the Philippines intends to conduct a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA), commencing in January 2014, and the UN system expressed its readiness to support that process.

While preparedness and early warning systems have improved, more work needed to be done, in particular addressing the underlying drivers of risk, such as weak governance, poor planning and land use, poverty and lack of protection of ecosystems. Other issues raised included the role of local leadership, the role of the private sector in disaster risk management, the use of technology in relief, recovery and reconstruction efforts, civilian capacity gaps and the need to simplify scientific language for ordinary citizens. A key message

is that humanitarian efforts should be linked to long-term development agenda.

Expectations are high with regard to the 2014 International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa, the 2014 Climate Summit in New York and the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, which many view as key opportunities for addressing issues related to natural disasters.

The Economic and Social Council will convene a follow-up meeting to assess lessons learned in March 2014.

For more information:

[ECOSOC Special Meeting on “Response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines”](#)

Social Development: Report of the GA Third Committee



Since September 20 2013, the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly has been addressing social development. During its session, which was concluded on 27 November, a number of agenda items have been discussed relating to a range of

social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues.

The Committee is focusing specifically on the 1) implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, 2) the significance of social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family, 3) follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing, and 4) the initiative of United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for All.

Over the months, representatives have been contributing their voices and ideas to what the UN can do for social development. On 24 October, the Representative from Senegal spoke on behalf of Armenia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Panama, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova and Senegal about policies and programmes involving youth. He emphasized that this generation of youth is one of the largest ever and that the UN needs to ensure they have access to education, health programs, gender equality, and empowerment.

On 17 October, the Representative of Peru, on behalf of Guatemala, Mongolia and Peru, spoke to the Third Committee about promoting social integration through social inclusion. Peru

especially expressed the need for social inclusion in the economy to promote inclusive and equitable economic growth that can overcome the challenges of unemployment is necessary to achieve poverty eradication and inequality reduction.

Among the other speeches by the Member States, themes that were emphasized included “Literacy for Life: Shaping Future Agendas”, “Cooperatives in Social Development” and “Preparations for the International Year of the Family”.

For more information:

[Full report of the Third Committee in all UN six official languages](#)

[Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly](#)

Furthering South-South cooperation

A major feature of the changing landscape of development cooperation is the greater role of the Southern partners. In addition to additional financial resources,

South-South development cooperation has brought benefits in the form of personnel transfers and skills, capacity building, technology transfers and knowledge sharing.

Moreover, regional, historical and cultural similarities can add additional value to the engagement by Southern partners.



Recent meetings of Southern partners have taken place in New Delhi and in Addis Ababa on the common issues and challenges they face. These meetings called for continued dialogue on South-South cooperation principles, definitions, modalities, as well as views on a renewed global partnership for development that reflects and draws on the experience of South-South cooperation. To facilitate such dialogue, an informal Core Group of Southern partners was established, to be supported by UN DESA and UNOSSC and with the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) as a platform to facilitate its work.

On 2-3 December, the first meeting of the Core Group of Southern Partners was held in Istanbul, Turkey. Jointly organized by UN DESA’s Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), the event was attended by senior officials responsible for development cooperation from 13

governments, as well as participants from international organizations and think tanks.

The Group discussed and recognized the need to further its work on the principles of South-South cooperation and their reflection in operational practices. The next meeting of the Group will be held in Berlin, alongside the DCF Germany High-level Symposium on “Accountable and effective development cooperation in the post-2015 era”, to take place on 20-21 March 2014.

For more information:

[The focus on South-South development cooperation](#)

The future of development cooperation



The landscape of development cooperation has changed greatly since 2000. So has the daily practice of development cooperation. Concepts and policies need to catch up with practical action, as a post-2015 development agenda takes shape. This is the focus of

preparations for the fourth ministerial meeting of the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) in July 2014 in New York.

It aims to produce a new narrative and global approach to development cooperation: one that fits and supports a transformative global development agenda, applying to all countries and with sustainable development at its centre.

Preparations for the Forum are tackling several, practical questions. What would a renewed global partnership for development, in support of a sustainable development agenda, look like in practice? What would make it attractive for the diverse set of stakeholders to engage in this partnership? How would development cooperation have to change, to support an integrated approach to the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental?

To examine how development cooperation would have to change to support a post-2015 development agenda, UN DESA and the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency organized the DCF Switzerland High-level Symposium in October 2013, bringing together ministers and experts representing the range of stakeholders, governmental and non-governmental. Drawing upon their varied practical experiences and the analytical work prepared

for the Symposium, participants identified the following key elements for the future of development cooperation:

1. Development cooperation post-2015 should support a single development agenda, with poverty eradication and sustainable development at its core.
2. Such a transformative agenda must be matched by a different scope and scale of support. The type, or form, of development cooperation, should follow function and focus.
3. Development cooperation should benefit all stakeholders, especially the poor and most vulnerable, within and among countries.
4. The support should be flexible and take into consideration country needs and specific priorities. Least developed countries and middle-income countries will need continued support, but the kind of support they will need differs.
5. Working towards meeting the UN's 0.7 per cent ODA to GNI target will remain critical. Even if past ODA commitments were met, however, these resources alone would still fall far short of what will be needed.
6. Development cooperation today is about more than governments – North-South and South-South – and about much more than aid. Providing incentives for the diverse set of actors – including also the private sector – will be critical to the agenda's implementation.
7. Effective and sustainable development results will require a shared, yet differentiated, framework to hold all actors accountable.
8. The renewed global partnership for development must take the Monterrey Consensus as a starting point but go beyond it. It should bring together the different tracks, including the Rio+20 follow-up, in a single agenda, with a single financing framework to support.
9. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are unlikely to replace the inter-governmental partnership. But they are likely to become an ever more important complement.
10. The post-2015 global partnership for development should reflect the move away from a donor-recipient paradigm and become a genuine and dynamic multi-stakeholder partnership.

The Montreux discussions revealed a new degree of openness to question some of the fundamentals of development cooperation, given the opportunity to advance a truly transformative agenda ([click here for more information](#)).

A principle function of ECOSOC, the DCF meets biennially, at ministerial level, based on extensive two-year cycles of preparation that integrate analytical work with high-level symposiums and stakeholder engagement. The DCF provides an inclusive forum for the diverse range of stakeholders to discuss issues and challenges in international development cooperation in a frank and candid manner.

For more information:

[2013 Switzerland High-Level Symposium on “Development Cooperation in a Post-2015 Era: Sustainable Development for All”](#)
– 24 to 25 October 2013

Trends and Analysis

Advancing sexual health and reproductive rights of indigenous peoples



The first international expert group meeting on indigenous peoples' sexual health and reproductive rights will be held at the UN Headquarters in New York on 15-17 January.

The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has the mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, human rights and health and to provide expert advice and make recommendations to Member States as well as the UN system. Throughout its twelve sessions, the Permanent Forum has made 19 recommendations that deal specifically with sexual health and/or reproductive health and rights.

At its eighth session in 2009, the Permanent Forum recommended that an expert group meeting on sexual health and reproductive rights be held. And then at its twelfth session in May 2013, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues decided to organize an international expert group meeting on the theme "Sexual health and reproductive rights: articles 21, 22 (1), 23 and 24 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples".

The Expert Group Meeting is intended to:

- Analyze enshrined human rights within international standards and policies and how these could be more responsive to advancing the sexual health and reproductive rights of indigenous peoples;
- Promote an opportunity to exchange information, analysis and good practices;
- Identify options and further plans to build the necessary conditions for addressing the sexual health and reproductive rights of indigenous peoples, through concrete recommendations to the UN system, Member States, indigenous peoples and their organizations as well as non-indigenous civil society organizations.

The final report and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting will inform the thirteenth session of the Permanent Forum (12-23 May 2014), and also feed into the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples (September 2014) as well as the 20 year

review of the International Conference on Population and Development and the ongoing discussions to define a development agenda beyond 2015.

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](#)

Study tour to support e-government practices in LDCs

UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) is organizing a study visit to Bahrain on 26 January-1 February, to support the adaptation and implementation of e-government practices in LDCs through an in-depth practical and hands-on learning experience.



The study tour takes place within the framework of DPADM's Development Account Project on "Strengthening capacities of the public sector in least developed countries to deliver quality services equitably through the transfer and adaptation of innovative practices".

It aims to expose interested participants from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to Bahrain's National E-Government Programme.

While during the study tour participants will be familiarized with the entire E-Government strategy and programme of Bahrain, a special effort will be made to address specific interest of those LDCs which are particularly interested in some modules, such as e-procurement, payroll administration, health or education services, etc.

For more information:

[Division for Public Administration and Development Management](#)

Survey assess accountability and transparency in international development cooperation

For more information:

[Development Cooperation Forum](#)



The global debate on a post-2015 development agenda has pointed to a need for enhanced monitoring and accountability at all levels, to ensure delivery on commitments and sustainability of development results. This includes advancing progress on mutual accountability, as an

overarching principle for the effectiveness of development cooperation.

The third Global Accountability survey will assess how mutual accountability mechanisms effectively support the delivery on development cooperation commitments.

It has been launched under the auspices of the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) by UN DESA, in partnership with UNDP.

Similar to the first two surveys (2009 [here](#) and 2011 [here](#)), the third survey seeks to generate evidence to support governments in their efforts to strengthen development partnerships at country level. 140 Ministries of Planning and Finance from developing country governments have been invited to participate and to consult with relevant line ministries, providers and other stakeholders to identify ways to implement tools that support mutual accountability, such as dialogue platforms and aid and partnership policies.

By engaging in the survey, stakeholders are also encouraged to address the capacity challenges they may face in strengthening mutual accountability, in light of the changing composition of development finance and expectations of development cooperation in the post-2015 development agenda.

The biennial DCF provides a legitimate, yet informal hub for candid and inclusive dialogue on the future of development cooperation in a post-2015 era. The findings of the 3rd global accountability survey will inform discussions at a High-level Symposium on 20-21 March 2014 on how to feature effectiveness and accountability in the post-2015 development agenda, with a particular focus on development cooperation and a renewed global partnership for development.

A full repository of information on the mutual accountability work of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) is available [here](#). Latest updates on the 3rd global accountability survey, including webinar recordings, are forthcoming.

Capacity development

Preparing for the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review



The Office of ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC), in collaboration with the Division for Sustainable Development and the Capacity Development Office of UN DESA, organized a Training Workshop and Expert Group Meeting in preparation for the 2014

Annual Ministerial Review of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at UN Women Headquarters in New York on 16-17 December 2013.

The 2014 AMR theme will focus on “Addressing on-going and emerging challenges for meeting the MDGs by 2015 and for sustaining development gains in the future”. It will be the first review to be held under the revised structure of ECOSOC and to be convened in tandem with the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC. It will provide Member States with an opportunity to reflect on new approaches to review and assess progress towards the MDGs and sustain results in the context of the follow-up to Rio+20 and ongoing deliberation on the post-2015 development agenda.

The objectives of the event were to: a) increase knowledge of the prevailing issues captured by the AMR theme for next year; b) identify key priority areas to be addressed by the Secretary-General’s report and activities leading up to the 2014 AMR deliberations, and; c) propose new ways to measure development progress building on the experience of the AMR and NVPs.

It brought together representatives and senior experts from member States, UN system partners and independent experts to share expertise and knowledge on the issues to be addressed by the theme of the 2014 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review. During the two days, the participants shared experiences and lessons learned from their respective work places or national contexts.

The workshop featured substantive presentations by experts, followed by interactive discussions among participants. The discussions focused on: (i) Role of Institutions in Supporting Sustainable Development; (ii) Inclusive development; (iii) Measuring Development Progress; (iv) Lessons Learned from Existing National Reporting, and; (v) NVP Next Generation: Towards a New Analytical Framework.

The deliberations underscored the fact that strong institutions were a prerequisite for successful development, and that strong leadership was a critical driver and enabler of development. So too, was the need to engage citizen participation and building community resilience. This was seen, together with maintaining effective parliamentary oversight, as an effective system of checks and balances that should operate for governments and the governed in all settings.

Various monitoring and reporting options for a post-2015 framework were examined, which should include setting appropriate targets and indicators, identifying measurement tools that are qualitative and quantitative, addressing the role of women and combining local, national, regional and global applicability. Strong monitoring and evaluation features, through a mutual review system, should be central to ECOSOC’s oversight responsibility, with follow up implementation and report-back mechanisms. Continuous capacity building programmes should be designed for MDG acceleration and implementation of the new development framework.

Participants found the workshop to be important in understanding key concepts in the lead-up to the 2014 AMR and in building on the existing strengths of the National Voluntary Presentations. They underscored the need for a new analytical framework for the next generation of National Voluntary Presentations.

For more information:

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

For a holistic water agenda post-2015

From 25 to 27 November 2013, a technical workshop brought together around thirty senior-level water managers, economic planners and statistical experts from fifteen countries to identify priority actions to strengthen institutional capacity for implementing a more holistic water agenda in the post-2015 development framework.



The Workshop was organized by UN DESA’s Division for Sustainable Development in collaboration with the department’s Statistics Division supported by UNICEF, the World Bank, UNEP-DHI and UN-Habitat.

The participants highlighted the importance of water as a resource and a human right, and reinforced why a more holistic water agenda for the post-2015 development framework needs to go beyond water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) – the focus of the MDGs – to one that includes water resource management and water quality/wastewater management. The discussions placed emphasis on national context and realities.

The participants shared experiences and lessons and identified key challenges for linking integrated water resource management (IWRM) to national planning, budgeting and priority setting. They highlighted as a high priority the importance of strengthening institutional capacity in integrated monitoring frameworks and systems in which all stakeholders across all sectors need to be actively involved.

The participants discussed the opportunities of implementing programmes that build on existing initiatives progressing measures to complement GDP – as called for in paragraph 38 of The Future We Want. This especially relates to the area of natural capital accounting, using the internationally adopted methodologies for the System for Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA).

A very important lesson from countries like Brazil, which implemented SEEA-Water, a sub-system of the SEEA central framework, is that the process itself and putting in place the necessary institutional arrangements for implementing SEEA-Water have already contributed significantly in strengthening integrated approaches to water management and development through better coordination and institutional cooperation.

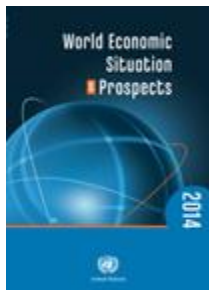
A report will be made available when ready on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, please see the link below. For more information:

[Beyond the WASH Agenda; Strengthening Capacity for Water Resource Management in the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#)

Publications and Websites

Technical reports

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2014



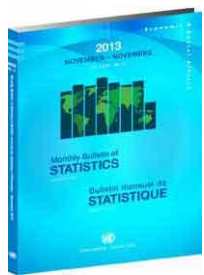
The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2014 (WESP) will be launched in multi-city locations around the world on 20 January. The first chapter of the report on the “Global economic outlook”, pre-released on 18 December 2013, reveals that the global economy is expected to grow at a pace of 3.0 per cent in 2014 and 3.3 per cent in 2015, compared with an estimated growth of 2.1 per cent for 2013.

According to WESP 2014, inflation will remain tame worldwide, but the employment situation will continue to be challenging. While growth in international trade flows is expected to pick up moderately to 4.7 per cent in 2014, the prices of most primary commodities are projected to be flat, although any unexpected supply-side shocks, including geo-political tensions, could push some of these prices higher. The report warns that international capital flows to emerging economies are expected to become more volatile.

- [More information](#)

Statistical compilations

Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online



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

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In addition to the regular recurrent monthly tables, this issue includes the quarterly and annual tables: Earnings in manufacturing, by sex; Total exports and imports by regions: quantum and unit value indices and terms of trade in US dollars; World exports by commodity classes and by regions.

- [More information](#)

Outreach material

Sustainable Development in Action – Issue 11, Volume 1

The latest issue, published by UN DESA’s Division for Sustainable Development, highlights among other things, the fifth session of the Open Working Group (OWG) on sustainable development goals. The newsletter aims to inform about the work carried out by Member States, the UN, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing sustainable development and leading the way to the Future We Want.

- [Read full issue](#)

Youth Flash Newsletter

Published by UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development Focal Point on Youth, the December issue is available online featuring the article “Young people address the realities of HIV and related issues for Post 2015” and putting a spotlight on the movement ACT 2015: one goal, many voices, building initiatives that aim to secure a post-2015 development framework that advances the SRHR and HIV response for young people. The newsletter is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, and from youth organizations around the world.

- [Read full issue](#)

Enable Newsletter

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

- [Read full issue](#)

DESA NGO News

The December issue published by UN DESA's NGO Branch is available online, providing the most up-to-date information on news and upcoming events of interest to civil society at UN headquarters in New York, Geneva and elsewhere. The current issue provides guidelines for NGOs in a consultative status with ECOSOC on how to request UN ground passes for 2014, as well as information about the informal sessions held in December by the Committee on NGOs.

- [Read full issue](#)

The Message Stick

The latest version is available online highlighting the activities undertaken by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) as well as its Secretariat. It features briefings including on the work of the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly promoting the rights of indigenous peoples, on ECOSOC's resumed session and on a Global Conference on Indigenous Women that took place in Peru in October.

- [Read full issue](#)

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 61

Published by DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division, the December issue reveals that anaemic economic recovery is accompanied by tame inflation in developed economies, the GDP growth is stronger than expected in the United States and currencies in some emerging economies are under pressure again.

- [To download](#)

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff member was promoted in December:

Anna Satarova, Staff Assistant, Division for Social Policy and Development

Goings

The following staff member retired in December:

Charles Milenko, Programming Assistant, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Calendar

January

Seventh session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

6-10 January, New York

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1679>

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2014

20 January

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

First international expert group meeting on indigenous peoples' sexual health and reproductive rights

15-17 January, New York

<http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/EGM2014SexualHealthandReproductiveRights.aspx>

2014 regular session of the Committee on NGOs

21-30 January, New York

<http://csonet.org/?menu=105>

Study tour to support e-government practices in LDCs

26 January-1 February, Bahrain

<http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/Home/tabid/420/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

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>

52nd session of the Commission for Social Development

11-21 February, New York

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

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.