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Leading the way to a sustainable future

“I believe that Rio+20 is one of the most important events of this decade. It is an event for the whole world; it is about tomorrow, about the future. And sustainable development should be our common future. History has given all of us an opportunity to make a difference. Let us do it, together,” says Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of Rio+20, in an exclusive interview.

A career diplomat with extensive experience in multilateral organizations and international conferences, Sha Zukang has been the Under-Secretary-General for DESA since 2007. In addition, Mr. Sha serves as Secretary-General of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. Exclusive for DESA News, Mr. Sha shares his experience, vision and hopes as he leads the work culminating in this milestone event taking place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 4-6 June 2012.

What is your vision as Secretary-General of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development?

“I am a strong advocate of sustainable development and I think, if there is a future for our civilization, it will be through achieving sustainable development across the globe.

As a conference dedicated to sustainable development, I hope Rio+20 will re-launch our world on a sustainable trajectory. That, in short, is my vision.”



What message would you like to convey to governments and organizations around the world, as we prepare for Rio+20?

“I believe that Rio+20 is one of the most important events of this decade. It is an event for the whole world; it is about tomorrow, about the future. And sustainable development should be our common future. History has given all of us an opportunity to make a difference. Let us do it, together.

Rio+20 can be captured in 1, 2, and 3:

- One focused political document on the outcome;
- Two themes - a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development; and

- Three objectives - renew political commitments, assess gaps in implementation and identify new and emerging challenges.

Overall, I would like to see governments and organizations produce two kinds of results -at the political level, renewing their political commitment to sustainable development; at the action level, launching concrete initiatives in support of implementation. These initiatives could be country-led, supported by multi-stakeholders; or led by UN organizations; or by business and civil society.

Rio+20 should be a milestone event, with broad participation at the grass root level. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations.”

What are the chances for success in Rio? Are you optimistic?

“A large international conference like Rio+20 is often a difficult and complicated process, because it is seeking to address broad, inter-linked challenges. But I am optimistic. I see enthusiasm and passion for Rio+20 on the rise. Governments are becoming more engaged. They are setting up national coordination committees or task forces. Businesses are also engaged. They have set up a dedicated mechanism for Rio+20. And civil society groups are active. Many are preparing to launch initiatives in the lead-up to Rio or at Rio.

Equally important, Rio+20 offers a timely opportunity to take sustainable development forward. Rio+20 can, and I hope, will live in history as an event that provided the momentum to re-launch the world on the pathway to sustainable development.

While gaps remain on how to proceed, Governments agree that the current international environmental governance is fragmented and there is need for a better balance between governance for the three pillars of sustainable development. While there is concern over green economy, in the area of trade, aid and capacity building, countries agree that a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication can be an important avenue to accelerating sustainable development.”

What in your view are the new challenges?

“During preparatory discussions, delegates identified a number of new, emerging challenges.

Though many are long-known challenges, they have taken on new dimensions. One example is the need for enhancing disaster preparedness, in view of the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters.

Others include energy (energy access, energy efficiency, renewable energy), water (water stress and shortage), land degradation (soil loss), population dynamics, urbanization, sustainable agriculture, ocean and fisheries (the blue economy) and others.

I think Rio+20 will need to address these new challenges. Agreement is needed on measures and commitments that can accelerate implementation in meeting them.”

How is your job as Conference Secretary-General?

“Not easy. It is hard work, but I am not afraid of hard work. I do work hard. However, there are lots of frustrations. Lack of funding is an important one.

Despite frustrations, I also have a strong team working with me and supporting me, which makes this job more enjoyable.”

For more information:

The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20:
<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development and Under-Secretary-General of DESA:

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

Putting spotlight on innovative governance

Over 600 participants are expected to attend the 2011 UN Public Service Day, Awards Ceremony and Forum on 20-23 June. With a focus on "Transformative Leadership in Public Administration and Innovation in Governance: Creating a Better Life for All", the event will feature workshops, an exhibition and celebrate excellence in public service delivery.



Taking place in Tanzania’s largest city Dar es Salam, this is the first time the UN Public Service Awards (UNPSA) will be commemorated concurrently with Africa Public Service Day. To mark this special event and leading up to the Awards Ceremony

on 23 June, a series of capacity-building workshops and a ministerial roundtable will also be held at the Mlimani City Complex.

This global event is managed by DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), under the leadership of its Director, Haiyan Qian. DPADM organized the Awards Ceremony and Forum in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the President's Office of the United Republic of Tanzania, hosting the event, and in partnership with UN Women and supported by the UN Development Programme in Tanzania.

Programme grows dramatically

The UNPSA team led by the Public Administration Capacity Building Branch of DPADM and a devoted group of staff from across the division's branches and UN Women, which has been involved this past year for its first collaboration with DPADM on the Awards Ceremony and Forum, are all excited by the growth and expansion of the overall programme. UNPSA Coordinator Adriana Alberti says the programme has grown dramatically over the last two years, with 2011 showing the number of nominations increasing by 44.4 per cent compared to 2010.

"Olympics" of public service excellence

The team works all year round, starting with the Call for Nominations in the third quarter, to raise awareness and encourage countries to nominate best cases and examples of innovations in governance and delivery of public services. By showcasing and sharing what works with each other, countries can compete in a kind of "Olympics" of public service excellence, from water services to the administration of elections, and share what they know best for possible replication and adaptation. The four-day Forum also creates a unique opportunity to explore issues of governance in a critical and organic way, presenting trends and allowing for discussion on best practices and ways forward.

The winners of the prestigious United Nations Public Service Awards, which are selected from the finalists in each category and region by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) at its annual session, are recognized for their achievements on the last day of the Forum. This also coincides with UN Public Service Day and Africa Public Service Day. It was the General Assembly, which designated 23 June as UN Public Service Day to "celebrate the value and virtue of service to the community".

Briefing sessions and new categories

This past fall DPADM for the first time held a series of informative sessions, both in English and Spanish, for representatives of Permanent Missions to the UN, to brief them on the programme and encourage them to notify their governments to increase nominations and participation. Attendees included

representatives of Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Canada, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Mexico, Namibia, Norway, Oman, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Romania, South Africa, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago and USA. Eight new countries were also nominated this year, including Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Dominica, Somalia, Tajikistan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Ukraine.

In addition, two new categories were created this year in partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and with UN Women: "Preventing and Combating Corruption in the Public Service" and "Promoting Gender-responsive delivery of Public services". There are five categories in total.

A platform for exchange and exploration

Drawing together world leaders, policy-makers, innovators in governance, representatives of international and regional organizations, members of academia, non-profit organizations, the private sector, the UN Public Service Forum puts governance and innovation squarely in the spotlight. Every year it focuses on a specific critical area and explores its different dimensions and components in an organic way. It provides a platform to explore, discuss and learn about: (i) Emerging challenges, issues and trends in public governance; (ii) Innovative practices to address these challenges; and (iii) Capacity development strategies, approaches and tools - how can we learn from these practices and what tools are available or can we develop to move forward?

Five capacity-building workshops will be arranged including: Leading with Integrity and Inventiveness in Public Governance; Engaging Citizens and Civil Society Organizations to Promote Effectiveness, Accountability and Transparency in Reconstruction and Recovery Strategies after Natural Disasters; African e-Leadership Capacity-Building; Leading Innovations in Gender-Responsive Service Delivery; and Special Meeting of Awards Programmes Coordinators.

Public governance app to be launched

Besides highlighting many first time winners, the awards ceremony will also feature the launch of DESA's first App developed for mobile devices. It is an interactive publication "UN Innovations in Public Governance" showcasing all winners from the beginning of the programme in 2003 including the current ones of 2011. The App will be available as a free download on the iTunes store for iPhone and iPad.

The UN Public Service Awards is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. It rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions that lead to a more effective and responsive public administration in countries worldwide. Through an annual competition, the UN Public Service Awards promotes the role,

professionalism and visibility of public service. It is held every year on 23 June, United Nations Public Service Day.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/unpsa>

Call to turn indigenous rights to reality

video



“This forum can play a dynamic role in...helping indigenous peoples around the world achieve the self-determination they deserve. Your success can build momentum towards the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples planned for 2014,” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the opening of the 10th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on 16 May.

Under-Secretary-General of DESA Sha Zukang also spoke in his capacity as the Secretary-General of Rio+20, highlighting the important role indigenous peoples play when it comes to sustainable development: “Rio+20 is a tremendous opportunity for indigenous peoples to share their wisdom with all of us. Indigenous peoples have a unique understanding of Mother Earth as a living entity, where all beings are interconnected and interdependent.”

The 10th Session was led by newly elected Chair Ms. Mirna Cunningham and continued until 27 May.

Video from opening of session:

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2011/05/10th-session-of-un-permanent-forum-on-indigenous-issues-opening-original-language.html>

Global UN forum marks decade-long effort to promote rights of indigenous peoples:

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2011/05/global-un-forum-marks-decade-long-effort-to-promote-rights-of-indigenous-people.html>

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/session_tenth.html

Global Dialogue on Development

UNFF Forest Film Festival wins European Film Award

The International Forest Film Festival has been awarded the grand prize by CinemAmbiente, the leading environmental film festival in Europe and Ms. Jan McAlpine, Director of the UNFF Secretariat has been invited to receive the grand prize in Turin on 5 June

To celebrate the International Year of Forests 2011, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat launched the International Forest Film Festival in collaboration with the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. The festival received 167 films from over 30 countries and winners were selected across six categories. The winning films were first screened during the ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests and they are now being presented around the world throughout 2011 as a part of the continuing festival.

This year's CinemAmbiente festival will open in Turin on 31 May and run through 5 June, which is also World Environment Day. The program features over 100 films to be shown in the National Competition, International Competition, and International Shorts Competition categories, thematic focuses, retrospectives, Ecokids for younger audiences and Panorama, which will probe issues on deforestation and land use.

This year's festival is sponsored by the UN Regional Information Center (UNRIC) in Brussels. The Turin-based organization also coordinates the worldwide network of similar environmental film festivals and the Environmental Film Festival Network (EFFN).

For more information: www.forestfilmfestival.org, <http://www.cinemambiente.it>

General Assembly highlights MDGs and development agenda beyond 2015

Two panel discussions will be held examining "MDG implementation and accountability: women's and children's health as an engine for progress" and "Advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015" on Tuesday, 14 June at UN Headquarters in New York

The President of the General Assembly, Mr. Joseph Deiss, will arrange this event on development, mandated by the General

Assembly resolution 60/265 which requests that a "specific meeting focused on development, including an assessment of progress over the previous year, at each session of the General Assembly."

DESA is providing technical and logistical support for the event, which will take the form of a formal plenary meeting and two high-level panel presentations examining "MDG implementation and accountability: women's and children's health as an engine for progress" and "Advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015."

In particular, the second panel will seek to inform Member States of ongoing discussions outside the UN regarding a post-2015 framework. A number of high-level and prominent personalities have been invited to contribute to the discussions in each panel.

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

CSD-19 focused on reducing harms of pollution and waste

The Commission on Sustainable Development held its 19th session on 2-13 May in New York focusing on transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production (SCP)

The High-level segment on 11-13 May gathered 60 ministers of environment and other relevant ministers, who discussed the themes in four roundtable sessions: SCP; transport; mining; and waste management and chemicals. The opening session of the High-level Segment featured three keynote speakers highlighting the importance of sustainable development and the changing patterns of consumption and production. A number of ministers also presented their views in this area.

The roundtable sessions also had experts on the thematic areas to start the discussions and were co-chaired by ministers from developed and developing countries. The Secretary-General was a keynote speaker on the last day of the Commission's session where he talked about the importance of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development to take place next year in Rio.

CSD-19's Learning Center offered 14 courses related to the Commission's five themes and cross-cutting issues to more than 300 participants from national delegations, NGOs, international organizations and other institutions. The class size averaged 23 participants and was over 40 participants in some sessions. There were also forty-eight side events and twelve related activities held in connection with the session.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml

Key messages identified to maximize results of aid

The Government of Mali and DESA co-organized the first symposium “Gearing development cooperation towards the MDGs: Results and Effectiveness” to prepare for the 2012 ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) on 5-6 May in Bamako, Mali

The meeting identified a number of key messages on how to maximize the results of aid on poverty and other MDGs and it was attended by some 150 participants from over fifty developing and developed countries. Attendees included the President of ECOSOC, Ministers from Mali, DRC and Liberia, government representatives, civil society organizations, parliamentarians and local government officials.

The continued involvement of such a varied group of stakeholders is frequently highlighted as one of the key strengths of the DCF, as was also expressed during the ongoing review of General Assembly Resolution 61/16 on the “Strengthening of ECOSOC”.

On delivering results from aid, participants agreed that a focus on short-term outcomes is important to build support for development cooperation, in particular in conflict affected countries. At the same time, more attention should be paid to the medium and long-term impact of development cooperation and its sustainability. Planned results need to be developed under the leadership and inclusive ownership of developing countries. Monitoring and evaluation would need to be a shared exercise. Clear benchmarks can help to measure how aid is contributing to the achievement of national development goals and the MDGs.

The meeting also discussed ways of ensuring that actors hold each other accountable on development results and aid management. The growing number of development actors was seen as a key challenge in coordinating aid. Robust mutual accountability mechanisms between donors/providers and programme countries, based on common results frameworks were seen as an effective tool to overcome this challenge.

Multiple conditionalities on development cooperation continue to hinder national ownership and leadership. This meeting underscored that where conditionalities cannot be eliminated, they should be rooted in national strategies; agreed between donor and programme countries.

A strong message was the need to build developing countries’ capacities across the board in order to bolster national ownership. Important areas included policy making, monitoring and evaluation, statistics, coordinating aid as well as promoting greater

transparency and the inclusion of civil society representatives in all phases of the development process. There was a strong emphasis on the need for “inclusive national ownership” – which engages parliaments, local governments and civil society organizations. Strengthening the capacities of these actors was also seen as critical.

In preparation of the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV), the symposium also focused on development cooperation with LDCs. Background documents show that LDCs do not only face the greatest structural needs, but they also receive aid of lesser quality than other developing countries. This compounds the delays in meeting donors’ commitment to increase aid quantity. It was therefore suggested that a framework should be developed to improve accountability between LDCs and their donors on commitments relating to the quantity and quality of aid. Such a framework would support reviews on the follow-up to the Istanbul programme of Action.

It was felt that the UN DCF has an important role in accelerating the achievement of the MDGs and in keeping under review the impact/results of aid. The outcome of the meeting, “Bamako conclusions”, was read out in summary form by the President of ECOSOC. These will be fleshed out and posted on the ECOSOC website and shared with all participants.

The results of the discussion during the symposium will feed into the 2012 DCF. It will also contribute to the OECD-DAC Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF4) in November 2011 in Busan, Republic of Korea. The outcome of the discussion on LDCs was presented by Mali at a DCF special event at the LDC-IV conference.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/dcfmali.shtml>

Stronger accountability frameworks to enhance aid to LDCs

DESA’s Office for ECOSOC Support organized a special event on “Mutual accountability for LDCs: Aid quality and beyond” with UNDP and OECD-DAC in connection with the Fourth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries that took place in Istanbul on 9-13 May

This event took place on 12 May and examined the quality of aid to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and how greater mutual accountability between LDCs and their donors can improve it. The discussions built on the premise that LDCs do not only face the greatest structural needs, but they also receive aid of lesser quality than other developing countries.

This compounds the delays in meeting donors’ commitment to increase aid quantity. It was therefore suggested that a mutual

accountability framework should be developed to improve aid quantity and quality that builds on existing mechanisms and contributes to the follow-up to the Istanbul Programme of Action.

The special event brought together approximately sixty participants and high-level speakers from Mali, the Republic of Korea and the IBON Foundation for a lively debate. It was chaired by the President of ECOSOC and introduced by the Head of the OECD-DAC's aid effectiveness team and DESA's Assistant-Secretary-General for Economic Development.

Among many other suggestions, great emphasis was placed on the need for stronger global and independent monitoring mechanisms to assess progress towards better and more aid as well as mutual accountability, notably in the absence of well developed national institutions. The role of the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) as such a mechanism and as a dialogue platform on technical aspects of mutual accountability was reaffirmed.

Participants also highlighted the need to strengthen institutional arrangements for aid management that are conducive to greater parliamentary oversight and civil society involvement. Existing mutual accountability frameworks should better take into account the concerns and needs of LDCs and be perceived in the context of broad development partnerships, including with the private sector.

In his closing remarks, the President of ECOSOC reiterated that transparent and truthful consultations and strong institutions are key to ensure that assistance provided and received produces the maximum impact for beneficiaries. He stressed the importance of enhancing mutual accountability and assured that this area of work will be continued in the context of the DCF in preparation of its next forum in 2012.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ldc/home>

Strengthening disability rights

The Fifth Session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities met in Geneva on 11-15 April

Persons with disabilities make up an estimated 10 per cent of the world's population, eighty per cent of which reside in developing countries. The 18-member Committee was created to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with its aim to promote, protect and ensure the human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, in addition to promoting respect for their inherent dignity.

In a statement, Akiko Ito, Chief of the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities within DESA, described the department's role and work in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in development. She also informed that 99 countries had ratified the Convention at the time

of the meeting. This number was later revised as Colombia on 10 May became the 100th country ratifying the Convention, which was adopted on 13 December 2006 and opened for signature on 30 March 2007.

“While the increase in number of ratifications... the lack of expertise in how to plan and execute government policies and strategies that address the situation of persons with disabilities remains a major challenge... The international community has reiterated that disability is a cross-cutting issue and all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, have relevance to disability and persons with disabilities... Mainstreaming disability in development agenda is defined as a strategy”, Ms. Ito emphasized.

Marcia Kran, Director of the Research and Right to Development Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, also highlighted the impressive level of ratifications that the Convention has reached in a short period of time and that this means that the work of the Committee will significantly increase.

Ms. Kran also noted that some states used lack of resources as a reason for not ratifying the Convention. However, as the Committee members illustrated that limited resources in many cases should not amount to become an obstacle to the implementation and the realization of rights of persons with disabilities.

The Committee reviewed the first country report, the initial report of Tunisia and it also established a working group on accessibility to public transportation and airline transport among other things.

More information: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/>,
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

Trends and Analysis

Confronting family poverty and social exclusion

Expert Group Meeting on family policies will be held in New York on 1-3 June

The UN Programme on the Family in DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development is organizing this event under the theme "Assessing family policies: confronting family poverty and social exclusion & ensuring work-family balance."

The meeting is convened as part of the preparations for the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014. The Expert Group Meeting will focus on the importance of designing, implementing and monitoring family-oriented policies especially in the areas of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work and work-family balance. The experts will offer recommendations on appropriate policies in these areas.

For more information:

<http://social.un.org/index/Home/tabid/40/news/102/Default.aspx>

Poverty eradication and decent work for all

High Level Expert Group Meeting will be arranged on 20-22 June in Geneva

DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), in close collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), is organizing this event as part of the preparations for the 50th session of the Commission for Social Development, which is scheduled to take place in New York in February 2012.

The meeting is convened in the context of ECOSOC resolution 2010/L.5 in which the Economic and Social Council decided that the priority theme for the 2011-2012 review and policy cycle of the Commission should be "Poverty Eradication, taking into account its relationship to social integration and full employment and decent work for all."

The outcomes of the meeting will provide important inputs to the work of the Commission, in particular contributing to formulation of policies that have been shown to have a major impact on efforts to reduce poverty.

For more information:

<http://social.un.org/index/ExpertGroupMeetingsPanelDiscussions.aspx>

Reviewing responses to global job crisis

Expert Group Meeting on "The Challenge of Building Employment for a Sustainable Recovery" will take place in Geneva on 23-24 June

The meeting aims at providing input to the work of the Commission and at informing ongoing national and international debates on the challenge of building productive employment. It also aims to send a strong message on the importance of promoting job-rich growth to reduce poverty and maintain social cohesion.

It is organized by DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and will bring together specialists to undertake a review of responses to the global jobs crisis in different countries and regions of the world. It will also consider concrete policies and strategies to create productive, decent employment during the recovery.

The meeting has two main objectives:

- To undertake a review of national and international responses to the global jobs crisis, identifying best practices in preserving existing jobs and in generating new, decent jobs, and discussing lessons learned;
- To consider strategies, at the national and international levels, to create productive employment during the recovery as a central strategy for poverty eradication and social integration, so as to assist Member States to adopt policies consistent with the Global Jobs Pact.

For more information, please visit:

<http://social.un.org/index/ExpertGroupMeetingsPanelDiscussions.aspx>

Youth briefings on ICT and education

Two new youth sessions will take place in New York in June highlighting information and communication technology and education

The International Year of Youth briefing events continue to bring attention to different youth issues in the lead up to the High Level Conference on Youth to be held on 25-26 July at UN Headquarters in New York.

DESA's Programme on Youth has two new sessions in the pipeline for June, where one will highlight information and communication technology and the other education.

The Sessions are aimed at Member States, NGOs (with ECOSOC and/or DPI status), and staff members of the UN system. The Sessions will bring together panelists and audience to discuss the most important issues concerning youth in the context of the International Year.

For more information on the briefing:

<http://social.un.org/youthyear/briefings.html>

International Year of Youth Facebook page:

<http://www.facebook.com/UNyouthyear>

Sport as a tool for development

The role of sports in development and its importance for people with disabilities will be highlighted at a panel discussion on "Sport as a tool for development: using sport to foster the inclusion and well-being of persons with disabilities" at UN Headquarters in New York on 27 June

The unique ability of sports to transcend linguistic, cultural and social barriers makes it an excellent platform for strategies of inclusion and adaptation. Furthermore, the universal popularity of sport and its physical, social and economic development benefits make it an ideal tool for fostering the inclusion and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Sport can help reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with disability because it can transform community attitudes about persons with disabilities by highlighting their skills and reducing the tendency to see the disability instead of the person. Through sport, persons without disabilities interact with persons with disabilities in a positive context forcing them to reshape assumptions about what persons with disabilities can and cannot do.

Sport changes the person with disability in an equally profound way by empowering persons with disabilities to realize their full potential and advocate for changes in society. Through sport, persons with disabilities acquire vital social skills, develop independence, and become empowered to act as agents of change. Sport teaches individuals how to communicate effectively as well as the significance of teamwork and cooperation and respect for others. Sport is also well-suited to reducing dependence and developing greater independence by helping persons with disabilities to become physically and mentally stronger.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1563>

Principles and recommendations on Vital Statistics System

Expert Group Meeting on International Standards for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics will take place on 27-30 June in New York

DESA's Statistics Division is organizing an Expert Group Meeting on International Standards for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, which will review the Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System, Rev. 2, published in 2001 by the UN (UN publication, Sales No. E.01.XVII.10).

The essential standard which the Principles and Recommendations promulgates - generating accurate, reliable and regular vital statistics from civil registration system - remains unchanged and valid. However, over the past 10 years several issues emerged that might require revisions and updates of the principles and recommendations, such as the increasing use of population registers as source of vital statistics, advances in modern technologies that have helped some countries in accelerating the improvement of their civil registration and vital statistics systems, and the development of statistical systems in countries.

The meeting will review the Principles and Recommendations for updates and elaborations and propose an outline for the next revision of the recommendations.

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

Transitioning to low-carbon economy

DESA's Division for Sustainable Development and Development Policy and Analysis Division organized an Expert Group Meeting on 19-20 May

The meeting was arranged with the purpose to engage international and national experts in a substantive discussion on appropriate modeling techniques to implement a project titled "Supporting National Government in the Transition to Low-Carbon Development Pathway".

The project aims to assist countries in accelerating the transition to a low-carbon economy through enhancing policymakers' capacity to promote green technologies, including renewable energy development, affordable access to clean energy for the poor, and support to industries and other economic sectors in adopting low-carbon technologies. The project proposes to start with the following group of countries in Southeast Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand.

For more information:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=254&menu=46>

Education makes progress but challenges remain

Regional Ministerial Meeting was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 12-13 May on the theme “Key Education Challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean: Teachers, Quality, and Equity”

The meeting—hosted by the Government of Argentina, in cooperation with UNDESA, UNESCO, UNICEF, and ECLAC—was held in preparation for the 2011 Annual Ministerial Review of ECOSOC. It was attended by a number of education ministers and vice-ministers from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as participants from Governments, regional organizations, the UN system, civil society and the private sector. ECOSOC was represented by Vice-President Ambassador Gonzalo Gutiérrez and Mr. Thomas Stelzer led DESA’s delegation.

Key messages emanating from the discussion include the following: LAC has made significant progress on the education agenda (primary education, gender equality in education, and adult literacy rates), but challenges remain. There is a need to develop strategies to address inequality in access to education and to improve education quality and to include civil society as a key partner in education policy. Bilateral donors and multilateral organization need to better harmonize their agendas and programmes and efforts are needed to promote the educational use of new technologies, as well mechanisms that facilitate the sharing of lessons learned on the use of ICTs in education.

A summary report containing a full list of policy recommendations from the meeting will be presented at the high-level segment of ECOSOC.

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

Capacity Development

Platform for exchange of census data experience

Regional Seminar on Census Data Dissemination and Spatial Analysis for Latin American Countries, will be arranged in Santiago, Chile, on 31 May – 3 June

The Regional Seminar, which is being organized by DESA's Statistics Division in collaboration with ECLAC and UNFPA, will provide a forum for sharing national practices and experiences in the dissemination and use of census data.

It will aid in taking stock of national capacities and challenges for meeting the increasing requirements of census data users as well as review emerging trends, innovative approaches and technological tools employed in the dissemination of census data. Furthermore, the seminar is expected to help in identifying good practices and lessons learned in the dissemination and analysis of census data.

For more information:

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

Institutionalizing water accounts and statistics

Workshop will be held in Pretoria, South Africa on 6-8 June

The objective of the workshop is to provide focalized technical assistance to some countries in southern Africa for the institutionalization of water accounts and statistics. The workshop will be based on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water (SEEA-Water) and the International Recommendations for Water Statistics (IRWS), adopted by the UN Statistics Commission (UNSC).

The workshop will be jointly organized by DESA's Statistics Division and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The participants include experts from the National Statistics Offices and Water Agencies from Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

For more information:

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

Analyzing mortality, housing and the situation of the elderly in Ethiopia

Dissemination of the Analytical Reports of the 2007 Ethiopian Population and Housing Census, June 2011

As a part of the Regional Project to Strengthen National Capacity to Analyse, Present and Disseminate Census Data, and within the framework of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, DESA's Statistics Division is supporting the Central Statistical Agency (CSA) of Ethiopia in conducting in-depth analyses of its 2007 Population and Housing Census.

Four teams comprising the staff of the CSA, national and international experts worked from 11 April to 6 May on four topics selected by CSA: fertility, mortality, housing and the situation of the elderly in Ethiopia.

The final drafts of the analytical reports are ready for professional editing of the language. A dissemination seminar will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the 3rd week of June, where about 300 persons from line ministries, government agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations, UN and other international agencies, the media, academic and research institutes and users in general are expected to attend.

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

Using macro-micro modeling framework in decision-making

DPAD's capacity development project on "Strengthening Macroeconomic and Social Policy Coherence through Integrated Macro-Micro Modelling" was launched through training workshops in Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador with the most recent one taking place in Quito on 10-12 May

Recent UN-DESA studies have revealed that progress toward the MDGs is expected to slow down as a consequence of the global economic downturn as well as high energy and food prices. Lower government revenue and income per capita will lead to reduced public and private spending on social services. It is estimated that the cost of achieving the MDGs will rise by 1.5-2 per cent of GDP, which will require that countries mobilize

additional resources in order to prevent social and economic setbacks.

Given the effects of the global economic crisis, the Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD) has been receiving requests from Governments of several developing countries for capacity development support, as they see it necessary to strengthen their analytical capacity to assess the impacts of the crisis and other external shocks. This would further enable them to design policies and/or request financial support from the international community to help revert the situation and to ensure the timely achievement of the MDGs and its continued sustainability beyond 2015.

Capacities had already been built in almost thirty countries from Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa through projects that UN-DESA/DPAD has completed, covering a wide range of issues from financing strategies to achieve the MDGs, to social protection policies that may help countries alleviate the impact of unfavourable external shocks. These completed studies have helped set up the foundations for pursuing more capacity development efforts.

In response to Governments' requests, DPAD initiated in 2011 the capacity development project "Strengthening Macroeconomic and Social Policy Coherence through Integrated Macro-Micro Modelling", funded by the Development Account, and which will be implemented in close collaboration with other partners including UNDP and the World Bank. It builds on the accumulated work of previous capacity development projects and aims at providing support in strengthening the ability of policy makers to understand and use an integrated macro-micro modelling framework in decision-making.

Integrated macro-micro modelling framework

The integrated macro-micro modelling framework combines an economy-wide model and methodologies at the micro and sectoral levels. At the core is a special module which specifies the main determinants of MDG achievement and the direct impact of enhanced public expenditures on MDG-related infrastructure and services. It also shows how the financing of these may affect the economy at large and the feasibility to achieve targets on poverty reduction, primary education, maternal mortality and access to safe water and basic sanitation. As part of one of the project's pilot studies, the framework will be extended to incorporate targets for MDG 6 on combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases in countries where this is relevant.

Inception workshops for institutional capacity building

The project was launched through inception training workshops in Honduras, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador. The most recent workshop took place in Quito, on 10-12 May. The main objective of these workshops has been to present the macro-micro modelling

framework and to brainstorm on the key policy questions to be addressed, data challenges and design a work plan. In addition, the institutional arrangements for project implementation have been discussed with the Governments, with a view to form an inter-institutional technical team to be trained in the application of the modelling tool.

Upcoming activities

Inception workshops are scheduled to be conducted in the second half of 2011 in Costa Rica, Philippines, Kyrgyzstan and Uganda. At the same time, follow-up training workshop will be organized for the other four countries.

By the end of the project in 2013, it is envisaged that three intensive training workshops and technical backstopping from DPAD for each of the participating countries would have been completed. In addition, a methodological toolkit will be transferred to the Governments with a view to initiate a policy dialogue in support of policy making.

For more information:

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

Publications and Websites

Technical reports



World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) mid-2011 update

The World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) as of mid-2011 was launched on 25 May and highlights that the recovery of the global economy remains intact but uneven, with strong output growth in developing countries and a weaker economic performance in developed countries. At the same time, new headwinds have emerged, such as upward pressure on inflation rates due to higher energy and food prices and continued appreciation pressure on emerging market currencies.

It further analyses a number of risks, including problems regarding the sustainability of public finances in developed economies, the remaining vulnerability of the private financial sector, continued high and volatile commodity prices and the possible collapse of the United States dollar. In the area of policy making, the report highlights numerous challenges such as how to time the unwinding of fiscal support, the redesign of fiscal policy to promote employment and sustainable development, greater synergy between monetary and fiscal policy, the provision of sufficient funding to developing countries and more effective international policy coordination.

For more information:

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

World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision

The 2010 Revision of the World Population Prospects is the twenty-second round of global demographic estimates and projections undertaken by the Population Division of DESA. The world population prospects are used widely throughout the UN and by many international organizations, research centers, academic researchers and the media.

This new revision was released on 3 May and key findings and projections were presented at a press conference in New York by Hania Zlotnik, Director of DESA's Population Division. Among other things, projections show that the number of people inhabiting the planet is expected to pass the 10 billion mark by 2100. Ms. Zlotnik also stated that unlike past reports, this one includes projections for all countries and regions of the world up to 2100. She said the new and more complex method used to project

fertility took countries' past experiences more into account in order to chart future fertility paths.

Ms. Zlotnik also said that the world population was projected to increase to 7 billion towards the end of the year and that while the world had not collapsed under the billions of new people, the poorest countries were experiencing the highest rates of population growth.

The next revision is due in the first part of 2013.

For more information: <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm>

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 bimonthly basis, are presented along with the regular recurrent monthly tables: Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of UN officials, Civil aviation traffic: passenger km and cargo net ton km, Total exports and imports by countries or areas: volume, unit value, terms of trade and purchasing power of exports, in US dollars.

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

Updated Environmental Indicators on the Web

DESA's Statistics Division (UNSD) publishes global environment statistics through two main web-based products, UNSD Environmental Indicators and Country Snapshots. The environmental indicators in the areas of Air and Climate; Biodiversity; Energy and Minerals; Forests; Governance; Inland Water Resources; Land and Agriculture; Marine and Coastal Areas; Natural Disasters; and Waste have been recently updated.

Statistics on Water and Waste are based on official statistics supplied by national statistical offices and/or ministries of environment (or equivalent institutions) in response to the biennial UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics, complemented with comparable statistics from OECD and Eurostat, and water resources data from FAO Aquastat. Statistics on the other themes were compiled by UNSD from other international sources.

The updated Environmental Indicators, published in the form of indicator and time series tables, charts, along with maps, are available at:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/environment/qindicators.htm>

Publications in other languages

The following publications are now available in other languages:

- International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Supplement to the Compilers Manual ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/87/Add.1 (Spanish, Chinese)
- Designing Household Survey Samples: Practical Guidelines ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/98 (Chinese).

For more information: <https://unp.un.org/>

Meeting records

DSD officially launched “Synergies Success Stories,” a joint publication of DESA and the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, UNEP and FAO at the High-level Segment of CSD-19. An electronic version of the publication, as well as the websites of relevant conventions, was posted on the Commission's website.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml

Newsletters

Rio+20: Making it Happen

The latest issue of the newsletter, Volume 2, Issue 9, features a Nordic Council side-event held at CSD-19, which focused on the role of women in the economy and the importance of engaging civil society and to create a sustainable future. Among other issues, reports and events, it also highlights the upcoming thematic debate of the UN General Assembly on the “green economy” on 2 June

and the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Amazon, Congo, and Borneo-Mekong Forest Basins in the Republic of Congo on 31 May to 3 June.

For more information:

http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Vol%20%20Issue%209%2017%20May_Revised%20II.pdf

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects

The monthly briefing states that the International oil prices increased further amidst continued unrest in the Middle East, the US dollar fell to historic lows and many emerging and developing countries are tightening monetary policies.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/policy/publications/dpad_wespmbn.html

Working papers

Adapting the international monetary system to face 21st century challenges

Recent calls for more intense debate on and reforms to the international monetary system imply that the current system is unable to respond appropriately and adequately to challenges that have appeared, or become more acute, in recent years.

This paper focuses on four such challenges: ensuring an orderly exit from global imbalances, facilitating more complementary adjustments between surplus and deficit countries without recessionary impacts, better supporting international trade by reducing currency volatility and better providing development and climate finance. After describing them, it proposes reforms to enable the international monetary system to better respond to these challenges.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/papers/2011/index.shtml>

Credit to Private Sector, Interest Spread and Volatility in Credit-Flows: Do Bank Ownership and Deposits Matter?

With bank-level data from 81 developing countries, this paper shows that increased foreign bank presence is associated with increased reliance on non-deposit based funding, which leads to higher interest rate spreads, less credit to the private sector, and higher volatility in bank loans.

Foreign bank entry significantly reduces domestic banks' share of deposits while foreign banks typically allocate less of their assets and deposits to lending. As domestic banks lose their deposit base, they rely on non-deposit based funding, but its higher costs and uncertainty force domestic banks to reduce their lending activities.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/papers/2011/index.shtml>

Website



Redesigned website of DESA's Social Policy and Development Division

A new and improved DSPD website is now available. The new website delivers important innovations both in terms of content and technological enhancements. The site reflects DESA's work in social development and its outreach. Through the new site, both existing users and new visitors can gain a greater understanding of the Division's activities and achievements in promoting social development for all.

To browse: <http://social.un.org/index/>



United Nations Enable on Facebook

A new Facebook page, United Nations Enable has been launched to help users of this social network find out more about the work of the United Nations for persons with disabilities.

To browse:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/United-Nations-Enable/196545623691523>

Comings and Goings

Comings



Ms. Daniela Bas was appointed Director of DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development on 9 May 2011. A politologist specialized in international politics, human rights and social development, Ms. Bas has most recently served as Senior Consultant designated by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as expert on human rights to Institutes that operate internationally. She has also provided her expertise on anti-discrimination issues at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Ms. Bas has worked for close to 10 years for the UN as a Professional Officer in social development and human rights, traveling around the world on behalf of the UN and also as a speaker at international conventions. She has also held a number of other significant assignments including as Special Adviser on "Fundamental Rights" for the former Vice President of the European Commission; as the Italian representative designated by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the topic "Tourism for All" to the European Commission; and as journalist and broadcaster for Italian Radio and TV.

Ms. Bas is a Board Member of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and of the Committee to Promote non-Armed and non-Violent Civil Defense of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. She graduated in Political Science in 1985, with a major in International Politics and wrote a dissertation on "The elimination of architectural barriers and the employment of people with physical disabilities".

The following staff members were promoted in May:

Ursula Germann, Programme Officer, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Luis Collantes, Computer Information Systems Assistant, Division for Social Policy and Development

Goings

The following staff members retired in May:

Alexei Tikhomirov, Adviser, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Calendar

June

Regional Seminar on Census Data Dissemination and Spatial Analysis for Latin American Countries

Santiago, Chile, 31 May – 3 June

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

Expert Group Meeting on assessing family policies

New York, 1-3 June

<http://social.un.org/index/Home/tabid/40/news/102/Default.aspx>

UNFF Forest Film Festival receives European Film Award

Turin, 5 June

www.forestfilmfestival.org

Workshop on Institutionalizing water accounts and statistics

Pretoria, South Africa, 6-8 June

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

General Assembly panel discussions to highlight MDGs and development agenda beyond 2015

New York, 14 June

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

High-Level Expert Group Meeting on poverty eradication

Geneva, 20-22 June

<http://social.un.org/index/ExpertGroupMeetingsPanelDiscussions.aspx>

Expert Group Meeting on “The Challenge of Building Employment for a Sustainable Recovery”

Geneva, 23-24 June

<http://social.un.org/index/ExpertGroupMeetingsPanelDiscussions.aspx>

The 2011 UN Public Service Day, Awards Ceremony and Forum

Dar es Salam, Tanzania, 20-23 June

<http://www.unpan.org/unpsa>

Panel Discussion on Sport as a tool for development: Using Sport to Foster the Inclusion and Well-Being of Persons with Disabilities

New York, 27 June

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1563>

Expert Group Meeting on International Standards for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics

New York, 27-30 June

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm>

July

Substantive Session of the Economic and Social Council

Geneva, 4 - 29 July

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/substantive2011/index.shtml>

International Day of Cooperatives

4 July

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlCoops/index.html>

High Level Meeting on Youth

New York, 25-26 July

<http://social.un.org/youthyear/high-level-meeting.html>

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.