TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL
UN DESA is a vital interface between global policies and national action in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Rooted in the United Nations Charter and guided by the universal and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global agreements, UN DESA responds to the needs and priorities of the global community.

1945: Rooted in the UN Charter

The United Nations Charter recognizes that solving economic and social problems is essential for peace, leading to the establishment of UN DESA's predecessor, the Department of Economic Affairs.

1997: Responding to evolving needs

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's broad reform brings together analytical, normative and capacity-development functions to form the Department of Economic and Social Affairs we know today.

2015: Transforming the world

In a watershed year for global partnership and solidarity, UN DESA supports the intergovernmental processes that lead to the adoption of the historic 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, contributing to the elaboration of these instruments.

2017: Focusing on results

UN Secretary-General António Guterres announces a sweeping plan to enhance the UN's delivery of results for people on the ground. His call for strengthening UN DESA results in the Department's repositioning to become more fit for purpose in the 21st century.

2019: A strengthened UN DESA

A strengthened UN DESA is now fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and other global agreements in the economic, social and environmental areas and poised to provide the agile and valuable support that Member States need to address the global sustainable development challenges of our day.
HOME OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

UN DESA is the place in the UN system where every Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) finds a home and where all stakeholders can do their part to leave no one behind.
The focus on equitable participation by all people and nations is what makes the United Nations unique. UN DESA has been helping countries to find common ground on sustainable development, population, social inclusion, financing for development and many other issues.

**Sustainable Development and the High-level Political Forum**

From the Earth Summit’s Agenda 21 to Rio+20 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN DESA has promoted and supported international cooperation for sustainable development and helped countries as they translate global commitments into national policies and actions. UN DESA assists Member States in preparing their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Department also produces manuals and synthesis reports, conducts workshops, pioneers the innovative VNR Labs and leads the organization of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the global platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

**The Addis Ababa Action Agenda**

UN DESA laid the groundwork for the landmark 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda - a road map for financing sustainable development. As the hub for the financing for development process, UN DESA guides international efforts to finance sustainable development for all.

**Policy guidance to the UN System country-level work**

UN DESA helps to provide strategic and substantive support to a new generation of UN Country Teams, led by a reinvigorated UN Resident Coordinator System. The knowledge and expertise of UN DESA is instrumental to strengthening results on the ground and maximizing the impact of the UN development system.
Achieving the SDGs is a colossal task for any country, but even more so for developing States, which often lack the tools and resources to grapple with the challenges of our times. UN DESA is responding to the unprecedented demand for capacity-building with a fresh, more strategic, integrated and longer-term approach.
Currently, UN DESA and partners support more than 75 countries in building integrated, evidence-based, inclusive and well-funded national strategies and plans to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Multi-stakeholder partnerships**

International conferences and forums led by UN DESA generate partnerships on everything from oceans to water and energy. UN DESA helps them grow through its Partnership for the SDGs Platform, where over 4,000 partnerships and voluntary commitments have so far come together in a vast ecosystem of SDG action.

**Public institutions**

UN DESA supports countries in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions that are well equipped to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in our digitalized world.

**Statistics**

Evidence-based decision-making starts with strong national statistical systems and high-quality data to ensure that no one is left behind. UN DESA has been strengthening statistical capacity in all corners of the world since 1945.

**Means of Implementation**

UN DESA helps countries to mobilize financial resources, including through offering technical expertise on taxes and convening the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters. UN DESA supports countries to leverage the opportunities and potential of technology for advancing sustainable development through the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the Science, Technology and Innovation Forum.
CULTIVATOR OF IDEAS

UN DESA’s social and economic approach is ahead of the curve, warning about impending crises and identifying potential opportunities.
UN DESA's far-sighted socioeconomic analyses warned about the global debt crisis in the 1980s and cautioned about the factors that led to the global financial crisis in the late 2000s. UN DESA continues its cutting-edge assessment through its analytical products, policy advice and technical assistance.

**Frontier issues**

UN DESA's thought leadership continues today. For example, in 2018, UN DESA's publications analysed the impact of frontier technologies, on the way we work, produce, and co-exist.

**Catalysing intellectual expertise**

In 2018, UN DESA brought together 16 globally renowned experts on economic and social policy to form the UN High-level Advisory Board (HLAB) on Economic and Social Affairs, tapping into the brainpower of this diverse group of specialists to inform our work.

**Analysing and projecting population trends**

UN DESA helps humanity prepare for a more populous, mobile and urbanized future. Through its databases and reports, UN DESA analyses global demographic trends including population growth, ageing, migration, urbanization and access to modern family planning.

**Assessing SDG progress**

UN DESA leads the preparation of the Sustainable Development Goals Report, an annual overview of progress towards the 17 goals, and supports the preparation of the Global Sustainable Development Report, an evidence-based instrument to strengthen the science-policy interface.
LEAVING NO ONE
To fulfill the 2030 Agenda’s promise of leaving no one behind, we must help the furthest behind first. Only when every woman, child and man is free from extreme poverty, hunger and exclusion, on a healthy planet, can we say that we have succeeded.
UN DESA is a leading analytical voice for promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities and eradicating poverty. Through its publications, advocacy, capacity development and convening power, UN DESA is a champion for tearing down the barriers that keep people in poverty and exclusion.

**A society for all ages**

Global ageing is unprecedented and enduring. Older persons will outnumber children and youth by 2050. UN DESA, the focal point on ageing in the UN system, drives the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and helps ensure older persons are recognized as active agents of sustainable development.

**Ending poverty**

The world has seen a dramatic drop in the rate of extreme poverty at the global level since 1990. Yet, at the same time, inequality increased worldwide. UN DESA helps to guide the global efforts to end poverty through universal social protection and targeted measures to reduce people's vulnerability.

**Empowering youth**

As the co-chair of the Inter-agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), UN DESA brings together over 55 UN entities and youth-led organizations to actively engage in youth development to achieve the SDGs. UN DESA drives the policy dialogue on youth within the UN system and supports the ECOSOC Youth Forum, which gathers hundreds of young people each year to share their vision of development.

**Engaging and empowering persons with disabilities**

As the focal point on disability in the UN system, UN DESA advances the dialogue to mainstream disability into all aspects of policymaking. UN DESA also supports the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Realizing the rights of indigenous peoples**

In 2007, the UN adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - the most comprehensive instrument on the rights of indigenous peoples in history. UN DESA leads the follow-up on this watershed declaration as the Secretariat of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.
Affected by a range of barriers to growth, many vulnerable countries are struggling to catch up with the rest of the world. UN DESA assists them in their sustainable development efforts, ensuring that no country is left behind.

**Least Developed Countries**

Since the 1970s, only five of the world’s least developed countries (LDCs) have exited that category. Today, as many as 14 out of 47 LDCs are preparing for graduation. UN DESA supports the Committee for Development Policy, which recommends countries for graduation, and helps LDCs navigate the complex transition out of the category, including through Gradjet, an interactive online tool launched in 2018.

**Small Island Developing States**

In 2014, world leaders adopted the landmark Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action, or the SAMOA Pathway. It is a plan of action for small island developing States (SIDS) on issues ranging from sustainable and inclusive economic growth to climate change and energy, to disaster risk reduction. UN DESA organized the conference that adopted the SAMOA Pathway and continues to assist SIDS to achieve their ambitious objectives.

**Landlocked Developing Countries**

Due to their geographical remoteness, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) face special challenges to sustainable development which are compounded by weak transportation infrastructure. UN DESA helps LLDCs mobilize partnerships and resources to transition to sustainable and equitable development. The Global Sustainable Transport Conference is key to this effort.
SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

UN DESA helps countries make informed decisions by providing a wealth of information through its publications and databases and through its work supporting international deliberations at the United Nations General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, Commissions, Forums and other bodies.

- General Assembly
- High-level Political Forum
- Economic and Social Council
- Commissions
  - Commission for Social Development
  - Commission on Population and Development
  - Statistical Commission
  - United Nations Forum on Forestry
- Forums
  - Development Cooperation Forum
  - Financing for Development Forum
  - Internet Governance Forum
  - Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs
  - Partnership Forum
  - World Data Forum
  - Youth Forum
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DATABASES

UN Data
UN E-Government Knowledge Database
UN Global SDG Indicators Database
UN LDC Data
UN Public Service Awards Database
Population Databases
UN Comtrade International Trade Statistics Database
UN System SDGs Actions Database
Voluntary National Reviews Database

MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

World Social Report
World Economic Situation and Prospects
Financing for Sustainable Development Report
Global Status Report on Disability and Development
International Migration Report
The Sustainable Development Goals Report
The World’s Women
United Nations E-Government Survey
World Population Prospects
World Public Sector Report
World Youth Report

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