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Serving the well-being of future generations

DESA News got an exclusive interview with the department's new Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Wu Hongbo, who took office on 1 August, bringing over 30 years of experience from leadership roles in international relations and diplomacy. Prior to joining DESA, Mr. Wu was the Ambassador of China to Germany.



A veteran diplomat with broad diplomatic experience, Mr. Wu will guide DESA's normative, analytical and capacity development

work, especially as it advances towards a post-2015 development framework with sustainable development at its core.

Sharing first impressions

With energy and enthusiasm, Mr. Wu talked about his first weeks in DESA, getting to know his staff and the many and varied issues handled by the department. "We have over 500 staff, all of whom are very dedicated, talented and intelligent and hard-working. They have rich experience and knowledge and I am very much impressed by the quality of the staff," he said. Mr. Wu also praised the atmosphere, saying that it is characterized by "coordination, cooperation and harmony".

Discussing the responsibilities and mandates of DESA, Mr. Wu noted "DESA covers very extensive ground. I think almost all the social and economic development areas are wholly or partially responsibilities of this department," he said. "We are facing a lot of challenges. Together, all of us in DESA can make a difference for the future."

Vision and priority areas for DESA

Well-informed of the Rio+20 outcome document, Mr. Wu said, "One thing is very clear. We as an international community are at a very critical juncture in our social and economic development". He discussed the importance of pushing forward on implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but at the same time pointed to the emergence of new challenges. "During the past few years, we have witnessed a lot of new challenges, for instance shortage of energy, the food crisis, shortage of clean water and drinking water, which all point to an essential issue: whether we are going to have sustainable development or not."

Mr. Wu underscored that sustainable development – with its three interlinked dimensions of social and economic

development, and environmental protection – is foremost on his list of priorities for the department. “It is also the top priority of the Secretary-General and the United Nations,” he added.

Regarding specific tasks of the department, Mr. Wu elaborated on the three integral components of DESA’s work: analytical, normative; and capacity development. “In these three areas we have strong and rich experiences, and we have a lot of expertise.”

Mr. Wu discussed the importance of ensuring high-quality analytical reports of the department, providing “Member States with policy advice that would ensure future sustainability”. In terms of DESA’s normative work, Mr. Wu explained, “we are talking about economic global governance, we are talking about the changing situation, we are talking about a lot of challenges.” He also underscored DESA’s strength when it comes to normative work as well as the importance of capacity development, linking policy plans and capabilities at the country level.

Keeping the momentum beyond 2015

DESA is fully engaged in promoting and supporting the emergence of a solid and ambitious post-2015 development agenda. DESA has established a department-wide task force and is also leading, jointly with UNDP, the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN development agenda, established by the Secretary-General. DESA News asked Mr. Wu how he believes the world community can keep the momentum beyond the MDGs target date.

“Certainly it is a rather complex issue. I think the awareness of the need for sustainable development, post-2015, is there.” Mr. Wu said. However, he also explained that when talking with Prime Ministers and other stakeholders, the question is often raised how the outcome document of Rio+20 can be implemented. “I think the point has been stressed by many PRs from developing countries, the vulnerable countries in particular, that efforts should not be relaxed, we should push forward strongly, to implement as much as possible the MDGs.”

Mr. Wu also shared that he is sometimes asked questions on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where representatives seek a clearer picture of the way forward. “SDGs will be at the core of the post-2015 UN development agenda”, he said.

Mr. Wu emphasized the importance of informing Member States in a timely manner and providing them with sufficient materials and information. DESA and other agencies involved in the development agenda have a vital role to play.

“If you want to keep the momentum of the Member States and the international community in forming sustainable development for the future, we need successful coordination of efforts within the UN system,” he said. In this context, Mr. Wu praised the fact that there is both a UN system wide Task Team, as well as a departmental task force on the development agenda already in place.

“I believe the momentum for sustainable development is there. We will do our best to push this programme and the process forward,” said Mr. Wu.

Mr. Wu expressed confidence in the world community’s ability to keep the momentum beyond the MDGs target date. “If we do our job well, I think we will be successful,” he said, adding, “I think all DESA colleagues share my wish, that what we are doing today, in the next few years, will serve the well-being and the happiness of our future generations.”

For more information:

[For the full interview with Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs](#)

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

A digital bridge to civil society

“Our times demand (...) a new constellation of international cooperation – governments, civil society and the private sector, working together for a collective global good”. In line with this statement of the UN Secretary-General, DESA and its UN partners continue to enhance their services to civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) across the globe.



Civil society and non-governmental organizations play a vital role as partners to the UN in implementing development goals and assisting people at the local level in countries all over the world. They are also important collaborators and contributors to major UN Conferences and summits. This was last seen in June at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, when some 17,000 representatives registered to participate in the conference.

The relationship between DESA, civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs is not a new one. It dates back to the late 1940s, when the UN had 41 organizations in consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This number has increased considerably over the years and the

department's NGO Branch, which is part of DESA's Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, is now serving some 3,500 organizations around the world in consultative status with ECOSOC.

The NGO Branch provides organizations with information about events and opportunities to collaborate with the UN and it also handles intergovernmental support, servicing the Committee on NGOs, as well as conference registration through the web platform CSONet.org.

"Engaging with the UN system is now less complicated thanks to CSONet. Amidst diverse demands, timely and accurate information gets things done," says Joseph Cornelius Donnelly, Head of the International Delegation to the UN, CARITAS Internationalis. "We are at UN Headquarters to bring the living voices of those we serve to Member States and UN colleagues. Effective advocacy is strengthened by this tool. Every voice counts! It's imperative to know clearly where, when, what and how to speak, meet, consult at the UN," explains Mr. Donnelly.

"We offer a central platform, giving NGOs and civil society the necessary information to be able to connect with the UN, the international development community and other relevant stakeholders," says Andrei Abramov, Chief of the NGO Branch. "We also have a response system," Mr. Abramov explains, "if an organization has an inquiry, it is our goal to respond within 48 hours".

Mr. Abramov also highlights the online newsletter, reaching 6,000 subscribing organizations every month with relevant information updates. The related Twitter account has some 1,500 followers, many of them civil society professionals with a key interest in the daily meetings at UN Headquarters.

New tools to serve important relationship

It is not only the number of organizations that have changed over the years. With the creation in 2008 of its integrated Civil Society Organizations (iCSO) System, DESA and other UN agencies have considerably developed its services towards civil society. Developed by DESA, this interactive database has been designed to share knowledge with up-to-date information and to provide a powerful communication tool facilitating interaction between CSOs and the UN.

Through the iCSO system, organizations register their information and also access information about other organizations and their projects. They can also sign up for ground passes to access the UN compounds in New York, Geneva and Vienna and the system also allows the organizations with an ECOSOC consultative status to submit their quadrennial reports.

Database represents NGOs from 180 countries

In the beginning of 2009, when the online database had just been launched, there were 12,000 organizations listed. Since then, 14,000 organizations have gone online and registered to participate

in the database, making the current number of organizations totaling more than 26,000 from 180 countries. With 6,344 registrations, Africa is the continent with most organizations represented, followed by Asia with 4,438 NGOs listed. The majority of organizations are active within the economic and social fields, followed by sustainable development.

The Branch has a long history of using technology for facilitating NGO access to the UN. In 2002, it launched the Paperless Committee system, the first web-based portal to be used by Member States in official UN events. The initiative earned the Branch a UN 21 Award in 2008. It allows the Committee to review hundreds of applications of reports by NGOs annually. A "2.0" version was introduced last year.

Over the past three years, the event registration system has been further developed and a growing number of UN offices are using it to facilitate the collaboration with civil society and NGOs. As the documentation is now available online, it has also resulted in a paperless work process, in line with the UN's "PaperSmart" initiative.

Another benefit with this system is that it makes conference preparations easier. "Prior to major conferences like Rio+20, we know how many people to expect and what to prepare for," explains Andrei Abramov. In 2011, approximately 15,000 representatives registered for some 20 UN events in New York, Geneva and Bonn. The figure for 2012 will be much higher, with over 10,000 participants taking part in Rio+20 alone.

Serving grass root organizations in Africa

In Africa, thanks to an increasing availability of internet access, developing a tool that allows NGOs to register online via a website has become more and more relevant. In the past, the NGO database was in fact just a static directory with irregular updates. The accuracy of the data was a real issue. Having linked its database (2,044 NGOs) to the platform developed by DESA, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA), expects that a growing number of NGOs will register on-line and update their details.

The database is fully operational since 1 September and now requires to be publicized widely. As a result of the partnership with DESA, OSAA has provided the translation in French of all the content of the iCSO platform. That service will be much appreciated by a large number of NGOs for which French is their main language of communication. From what used to be a static directory, OSAA's new database has been turned into a dynamic and state of the art search tool, helping the most demanding in search of NGOs active in Africa.

"The world is keen to know about the work of civil society organizations in African countries and this system gives access to updated and accurate information about NGOs working close to people's needs in Africa," explains Mieke Ikegame, Chief of Coordination of OSAA's Advocacy and Policy Development Unit.

Ms. Ikegame also underscores that this system gives local African organizations an increased access to the international development community. “When preparing our mandated Secretary-General Reports, we will be able, for example, to use this platform to reach out to stakeholders at the grass root level so that their voices could be reflected in these UN documents, says Ms. Ikegame.

As the world community faces new and emerging challenges, the UN will continue working side by side with civil society across the globe. Developing effective and user-friendly tools for knowledge-exchange and information-sharing is part of this effort, promoting enhanced collaboration for the collective good and for a sustainable future.

For more information:

[DESA’s NGO Branch](#)

[Daily civil society updates on Twitter](#)

[iCSO](#)

[Working with ECOSOC: an NGOs Guide to Consultative Status](#)

[United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa](#)

Building the future we want

On 24 September, ECOSOC arranged a special meeting under the theme ‘Building the Future We Want’ focusing on sustainable development. “Rio+20 has given us a solid platform to build on, and the tools to build with. Now is the time to follow up, to get down to work, to get practical. There is no time to waste,” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.



The gathering was a follow up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Brazil in June, during which world leaders acknowledged the importance of an inclusive, transparent, strengthened and effective multilateral system to better address the urgent global challenges of sustainable development.

To help shape the conversation at the meeting, DESA and the Department of Public Information launched a global forum on Facebook and Twitter on 12-24 September, collecting input and questions from the online community. The forum generated a high level of participation and engagement for which the ECOSOC President ECOSOC President, Miloš Koterec extended special thanks.

DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo, also addressed the meeting saying that ECOSOC – through its work to promote international dialogue on global trends and policymaking on a range of issues, including population and development, as well as the environment – is well-placed to continue its leadership position in the area of sustainable development.

Attended by Government ministers and other relevant actors from around the world, the meeting was centred on an expert panel discussion and an interactive dialogue on strengthening the multilateral system for sustainable development, and a better integration of related economic, social and environmental dimensions.

[ECOSOC Special Ministerial Meeting](#)

[UN News story on the meeting](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

Meeting the needs of older persons

International Day of Older Persons on 1 October will be celebrated under the theme “Longevity: Shaping the Future” with events in Geneva on 1 October and New York on 10 October

On 14 December 1990, the United Nations General Assembly designated 1 October the International Day of Older Persons. This was preceded by initiatives such as the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing – which was adopted by the 1982 World Assembly on Ageing – and endorsed later that year by the UN General Assembly.

In 1991, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Principles for Older Persons and in 2002, the Second World Assembly on Ageing adopted the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, to respond to the opportunities and challenges of population ageing in the 21st century and to promote the development of a society for all ages.

For last year’s commemoration, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated, “In the current fiscal environment, we must be vigilant in ensuring that the provision of social protection, long-term care and access to public health for the elderly is not undermined. On this International Day of Older Persons, I call on governments and communities everywhere to provide more opportunities for their ageing populations.”

For more information:
[International Day of Older Persons](#)

Second Committee announces six special events

The Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee) of the General Assembly will address a wide range of issues under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. George Wilfred Talbot from Guyana as it begins its working session on 8 October

The agenda of the Second Committee features a general debate followed by a broad range of agenda items on topics including groups of countries in special situations, globalization and interdependence, macroeconomic policy questions, sustainable development, financing for development and the eradication of poverty. The Committee will also address agricultural development and food security, and the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

During the the first meeting of the Committee which was held on 21 September, Mr. Modest Jonathan Mero of the United Republic of Tanzania was elected as Vice-Chair from the African States group. The rest of the bureau is composed by representatives from Bangladesh, Mr. Tauhedul Islam, and from Italy, Mr. Stefano Stefanile. The Rapporteur is Ms. Aida Hodzic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The chair informed the Committee of the distribution of responsibilities within the bureau and discussed the programme of work.

The chair also announced six special events proposed by the bureau of the Second Committee:

- Lessons learned from debt crises and ongoing work on sovereign debt restructuring and debt resolution mechanisms;
- Science, technology and innovation: a new development paradigm;
- The challenges of countries under special situations/The special challenges of middle-income countries;
- Follow up to Rio+20 on sustainable development goals;
- Entrepreneurship for development; and
- Migration and development: causes and impacts.

As in previous years, the general debate will be preceded by a keynote address by a prominent economist, Professor James Robinson from Harvard University. The Chair also announced a joint briefing of the Committee and ECOSOC by the Project Link Partnership; a joint meeting between the Committee and ECOSOC on food security and nutrition; and the possibility of a joint meeting of the Second and Third Committees on a topic of mutual interest that would benefit the work of both Committees.

The Chair highlighted that the target date for the conclusion of the work of the Committee is 30 November.

For more information:
[The Economic and Financial Committee \(Second Committee\) of the General Assembly](#)

A show of support to eradicate poverty

The General Assembly has declared 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and invites all states to devote the day to presenting and promoting concrete activities with regard to the eradication of poverty

The observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty can be traced back to 17 October 1987. On that day, over a hundred thousand people gathered at the Trocadéro in Paris, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, to honour the victims of extreme poverty, violence and hunger. They proclaimed that poverty is a violation

of human rights and affirmed the need to come together to ensure that these rights are respected.

These convictions are inscribed in a commemorative stone unveiled on this day. Since then, people of all backgrounds, beliefs and social origins have gathered every year on 17 October to renew their commitment and show their solidarity with the poor. Replicas of the commemorative stone have been unveiled around the world and serve as a gathering place to celebrate the Day. One such replica is located in the garden of United Nations Headquarters and is the site of the annual commemoration organized by the United Nations Secretariat in New York.

In 1992, the General Assembly declared 17 October as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and invited all States to devote the Day to presenting and promoting concrete activities with regard to the eradication of poverty and destitution. The General Assembly resolution further invites intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to assist states, at their request, in organizing national activities for the observance of the Day, and requests the Secretary-General to take, within existing resources, the measures necessary to ensure the success of the Day's observance by the United Nations.

17 October presents an opportunity to acknowledge the effort and struggle of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard, and a moment to recognize that poor people are the first ones to fight poverty. Participation of the poor themselves has been at the center of the Day's celebration since its very beginning. The commemoration of 17 October also reflects the willingness of people living in poverty to use their expertise to contribute to the eradication of poverty.

For more information:
[International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#)

Promoting everyday heroes, sustaining forests for people

On the eve of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly, DESA's UN Forum on Forests Secretariat launched a video series showcasing the inspiring work of the UNFF Forest Heroes award winners

The Forest Heroes Award programme was part of the International Year of Forests 2011 (Forests 2011) celebration. Six Forest Heroes awards were given to eight remarkable individuals from around the world at the closing ceremony of the International Year of Forests in February 2012.

Jan McAlpine, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat and member of the jury, said the UNFF Forest Heroes Awards programme was created to honour individuals around the world who are heroically dedicating their lives to forests. "Each of us, all 7 billion people, has our physical, economic and spiritual

health tied to forests. The Forest Heroes embody the compelling message that everyday people can effect positive change for forests everywhere."

The award winners are from different parts of the world, of different ages, and impact diverse forests in their own ways. Africa's Mr. Paul Mzeka is a 78-year-old bee farmer in Cameroon; Asia's Mr. Shigeatsu Hatakeyama farms oysters in eastern Japan that was devastated by the 2011 tsunami; Europe's Mr. Anatoly Lebedev advocates for Siberian forests and indigenous tigers; Latin America's Mr. Paulo Adario campaigns for rainforests and the forest-dependant communities in the Brazilian Amazon; and North America's Ms. Rhiannon Tomtishen and Ms. Madison Vorva are Girl Scouts from the USA working to raise awareness on the impact of palm oil production on rainforests. In addition, a special award was given posthumously to Mr. José Claudio Ribeiro and Ms. Maria do Espírito Santo, two dedicated advocates in Brazil who were tragically murdered while trying to protect the Amazon forests.

For more information:
[The Forest Heroes Programme and the International Year of Forests](#)
[Click here to view videos](#)

Big turn-out to advance rights of persons with disabilities

The Fifth Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was held on 12-14 September at UN Headquarters in New York

More than 750 participants attended the opening of the Conference on 12 September, which featured remarks by H.E. Ambassador Marten Grunditz (Sweden), President of the Conference, Mr. Wu Hongbo, DESA's Under-Secretary-General and H.E. Moreno Lenin, Vice President of Ecuador, as well as by representatives from OHCHR and civil society organizations.

Under the theme: "Making the CRPD count for Children and Women", the three-day Conference featured a series of activities, including the election of nine members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, two roundtable sessions, one informal panel discussion, one interactive dialogue with the UN system and a general debate segment.

Two roundtable and one informal panel discussions were organized around three topics – "technology and accessibility", "children with disabilities", and "women with disabilities". Four background papers were developed by DESA to facilitate interactive discussions among the panelists and the participants with a view to promote disability-inclusive development and explore how to increase the efforts toward inclusive and sustainable development for equitable and just society, through

implementation of the Convention, giving special attention to the perspectives of gender and women, as well as children. Another focus of these discussions was around how to tap the potential of technologies to further ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society and development.

The general debate had around 50 States inscribed for the speakers' list, including many at ministerial levels. Due to time constraints, 17 requests could not be accommodated. Although it is a conference of States Parties, signatories and other observers actively participate in all aspects of the agenda of this very unique global forum. The Conference helps realize the goal of the United Nations' work in the field of disability that is: the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development, as both agents and beneficiaries.

During the Conference, 34 side-events were organized by Governments, UN system organizations, academic institutions, international and bi-lateral development agencies, and national human rights institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities.

A number of features, such as official documentation in Braille, an accessible UN Enable website, a PaperSmart portal for documents and statements, real time CART transcription (closed captioning), sign language interpretation and webcasting, were included at the Conference, with a view to promoting and facilitating the broadest participation possible. The Enable Daily Bulletin from the Conference was distributed to over 9000 subscribers. Highlights and news about the Conference was also broadcast through social networking media including Facebook and Twitter, via live information from the Conference floor.

The Conference of State Parties has now become one of the largest and key global forums, where stakeholders gather together to discuss experiences and innovative ideas to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and disability-inclusive policies and programmes towards building a just, equitable and inclusive society for all.

DESA, as the Secretariat for the Conference of States Parties, supported all aspects of the work of the Conference, in collaboration with OLA and OHCHR.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted by the General Assembly in 2006. The Convention has received strong support from Member States, 153 of which have ratified or acceded to it to date. Many States are now focusing on implementation, and advances are being made in harmonizing national legislation, policies and practices with the Convention.

At the same time, it has been increasingly recognized that disability has not been adequately included in development efforts. To address this situation, the General Assembly has decided to convene a High-level Meeting on Disability and Development on 23 September 2013 so that the international community can take a

concerted action toward a disability-inclusive post-2015 development framework.

For more information: [UN Enable](#)

Trends and Analysis

With a focus on trade statistics

A Regional Workshop on International Trade Statistics: Implementation of IMTS 2010 and a new vision for trade statistics will be held on 1-5 October in San Jose, Costa Rica

This workshop is organized by DESA's Statistics Division in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC) of Costa Rica which is hosting this event.

The focus of the workshop will be on the updated and new recommendations for International Merchandise Trade Statistics (IMTS) as contained in International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010 (IMTS 2010) and their implementation within the countries of Latin America. Particular attention will be given to the elements of the recommendations that provide additional information and that aim at the further development of the merchandise trade statistics in countries (or areas).

For more information:

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

Cooperation on international tax matters

Eighth Session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters will be held on 15-19 October at the Palais des Nations in Geneva

The main focus of the session will be the Practical Manual on Transfer Pricing for Developing Countries, which will be presented for adoption by the Committee. The session will also address other important areas, such as tax treatment of services, revision of the Manual for the Negotiation of Bilateral Tax Treaties between Developed and Developing Countries and capacity building in national tax systems.

For more information:

[Eighth Session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters](#)

Supporting statistics for improved policy-making

Seminar on developing a programme for the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) and supporting statistics in Southern Africa will take place in Pretoria, South Africa on 17-19 October

DESA's Statistics Division in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), is organizing a seminar on "Developing a programme for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics in Southern Africa".

The objective of the seminar is to assist Southern African countries with initiating the formulation of a national strategy and implementation programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting system-wide socio-economic statistics with the objective of strengthening the national statistical system in support of improved policy-making. It is expected that this initiative would lead to a multi-year statistical programme to move the countries over to the 2008 SNA and to establish a minimum common data set of annual and high frequency statistics.

For more information:

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

Global monitoring of Millennium Development Goals

The 22nd Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on MDG Indicators will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 31 October

The meeting is part of the yearly consultation with national experts and international agencies to review and discuss issues related to the global MDG monitoring. This IAEG meeting will focus on: lessons learned from MDG monitoring in the last decade, options to exchange data/metadata to update the MDG global database, and MDG-related statistical capacity needs at the country level.

For more information:

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

World e-Parliament Conference 2012

The World e-Parliament Conference 2012, co-organized by the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, took place in Rome at the Chamber of Deputies of Italy in Rome on 13 – 15 September

The meeting was the fifth of a series of conferences that were previously held in Geneva (2007), Brussels (2008), Washington D.C. (2009) and Johannesburg (2010). More than 110 parliamentary delegations from 90 countries attended the event where good practices were analysed and latest trends and

institutional developments discussed by Speakers, members of parliament, parliamentary staff and experts.

During the Conference the high-level Board of the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament convened its sixth meeting. The Board acknowledged the significant role that the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament has played since its creation in 2006.

“We want to see the Global Centre extend its efforts to gather and share the latest knowledge on the use of ICT in parliaments. We would like the Global Centre to reinforce its role as a hub for parliaments, working in partnership with other organizations, to build ICT capacity. To achieve this, however, the Global Centre will require financial and other resources. We therefore call on countries and partners to provide continued support and cooperation to the Global Centre. For its part, the Board will strengthen its representativeness, visibility and leadership in advancing the objectives of the Global Centre.” (ref: excerpt from the Board Proceedings).

The conference also provided the opportunity to officially present the World e-Parliament Report 2012, which draws attention to the newest technology trends and the persistent digital divide between parliaments in countries according to income and infrastructure level, and calls upon parliaments that have developed advanced use of technology to continue to share their know-how and tools with other parliaments.

It was highly symbolic that the closing day of the World e-Parliament Conference coincided with the International Day of Democracy as over the last six years the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament demonstrated the natural link between democracy, parliaments and new technologies.

The observance was celebrated by the formal launch of a ‘Declaration on Parliamentary Openness’ and by a concluding session on “tolerance and peace” to which participated the President of the IPU, the Speakers of the National Assembly of Niger, the Council of States of Sudan, the National Assembly of Suriname, the House of Representatives of Malaysia and the Senate of Trinidad and Tobago, together with the Vice Presidents of the Senate of Italy, the Chamber of Deputies of Italy, the House of Representatives of Nigeria, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy and the ASG of DESA.

For more information:

[DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management \(DPADM\)](#)

Experts answer online questions on empowerment

On the second day of the expert group meeting on empowerment taking place in New York on 10-12 September, it was time for the experts to answer questions from DESA’s online community

“The questions were sound, they were provocative, they reflected concerns,” said John Mathiason of Cornell University, commending the engagement and participation on Facebook and Twitter. “This is actually quite precedent setting. The UN has not done this before. One interesting thing about empowerment is that you got to engage participation. When people both looked at Facebook and made their presentations on Facebook, Twitter and the survey, they were actually demonstrating that you can have empowerment of people who are far away,” Mr. Mathiason added.

More than 20 experts from all over the world gathered in New York this week to focus on how to empower people to eradicate poverty and to promote social integration and decent work for all. They represented various organizations including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Finland, the Institute of Development Studies from the UK, Human Sciences Research Council in South Africa, Youth Development and Civil Society in Jordan, NGO Committee for Social Development, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, FAO and ILO.

“Empowerment is critical to poverty eradication and to development. Indeed, I would even say that any long-term solution to poverty must start with empowerment,” said DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo at the opening of the expert group meeting on 10 September.

Leading up to the meeting, DESA and its Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) opened an online forum on Facebook to collect input and questions on empowerment from across the globe. And the engagement level was high.

“How are people aware that they are empowered?” read one of the questions. Mr. Clem McCartney of Club de Madrid, answered, “It is important that we have a sense that we can pursue our aspirations, not necessarily that we can achieve them, but that we can pursue them, with that sense I think we have the beginning of being empowered”, he said, also underscoring the importance of people feeling that they are being listened to.

Ms. Deepa Narayan, Advisor on poverty, gender and development, highlighted the importance of the right to choose and having access to information. “If a woman doesn’t have information about the availability of contraceptives, there is no way she can choose to spread out the birth of her children, or to stop having children”, she said. Ms. Narayan also discussed the right to negotiate. “It is not just a passive receiving of information, but actively using this information to negotiate changes that impact poverty.”

Concerns were raised via the online forum bringing to light the challenge to empower people if social services, budget allocation, in developing countries are cut. Ms. Sylvia Beales from HelpAge International in the UK, responded saying, “people can feel their power by organizing to get information, by

organizing to know what exactly is available, and to seek change and to self-help.” She also mentioned that there are many examples around the world of citizens monitoring, which involves people organizing and negotiating for change.

These were only a few examples of the questions answered during the meeting, arranged as part of the preparations for the 51st session of the Commission for Social Development, scheduled to take place in February 2013. For the full question and answer session with the experts, check out the video posted with this story and the social media Q&A.

It is clear judging from the online engagement level that the question of empowerment is close to peoples’ hearts. Mr. Wu Hongbo also underscored its significance as he addressed the meeting, “going forward, let us be very clear: Empowerment is a key means to achieving sustainable development and other vital goals. But it also has a value in and of itself. We must not lose sight of the need to empower all individuals and groups on our shared planet.”

For more information:

[Expert Group Meeting on Promoting People’s Empowerment Social Media Q&A](#)
[United Nations Social Development Network](#)
[DESA on Youtube](#)

Capacity development

Using data for transparency, accountability and collaboration

Workshop on Next Stage in Open Government Data: Using Data for Transparency, Accountability and Collaboration will be organized in Cape Town, South Africa on 10-12 October

The workshop is arranged by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) and co-organized with the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) of the South African Ministry of Public Administration in conjunction with the annual United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN)-Southern African Development Community (SADC) Partners Meeting of CPSI. Taking place in Cape Town, South Africa, the workshop will focus on “Next Stage in Open Government Data: Using Data for Transparency, Accountability and Collaboration”.

Open government data (OGD) is strongly linked with DPADM’s work areas as it is an online service by governments (electronic and mobile government) and an important initiative to strengthen participatory governance, which allows citizens to monitor data streams and thereby monitor the government (transparency, corruption). It also allows citizens to be aware of important issues and to be part of the decision-making process to address policy issues (citizen engagement, e-participation).

Aware of the emerging trends in the area of open data and challenges in legal, institutional and technical frameworks, DPADM is in the process of developing a toolkit on OGD which serves as an entry point for those UN Member States who plan to share data with their constituents. The toolkit includes strategies for opening government data, templates that governments can customize for their own needs, technologies for opening data, recommendations about the data hosting applications and platforms. In summary, step by step instructions for public officials interested in sharing government data online.

During the workshop, participants, mostly from developing countries and particularly from Africa, will be trained not only on how to utilize technologies to publish their datasets, but also on the next steps after publishing government data to ensure that the effort in publishing data leads to its effective usage. Most inspiring examples from leading countries will be shared with the participants. Since the majority of the countries have inadequate resources to implement systems for publishing data, emphasis will be given to free or low-cost technology solutions for publishing government data.

Approximately 60 participants are expected. Participants include Government and public administration officials, including a

knowledge management coordinator from each of the SADC countries, key citizens’ e/m-government experts from academia and research institution, civil society and private sector representatives, officials from DPADM Partner Organizations, as well as staff from the United Nations system.

For more information:

[United Nations Public Administration Network](#)

Developing comparable economic statistics

Workshop on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 for member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organisation, will be held in Tehran, Iran, on 14-17 October

DESA’s Statistics Division is organizing a workshop on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) for member countries of the ECO in collaboration with the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) and hosted by the Statistical Centre of Iran.

The purpose of the workshop is to initiate the formulation of an implementation plan for the 2008 SNA and supporting economic statistics in the ECO member countries with the objective of developing comparable economic statistics for monitoring the integration of their economies.

It is expected that this initiative would allow countries to set up priorities for the implementation of the 2008 SNA and improve the quality and the scope of existing economic statistics. It should also help international organizations and other donors supporting capacity building activities in the region to get information on the most urgent needs of countries and better coordinate their efforts.

For more information:

[DESA’s Statistics Division](#)

Launch of the Support Measures Portal for LDCs

A redesigned version of the Support Measures Portal for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) will become available on 17 October

The Portal compiles and catalogues in one single place, information about LDC-specific international support measures. As the single source of information, the Portal can assist the LDCs to improve their understanding of what LDC-specific support measures are, who their main “suppliers” are, and what is needed to access these resources.

Users will have access to information about international support measures from the donor community (including bilateral donors and multilateral organizations) as well as from the special treatment accorded to LDCs by certain multilateral and regional trade agreements. The major support measures extended to countries with LDC status vary among development partners and relate primarily to trade preferences and the volume of official development assistance.

The measures fall into three main areas: international trade; official development assistance, and other forms of assistance. By facilitating the utilization of the support measures, the Portal's aim is to assist LDCs to meet the targets established in Istanbul and contribute to enable half of the LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020.

The Support Measures Portal for LDCs will be available at: www.un.org/ldcportal

For more information:
[DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division \(DPAD\)](#)
 E-mail address to the DPAD/CDP Secretariat – ldcportal@un.org

Training national statistical authorities in Africa

DESA's Statistics Division will conduct a Regional Workshop on Population Projections for English Speaking African Countries in Pretoria, South Africa, on 29 October-2 November

The purpose of the workshop, held within the framework of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, is to provide training to statisticians from national statistical authorities in Africa in producing projections of population based on census results.

The 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses was approved by the Statistical Commission at its 36th session and adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The programme recognizes population and housing censuses as one of the main sources of data for effective development planning and objective decision-making. In addition, the data are useful for monitoring population trends and programmes, as well as for evaluating policies. The 2010 World Programme is primarily aimed at ensuring that each Member State conducts a population and housing census at least once in the period from 2005 to 2014 and disseminates the results.

For more information:
[Calendar of Events of DESA's Statistics Division](#)
[The 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses](#)

Teaching policy tools to achieve MDGs

Since the beginning of 2012, DPAD has held workshops for government officials in a number of developing countries, offering practical training on the use of advanced tools for policymaking

DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD) continues its series of capacity development activities, as part of the project "Strengthening Macroeconomic and Social Policy Coherence through Integrated Macro-Micro Modelling". The objective of the project is to institutionalise the use of an integrated macro-micro modelling framework to help policymakers formulate strategies to mitigate external shocks and put their countries on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

To achieve this, DPAD is conducting workshops in a number of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The workshops provide extensive training in economy-wide modelling and microsimulation tools that support policy analysis and scenario analysis. The activities are divided into: i) inception workshops, where the modelling tools are described, real-time simulations are conducted to demonstrate how these tools produce results and their analysis, and the schedule of activities is agreed on; ii) intensive training workshops, where participants get hands-on experience to simulate scenarios using their country's dataset and policy proposals; and iii) concluding workshops, where the trainees present policy notes.

DPAD provides the software tools (including user friendly interface solutions), background materials, training, and continuous guidance throughout the rigorous training process. The workshops culminate in the presentation of detailed policy notes to high level government officials, presenting policy alternatives and expected outcomes in relation to the MDGs and other national objectives.

Each of the workshops is jointly organized with local UNDP offices and the respective government counterparts. DPAD training activities are "demand-driven", in that the project responds to requests by governments for this support. This helps ensure stakeholder commitment.

For more information:
[Read more about the project "Strengthening Macroeconomic and Social Policy Coherence through Integrated Macro-Micro Modelling"](#)

Read more about the workshops (agenda, presentations, and participants) by clicking on the Activities tab of the previous link.

[Read more about DESA/DPAD Capacity Development and Advisory Services](#)

Publications and Websites

Websites

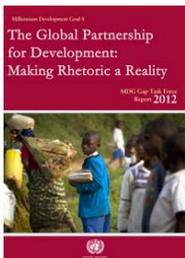


Launch of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (SDKP)

This new website has been launched by DESA's Division for Sustainable Development following-up to Rio+20. The platform contains information on the past 19 years of normative and analytical work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), a wealth of content from the preparatory process of Rio+20, and is the go to place for Rio+20 follow-up.

To browse: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.html>

Technical reports



MDG Gap Task Force Report 2012: The Global Partnership for Development: Making Rhetoric a Reality

“Do not place the burden of fiscal austerity on the backs of the poor,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the international community, as he launched the MDG Gap Task Force Report 2012 in New York on 20 September. In its

2012 Report, the MDG Gap Task Force has had difficulty identifying areas of significant new progress towards delivering on commitments to the Global Partnership for Development, and for the first time there are signs of backsliding.

The volume of official development assistance (ODA) fell for the first time in many years, obstacles to exports from developing countries are on the rise, and numerous developing countries are facing debt difficulties. With less than three years until 2015, there is no apparent commitment by donor Governments to reverse the trend in time, and it is likely that fewer MDGs will be reached in fewer countries as a result.

Download report:

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

Read the story [Significant MDG gains risk slowing under declining aid](#)

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 regular monthly tables, this issue includes the following quarterly and bimonthly tables:

- 8. Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials
- 12. Earnings in manufacturing, by sex
- 38. Total exports and imports by regions: volume and unit value indices and terms of trade

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

Meeting records

Secretary-General's Report on International Migration and Development

In resolution 65/170, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of that resolution at its sixty-seventh session. The report was also to include organizational details of the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, including possible themes.

The first section of the report includes recent data on migratory patterns by origin and destination. The information allows for an assessment of the scope of international migration from developing countries, providing a critical underpinning to the debate on international migration and development. It describes recent levels of remittance transfers, including evidence on the costs of transferring remittances, and highlights recent activities to safeguard the rights of migrants and to combat irregular migration. It also discusses gaps in protecting and assisting

migrants, including “stranded migrants” and people who move in the context of environmental change.

The second section synthesizes recent efforts of the UN system to enhance partnerships, coordination and cooperation, including through the Coordination Meeting on International Migration and the Global Migration Group. It contains a review of the support provided by the Group to Member States, including the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

The third section contains proposals for the organization of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, to be convened by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session in 2013. It also contains a suggested structure and format for the event, as well as possible themes, preparatory activities and outcomes.

The report concludes with a set of concrete recommendations to enhance the benefits of migration and to reduce its negative impacts on development and recounts the steps that are being taken to prepare for the 2013 High-level Dialogue.

For more information: <http://www.unpopulation.org/>

Outreach material

Social Development Link Newsletter (SDLN)

The August-September issue is now available online. The newsletter, which is now published monthly by the Civil Society and Outreach Unit of the Division for Social Policy and Development, aims at providing a sharp and synthetic summary of major activities carried out by DSPD.

As its title shows, the newsletter will serve as a link between DSPD and its major partners, from civil society actors to social development practitioners and scholars.

View full issue at:
<http://social.un.org/index/Newsletters/SDLNewsletter/AugustSeptember2012.aspx>

Youth Flash Newsletter

The August-September issue is now available featuring the story “Empowering Young Australians”, by Ella Fisher. The newsletter is a service of the UN Programme on Youth to keep the public informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. It is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and from youth organisations around the world.

View full issue at:
<http://social.un.org/index/Youth/YouthFlashNewsletter/2012/AugustSeptember.aspx>

ENABLE Newsletter

The June-August issue is now available. ENABLE Newsletter is 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, with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and civil society. It highlights among other things how many and which countries have ratified the convention.

View full issue at: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

DESA NGO News

The September issue is now available. The online monthly newsletter provides 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.

View full issue: <http://csonet.org/content/documents/sept.html>

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects

The latest issue states that the weak demand in Europe is directly affecting the growth prospects of many developing countries and economies in transition by reducing demand for their exports. The briefing also highlights the initiation of the European Central Bank (ECB) programme of “outright monetary transactions”, through which it would buy sovereign debt of eurozone countries with maturities of one to three years.

Download:
http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_mb/wesp_mb47.pdf

Comings and Goings

Goings



Ms. Kathleen Abdalla, Chief of the Emerging Issues Branch of the Division for Sustainable Development, retired at the end of September 2012 after serving more than 15 years in DESA and more than 27 years in the United Nations. An economist, she specialized in energy and sustainable development issues and during her tenure also served as Chief of the Energy and Transport Branch. In addition to preparing numerous UN reports and papers, she has published in professional journals on these topics.

Ms. Abdalla contributed to the United Nations work on climate change, including as an original member of the Secretary General's Climate Change Team that launched the SG's High level event on climate change prior to COP15.

She served as Acting Director of the Division for Sustainable Development for one year during which the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) successfully concluded its 16th session. She provided support to the various sessions of the CSD and to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in the areas of energy, transport, atmosphere and climate change. Most recently, Ms. Abdalla was the Cluster Leader on Fundraising and Logistics for Rio+20 and worked closely with the Brazilian National Organizing Committee for Rio+20.

Prior to joining DESA, Ms. Abdalla served the United Nations in Iraq, Jordan and South Africa. She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Connecticut.

The following staff members also retired in September:

Martha Luque, Programme Assistant, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Michael Mimicopoulos, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in September:

Elvira Cachola, Programme Assistant, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Jean Collison-Morris, Budget & Finance Assistant, Executive Office

Eder Garcia, Budget & Finance Assistant, Executive Office

Maria Guran, Meetings Services Assistant, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Saw Htoo, Technical Co-operation Assistant, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Matthias Reister, Senior Statistician, Statistics Division

Igor Ribeiro, Computer Information Systems Assistant, Population Division

Suwanee Thatchaichawalit, Team Assistant, Executive Office

Oksana Yarashuk, Programme Assistant, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Calendar

October

General Assembly, 67th session

New York, 18 September - December

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

- **Second Committee, 8 October – December**
<http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/index.shtml>
- **Third Committee, 8 October – December**
<http://www.un.org/en/ga/third/index.shtml>

International Day of Older Persons

1 October

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

Regional Workshop on International Trade Statistics: Implementation of IMTS 2010

San Jose, Costa Rica, 1-5 October

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

Workshop on Next Stage in Open Government Data: Using Data for Transparency, Accountability and Collaboration

Cape Town, South Africa, 10-12 October

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/BrowseEventsbyCalendar/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/2228/language/en-US/Default.aspx?selecteddate=10/10/2012>

Workshop on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 for member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organisation

Tehran, Iran, 14-17 October

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

Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, Eighth session

Geneva, 15-19 October

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/tax/eighthsession/index.htm>

Seminar on developing a programme for the implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) and supporting statistics in Southern Africa

Pretoria, South Africa, 17-19 October

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

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17 October

<http://social.un.org/index/Poverty/InternationalDayfortheEradicationofPoverty.aspx>

Launch of redesigned version of the Support Measures Portal for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

17 October

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

Regional Workshop on Population Projections for English Speaking African Countries

Pretoria, South Africa, 29 October-2 November

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

22nd Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on MDG Indicators

Geneva, 31 October

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

November

Expert Group Meeting on MDG Indicators

Geneva, Switzerland, 1-2 November

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

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