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Preparing for a year of global action

2015 is expected to be a historic year for global sustainable development. A number of milestone events are expected to set in motion crucial actions that will benefit both the people and the planet. With UN DESA playing a leading role in these efforts, DESA News met with Mr. Wu Hongbo, UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General, to learn more about upcoming events as well as gains made during the past year.



Watch the interview on YouTube <http://bit.ly/13Ksswr>

“Critical, busy and productive” said Mr. Wu, as he summarized the past year in just three words. Meeting in his office right before his departure for the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Lima, or COP20, Mr. Wu described an eventful 2014, with UN Member States preparing for the post-2015 development agenda.

“There are two important achievements,” Mr. Wu said. “One is the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals,” he said, describing the success of the group in proposing 17 goals and 169 targets aimed at creating a sustainable, prosperous and people-centred future of our planet. Mr. Wu also explained that many had not believed this to be possible at all. “They made the impossible possible with the support of DESA colleagues,” he said.

“Second is the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing,” Mr. Wu continued, explaining that this is another area of great interest for the international community. “We all know that without financial support, the development programme means nothing,” he said, highlighting how the Committee of Experts has come up with more than 115 policy recommendations and how their efforts have been commended by the UN General Assembly as well as by Member States.

In August 2014, the Committee presented its final report, including options on ways to finance the sustainable development agenda. It established that, with appropriate reallocation, around \$22 trillion in annual global savings could meet the financing needs for sustainable development in the future, to improve people's lives and protect the planet for generations to come.

Providing inputs for post-2015 development agenda

Mr. Wu, who served as Conference Secretary-General for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), described how the department, under his leadership, organized the highly successful conference, which took place in Apia, Samoa on 1-4 September 2014.

"This was a resounding success," said Mr. Wu. "It was welcomed and well received by the international community and Member States and in particular by SIDS," he explained, also emphasizing how the event produced solid and meaningful input to the post-2015 development process. In addition to the conference outcome, the S.A.M.O.A. Pathway, 297 partnerships were registered to support small island developing states, bringing the total value of these commitments to over \$1.9 billion.

Mr. Wu also highlighted other major events including the Special Session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014, as well as the first ever World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. These two events took place back-to-back at UN Headquarters on 22-23 September and were well received by the international community.

Areas of interest for people worldwide



"We also worked hard to help Member States carry out the reform of the ECOSOC system to make ECOSOC more efficient, effective and to be more relevant to the mandates," said Mr. Wu, also describing the regular tasks performed by the

department. "We continue to publish high-quality analysis on the world economic situation and also on the implementation of the MDGs," said Mr. Wu, pointing to the relevance of this work for policy makers worldwide. "We also promote forest management and forest economy," Mr. Wu explained. "Next year will be important for the UN Forum on Forest because the Member States will make decisions to renew the mandate," he added.

"We also have very important mandates to strengthen governance," said Mr. Wu. "We actually cover quite extensive areas, for instance, public administration and internet governance.

These are really the areas of great interest to people worldwide," he said. Mr. Wu also highlighted the vital role of the Statistics Division as they are not only conducting their regular work, but are also supporting the Secretary-General's Independent Expert Advisory Group on the Data Revolution.

Key moments for a sustainable future

"There will be three things mainly on the UN's agenda," said Mr. Wu when discussing a busy 2015 ahead. "Number one to celebrate the 70th birthday of this international organization," he said. "Second, to accelerate implementation of the Millennium Development Goals," he continued. "Third, which is the most important of all, to officially launch the post-2015 development agenda," he said. Mr. Wu also explained the vital role of UN DESA in supporting the inter-governmental negotiation process that will lead to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

In this context, Mr. Wu underscored the importance of financing for development and the upcoming Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which will take place in Ethiopia in July next year, for which Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has designated him as its Secretary-General.

"We will be very busy and what we are expecting is a sustainable development agenda post-2015 for the whole world," emphasized Mr. Wu. "This is the first time in human history that development is globally acknowledged to cover three dimensions – economic, social and environmental," he added, pointing to some of the challenges along the way and how he can foresee that all colleagues from all divisions will get involved in the substantial support of these efforts.

"We all know the last mile is always the difficult one. So the last dash to the finish line will be very challenging," Mr. Wu added. "What we want, what will be the end results, this is to be decided by Member States," he said, while at the same time highlighting how the professional knowledge, advice and support of UN DESA will be indispensable in this process. "We will be successful, and I am confident, because the professionalism, the hard work and team spirit demonstrated by my colleagues in this department give me strength, give me confidence," Mr. Wu concluded with a smile.

For more information:

[Website of UN DESA](#)

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

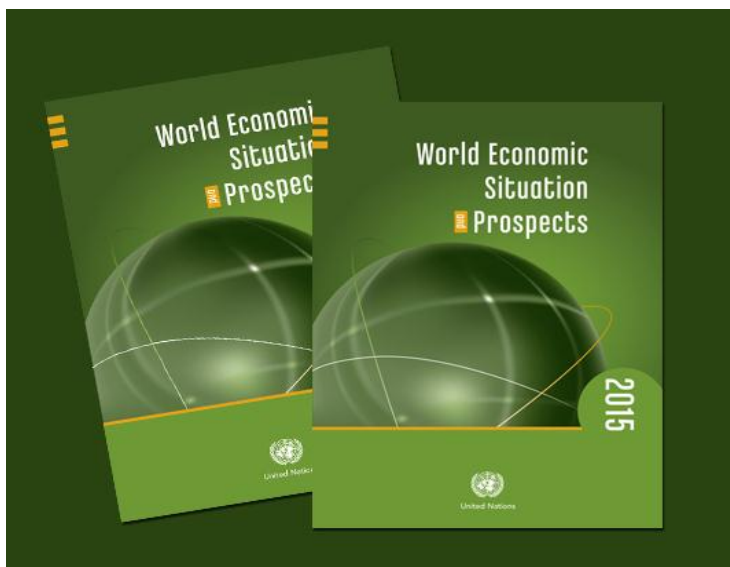
[Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals](#)

Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Development Finance

Third International Conference on Financing for Development

WESP 2015: Global economy to improve marginally

Global economic growth is forecast to increase marginally over the next two years, according to the *Global Economic Outlook of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015 (WESP) report*, launched on 10 December 2014. The global economy is expected to grow 3.1 per cent in 2015 and 3.3 per cent in 2016, compared with an estimated growth of 2.6 per cent for 2014. The complete report featuring regional forecasts will be released in mid-January 2015.



Watch UN Webcast: <http://bit.ly/1APj2K6>

The global economy expanded during 2014 at a moderate and uneven pace. Legacies from the global financial crisis continue to weigh on growth, while new challenges have emerged, including geopolitical conflicts such as in Ukraine and the Ebola epidemic.

Unemployment figures remain historically high in some regions, but appear to have stopped rising. While global inflation remains subdued, the spectrum ranges from deflation risks in the euro area to high inflation in some developing countries. Foreign direct investment inflows have remained the most stable and relevant source of financing for developing countries whereas portfolio capital flows are highly sensitive to changes in risk appetite.

Trade growth is expected to pick up moderately with the volume of world imports of goods and services projected to grow by 4.7 per cent in 2015. In 2015, fiscal tightening in most developed economies will continue, although the pace of tightening is expected to slow. The strong US dollar is expected to remain the dominant trend on foreign exchange markets.

“While some economic indicators are positive and moving in the right direction which points to the potential for a gradual return to consistent economic growth,” said Pingfan Hong, Director of UN DESA’s Development and Policy Analysis Division, “many risks and uncertainties could dash efforts to get the global economy on track and moving forward.”

Developed economies

Among the developed economies, while the US maintained an annual growth rate above 2 per cent in 2014, the economic situation in Europe has been precarious, particularly in the euro area, where a number of euro members teetered on the brink of recession. In Japan, momentum generated by a fiscal stimulus package and monetary easing from 2013 tapered off in 2014.

The US economy is expected to improve in 2015-2016, with GDP projected to expand by 2.8 and 3.1 per cent, respectively. Only a slight improvement in growth is expected in Western Europe. The region is held back by the travails of the euro area, where the level of GDP has yet to regain its pre-recession peak. A projected slowdown in Japan is mainly attributed to the drop of private consumption due to a higher consumption tax.

Developing countries and economies in transition

Growth rates in developing countries and economies in transition diverged more during 2014, as a sharp deceleration occurred in many large emerging economies, particularly in Latin America and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In contrast, East Asia, including China, experienced only a mild slowdown, while India led South Asia to a moderate uptick.



Among the developing countries, Africa’s overall growth momentum will continue, with GDP growth expected to accelerate to 4.6 per cent in 2015 and 4.9 per cent in 2016. East Asia will remain the fastest-growing region, and is projected to see stable growth of 6.1 per cent in 2015 and 6.0 per cent in 2016. Economic growth in South Asia is set to gradually pick up, while economic growth in Latin America and the Caribbean is projected to moderately improve. In the CIS, prospects are weak with near-zero growth expected in the

Russian Federation. More detailed regional forecasts from *WESP* will be released in January 2015.

Looming risks and uncertainties could set back global economy

The euro area's recovery remains precarious. While the sense of crisis has dissipated, great risks remain. The underlying growth momentum in the euro area has decelerated to the point where an exogenous event could lead to a return to recession. The forthcoming further normalization of the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy holds significant risks and uncertainties for the global economic outlook, depending on the timing and strategy of the monetary tightening, as well as the response by financial markets.

Many developing countries and economies in transition appear vulnerable to a tightening of global financial conditions, as well as a further aggravation of geopolitical tensions and an escalation of the Ebola epidemic. The ongoing high current-account deficits in some large emerging economies, such as Brazil, Indonesia, South Africa and Turkey, remain a concern, along with rapid credit growth in several emerging economies. A sudden change in market sentiment, similar to mid-2013 and early 2014, could trigger a painful adjustment process, especially in countries with large external deficits. A broad-based downturn in emerging economies, particularly a sharp slowdown in China, would weigh on economic performance worldwide.

A further risk lies in extreme volatility in oil prices which can have significant impacts on both oil exporting and oil importing countries. The crisis in Ukraine continues to have major regional macroeconomic repercussions. The situations in Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic continue to hamper economic and human development regionally and remain major sources of uncertainty.

International policy coordination must be strengthened

To reduce risks and meet challenges, the report says, it is imperative to strengthen international policy coordination. In particular, macroeconomic policies worldwide should be aligned toward supporting robust and balanced growth, creating productive jobs, and maintaining long-term economic and financial stability.

WESP is produced at the beginning of each year by UN DESA, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the five UN regional commissions and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). The report's full version will be available by mid-January 2015.

For more information:

[World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015 \(WESP\)](#)

Road to Dignity by 2030: Blueprint towards sustainable development

Calling for inclusive, agile and coordinated action to usher in an era of sustainable development for all, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 4 December presented the United Nations General Assembly with an advance unedited version of his synthesis report, which will guide negotiations for a new global agenda centred on people and the planet, and underpinned by human rights. The report was formally issued in the six official UN languages on 31 December.



Watch UN Webcast: <http://bit.ly/1sOaNi6>

“2015 will herald an unprecedented opportunity to take far-reaching, long-overdue global action to secure our future well-being,” Mr. Ban said as he called on Member States to be “innovative, inclusive, agile, determined and coordinated” in negotiating the agenda that will succeed the landmark Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the UN-backed effort to reduce extreme poverty and hunger, promote education, especially for girls, fight disease and protect the environment, all by 2015.

In an informal [briefing](#) to the 193-Member Assembly on 4 December 2014, the UN chief presented his synthesis report, [The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet](#), alongside the President of the General Assembly, Sam Kutesa who also [addressed](#) delegates, describing the process of intergovernmental negotiations that fed into the report's compilation to set the stage for agreement on the new framework at a September 2015 summit and stressing the “historical responsibility” States faced to deliver a transformative agenda.

Taking stock of post-2015 negotiations

The synthesis report aims to support States' discussions going forward, taking stock of the negotiations on the post-2015 agenda and reviewing lessons from pursuit of the MDGs. It

stresses the need to “finish the job” – both to help people now and as a launch pad for the new agenda.

In the report’s conclusion, the Secretary-General issues a powerful charge to Member States, saying: “We are on the threshold of the most important year of development since the founding of the United Nations itself. We must give meaning to this Organization’s promise to ‘reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of the human person’ and to take the world forward to a sustainable future... [We] have an historic opportunity and duty to act, boldly, vigorously and expeditiously, to turn reality into a life of dignity for all, leaving no one behind.”

Never before has so broad and inclusive a consultation been undertaken on development, Mr. Ban told the Assembly, referring to the consultations that followed [Rio+20](#) [the [2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development](#)], adding that his synthesis report “looks ahead, and discusses the contours of a universal and transformative agenda that places people and planet at the centre, is underpinned by human rights, and is supported by a global partnership.”

With rights and dignity at the core

The coming months would see agreement on the final parameters of the post-2015 agenda and he stressed the need for inclusion of a compelling and principled narrative, based on human rights and dignity. Financing and other means of implementation would also be essential and he called for strong, inclusive public mechanisms for reporting, monitoring progress, learning lessons, and ensuring shared responsibility.

He also welcomed the outcome produced by the Open Working Group, saying its 17 proposed sustainable development goals and 169 associated targets clearly expressed an agenda aiming at ending poverty, achieving shared prosperity, protecting the planet and leaving no one behind.

Discussions of the Working Group had been inclusive and productive and he said the Group’s proposal should form the basis of the new goals, as agreed by the General Assembly. The goals should be “focused and concise” to boost global awareness and country-level implementation, communicating clearly Member States’ ambition and vision.

The synthesis report presented dignity, people, prosperity, the planet, justice and partnerships as an integrated set of “essential elements” aimed at providing conceptual guidance during discussions of the goals and Mr. Ban stressed that none could be considered in isolation from the others and that each was an integral part of the whole.

Financing for Development Conference key for implementation

“Implementation will be the litmus test of this agenda. It must be placed on a sound financial footing,” he said welcoming the work

of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and encouraging countries to scale up their efforts.

The Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa on 13-16 July would play a major role in outlining the means for implementation, and he stressed the “key role” national Governments would play in raising domestic revenue to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.

Official development assistance (ODA) and international public funds, particularly for vulnerable countries, would also be vital to unlocking “the transformative power of trillions of dollars of private resources”, while private investment would be particularly important on projects related to the transition to low-carbon economies, improving access to water, renewable energy, agriculture, industry, infrastructure and transport.

Implementation would also rely on bridging the technology gap, creating a new framework for shared accountability, and providing reliable data, which he called the “lifeblood of sound decision-making.”

Stressing his commitment to ensuring the best outcome from the post-2015 process, he underlined the need for States to be guided by universal human rights and international norms, while remaining responsive to different needs and contexts in different countries.

“We must embrace the possibilities and opportunities of the task at hand,” he said.

In an earlier [interview](#) with the *UN News Centre*, Amina J. Mohammed, the Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning, stressed that one of the report’s main “takeaways” is that “by 2030 we can end poverty, we can transform lives and we can find ways to protect the planet while doing that.”

“I think that’s important because we’re talking about a universal agenda where we’re going to leave no one behind. It’s not doing things by halves or by three-quarters, it’s about everyone mattering... To say you don’t want to leave anyone behind is to look to see who is the most vulnerable and smallest member of the family and what is it that we’re going to have to do to ensure that they’re not left behind, because that will be the litmus test and success of what we do.”

Proposed sustainable development goals

Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
Goal 14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal 17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Source: UN News Centre

For more information:

[Access the advance unedited copy of the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report](#)

[Post-2015 process](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

UN Water Zaragoza International Conference: From Vision to Action



The post-2015 international agenda for water and sanitation will be decided now. Taking place on 15-17 January in Zaragoza, Spain, the UN-Water International Zaragoza Conference focuses on

bringing the post-2015 agenda into action by highlighting tools for implementation (financing, technology, capacity development) and governance frameworks.

The UN-Water Annual Zaragoza Conferences serve UN-Water to prepare for World Water Day which is celebrated annually on 22 March. This year, the conference is part of the road map for World Water Day 2015, which will focus on ‘water and sustainable development’.

More than 300 participants from UN Agencies and programmes, experts, representatives of the business community, governmental and non-governmental organizations will meet to draw conclusions based on existing practice and the exchange of views between governments and stakeholders. This is also the last year of the International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’, so it is especially important for taking stock of and learning from achievements as well as planning the next steps.

Freshwater is central to all development. Challenges are growing, spreading, multiplying across the world – from urbanization and over-consumption, under-investment and lack of capacity, poor management and waste and the demands of agriculture, energy and food production. Freshwater is not being used sustainably according to needs and demands.

Yet many water problems are economic, social and political in nature and could be addressed through intelligent and effective governance to optimize use between sectors and ecosystems and balance current and future needs. We need governments, the

private sector and civil society to work more harmoniously and to make water integration intrinsic in decision-making.

The Zaragoza Conference is a space for dialogue. The Conference will focus on a practical examination of the necessary transformations and how institutional change, technology, capacity development and financing can help develop joint responses. It will draw from practical experience of Member States and stakeholder groups.

The event will be facilitated by the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC) and sessions will be convened by UN-Water members, programmes and partner organizations.

For more information:

[UN-Water International Zaragoza Conference](#)

[Access a presentation introducing the Conference](#)

[United Nations World Water Development Report 4. Volume 1: Managing Water under Uncertainty and Risk](#)

[Measuring water use in a green economy](#)

International Year of Small Island Developing States comes to a close



A closing ceremony to mark the conclusion of the International Year of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will take place from 3 – 6 pm on Monday, 26 January 2015, in the Trusteeship Council

at UN Headquarters in New York.

The event will feature a video with highlights of the year, a cultural performance and a panel discussion on the way forward for SIDS. It is also expected to include remarks by the President of the General Assembly, Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo, the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, and the Champions of the International Year of SIDS.

The International Year highlighted both the challenges that this group of countries face but also the solutions that they bring to

the table to address pressing global issues, as well as celebrating the rich culture and heritage of these countries.

Discussions, workshops, an exhibition, tweetathon, google hangout, photo competition, cultural celebrations and other activities were organized in the course of the year. The vibrant and distinct cultures of these islands, and their diversity and heritage, were important elements throughout.

One of the highlights of the year was the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which took place from 1-4 September in Apia, Samoa. At the Conference, nearly 300 partnerships between governments, businesses and civil society organizations from all over the world were registered to support small island developing states, bringing the total value of these commitments to over USD \$1.9 billion. The Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action – or SAMOA Pathway – in which countries recognize the need to support and invest in these nations so they can achieve sustainable development, was also adopted at the Conference. A dedicated exhibition to highlight the International Year, was organized at the Samoa Conference with photos of the world heritage sites based in small island developing states, Magnum photos depicting people and lives of small island States, as well as literatures by authors from small islands.

For more information: [Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States](#)

Call for civil society responses to Secretary-General's Synthesis Report



The UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) and UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) invite Major Groups and other civil society stakeholders to submit their official responses to the report to a central online repository

via this [online form](#).

UN-NGLS and DESA-DSD provide this mechanism to support review of these important perspectives by all stakeholders in preparation for the continued elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, beginning with the 19-21 January negotiating session at UN Headquarters in New York. A preparatory forum for stakeholders will be conducted on 16 January by DESA-DSD and

UN-NGLS at UN Headquarters. More information about this forum will be provided soon.

In early January 2015, the Secretary-General will formally present the report and further discuss it with Member States. Links to all submissions will be published live as they are received [here](#).

For more information:

[Call for civil society responses to the Secretary-General's Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#)

Substantive sessions for Financing for Development Conference conclude



From 9 to 12 December, the United Nations General Assembly held a second and final round of substantive sessions to prepare for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which will be held in Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia, on 13-16 July 2015. The overall theme of the sessions was "Enabling environment, systemic issues, follow-up process and learning from partnerships". The substantive sessions will serve as inputs to the first drafting session on the outcome document, to be held from 27 to 29 January.

Following a first round of substantive sessions from 10-13 November, the December meetings focused on various issues, such as the international monetary and financial system, international tax cooperation, debt crisis prevention and resolution, trade, investment and technology, as well as domestic and international governance, statistical capabilities, and multi-stakeholder partnerships for development finance. The discussions included concrete proposals to inform the forthcoming negotiations on the outcome document of the Conference.

The sessions drew significant interest of Member States, with a high level of participation from capitals of both developed and developing countries, including senior officials from ministries of finance, foreign affairs and central banks. The major institutional stakeholders of the Financing for Development process contributed actively to the sessions, including the World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD and UNDP, together with many other

parts of the UN system, such as UNICEF, UNEP, the Global Compact, UNODC, UN-Women and UN-OHRLLS. Other organizations such as the Financial Stability Board, OECD, GAVI, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank also participated. Representatives of academia, civil society and the private sector contributed to all discussions and side events.

All substantive sessions will serve as inputs to the first drafting session on the outcome document, to be held from 27 to 29 January 2015.

To watch these informal sessions via UN Web TV, access presentations, statements and background information, visit the website of UN DESA's Financing for Development Office (see the link provided below).

For more information:

[UN DESA's Financing for Development Office](#)

World must do 'whatever it takes' to ensure recovery of Ebola-affected countries



The Economic and Social Council held a special meeting on "Ebola: A threat to Sustainable Development" on 5 December 2014 focusing on linking emergency Ebola response to longer-term efforts to strengthen health systems

The meeting brought together high-level representatives of Member States, the United Nations system, the international organizations, civil society, health sector experts, academia and the private sector. The ministers and high level representatives for the affected countries as well as the high-level United Nations Officials addressed the Council.

The keynote addresses were followed by a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Paul Farmer, Co-Founder of Partners in Health and Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Community Based Medicine, and Lessons from Haiti. Panelists included High-level Representatives from the African Union Commission, the United Nations system, the World Bank, Open Society Foundation,

Center for Global Development and Ebola Private Sector Mobilization Group.

A number of strong messages came out of this discussion, which include: (i) the Ebola outbreak has halted these countries economic progress and has had a negative impact on sectors beyond health, including agriculture, education, and commerce; (ii) urgent delivery of funding pledges and increased technical assistance for national coordination of resources to be provided, (iii) debt relief and concessional loans to be provided to the affected countries; (iv) development actors to align their assistance with national response plans and financial needs as defined by Governments, including salary support for civil servants and frontline health care workers; (v) the international community to support the African Union's decision to establish a Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in Africa that would enable the regional to prevent and effectively deal with Ebola and future pandemics; (vi) the private sector to play an important role in the Ebola response, including in bringing liquidity to the markets and in helping to strengthen health systems.

One of the strongest messages was to invest more resources in strengthening national institutions by investing directly through countries' national institutions, prioritizing the public sector, including health, education, sanitation and the economy, so as to safeguard affected countries against future crises. This will allow the affected countries to build health systems capable of responding to emergencies and of withstanding shocks such as Ebola. All development actors were called to consider flexible and innovative funding modalities for immediate response to future health and other development-related crises, as well as financing for vaccines and treatments. Mechanisms are needed to direct resources to meet re-defined government strategies.

As the outcome of the meeting, the President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Martin Sajdik of Austria has released a "[Presidential Statement](#)" which captures the main recommendations of the meeting and calls for a comprehensive study on the economic and social impact of the Ebola outbreak by the UN system, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, building on the work being done by the Economic Commission for Africa, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. The Economic and Social Council intends to convene a follow-up meeting in mid-2015.

For more information:

[ECOSOC Special Meeting on Ebola](#)

[UN System's Global Ebola Response](#)

Trends and Analysis

In pursuit of sustainable development goals



In September 2014, the UN General Assembly decided that the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals would be the main basis for integrating the SDGs into the post-2015 development agenda while recognizing that other

inputs will also be considered in the intergovernmental negotiation process. As part of the preparations for the new development agenda, an Expert Group Meeting will be arranged in New York on 28-29 January, focusing on “Policy integration in government in pursuit of the SDGs”.

In anticipation of the adoption of a post-2015 development agenda in September 2015, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is asking “what it will take” to make the transition to a development framework based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it has invited the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and other subsidiary bodies to contribute their views.

Set against this background, UN DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) will hold an Expert Group Meeting on “Policy integration in government in pursuit of the SDGs” at the United Nations Secretariat on 28-29 January 2015.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to elicit experts’ insights as an input to the 14th session of the CEPA, to be held from 20-24 April 2015 under the banner of “Building trust in government in pursuit of sustainable development goals – what will it take?” The meeting is expected to result in:

- Views on how to translate conceptual notions of policy coherence and principles of policymaking into practical terms
- Establishment of a baseline understanding of the capacity of administrations to pursue integration in pursuit of SDGs

- Build on work by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Bank and others, connecting of observations and conclusions to policy cycles taking into account political and institutional realities

The event will bring together experts from government, academia, the United Nations, OECD, World Bank and other organizations to review developments in the field of policy integration in government administration, the conditions that makes policy integration viable, and obstacles to its adoption as a common practice in government institutions. The meeting will tackle the “what?” and “how?” of integration, with special consideration of the prospects for policy integration in low- and middle-income countries.

Policy integration will indeed present a key governance challenge in pursuit of the SDGs, particularly in view of the rising complexity of social problems and global issues with important national and local impacts such as climate change. Effective policy integration is all the more important, given the range of expertise from different institutions and sectors required to tackle the SDGs, as well as demands for more innovative, responsive and equitable service delivery, which transcend the competences of individual ministries.

Photo credit: ec.europa.eu

For more information: [UN DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management \(DPADM\)](#)

Responding to demands to monitor goals beyond 2015



UN DESA’s Statistics Division and the Statistical Office of the European Communities are organizing the Global Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics on 15-16 January, seeking to formulate an adequate

response to the increased demand for detailed and timely data to monitor progress on the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda.

These goals and targets are universal in the sense that they concern all United Nations Member States, but they are specific

at the same time in the way they are formulated at sub-national, national and regional levels. These new demands require a more efficiently functioning national statistical system.

This Conference is organized as a High-Level Forum of official statisticians with the purpose to seek a broad consensus on the strategic agenda for statistics for the consideration of the 46th Session of the Statistical Commission in March 2015.

For more information: [Global Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics](#)

Experts gather to discuss future international arrangement on forests



The second UN Forum on Forests Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting (AHEG2) on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) is scheduled to take place at UN Headquarters from 12 to 16 January.

The meeting will discuss actions and options related to key components of the International Arrangement beyond 2015. These components include the Forest Instrument, Financing of Sustainable Forest Management, the UNFF and its Secretariat, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, Major Groups and Regional Entities. The outcome of these discussions will be reflected in the AHEG2 Co-Chairs' summary, which will be submitted for consideration by the Forum at UNFF11 in May 2015.

In April 2013, the tenth session of the UN Forum on Forests established the open-ended intergovernmental ad hoc expert group (AHEG) on the IAF as part of the intersessional preparatory activities for the review of the IAF. The AHEG is mandated to review the performance and effectiveness of the IAF, based on inputs provided by various stakeholders, as well as the outcome of the work of the independent assessment of the IAF. Based on this review, the AHEG will put forth a set of recommendations to UNFF11 on the strategic direction on the function and institutional arrangements of the IAF for the period beyond 2015.

For more information: [Second meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Expert Group on the International Arrangement on Forests \(AHEG2\)](#)

New million dollar UN DESA Grant to promote sustainable energy



“The well-being of our people and economy, and the health of our environment, all depend on safe, clean, secure, sustainable and affordable energy,” said Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social

Affairs, at the first meeting of the Advisory Council for a newly created UN DESA Grant to promote sustainable energy.

During the Rio+20 Conference, Member States realized that there had been success stories in advancing sustainable development, but that the international community is not doing enough to replicate and scale up best practices and lessons learned from successful experiences. They encouraged the UN system to do more to identify and publicize best practices and lessons learned, in collaboration with Governments, business, civil society and other stakeholders.

As a response, UN DESA, with funding support from the China Energy Fund Committee (CEFC), a Hong Kong-based NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, has launched the project “Powering the Future We Want – Recognizing Innovative Practices in Energy for Sustainable Development”. This initiative seeks to replicate and scale up best practices and lessons learned from successful sustainable energy experiences.

“At the Rio+20 Conference, Member States recognized the critical importance of access to sustainable, modern energy services for poverty eradication, public health and in meeting basic human needs” said Mr Wu. “They also recognized that improving energy efficiency, increasing the share of renewable energy and cleaner and energy-efficient technologies are critical for addressing climate change,” he continued.

The ‘Powering the Future We Want’ initiative therefore offers an annual one million US dollar Grant to institutions or individuals that have demonstrated leadership and innovation in promoting sustainable energy. The award does not simply recognize past achievement, but the recipients of the Grant are expected to apply the funds to furthering their best practices and to building capacity in developing countries, thus furthering sustainable energy.

The first meeting of the Advisory Council for the Grant took place on 5 December at UN Headquarters in New York. The Council discussed selection criteria and modalities for the Grant,

which are expected to be published before the end of the year. An important selection criteria will be for recipients of the grant to outline how they will use the award to further best practices and capacity building.

Applicants will also need to demonstrate that they have achieved, through leadership and innovative initiatives, tangible results and impacts at the local, national, regional or global levels in advancing energy for sustainable development.

The Advisory Council for the Grant consists of 12 members from UN entities, academic institutions, business and civil society groups. Membership is for one year, renewable annually. Each year, the Advisory Council will review and rank the applications and submit the top three candidates to the High-level Steering Committee, for Grant consideration and decision. The High-level Steering Committee consists of the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Secretary-General of China Energy Fund Committee and further UN entities.

For more information: [Powering the future we want](#)

The ECOSOC President and members of the ECOSOC Bureau participated in the meeting, which provided a forum for delegations, UN staff and participants from academia and NGOs to discuss critical aspects of the transition from an MDG to an SDG-based development agenda. Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, DESA delivered an opening address on behalf of Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary General.

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

Getting ready for the 2015 and 2016 cycles of ECOSOC

Preparations for the 2015 substantive session of ECOSOC commenced with the convening of an Expert Group Meeting in preparation for the 2015 and 2016 cycles of the Council, which was held in New York on 4-5 December. The discussions, in particular, focused on the institutional, policy, monitoring, accountability and partnership dimensions of such a transition.

Participants examined the type of changes and adaptations that will be required in existing institutional, policy and accountability frameworks to accommodate a universal, inclusive, and integrated development agenda and to ensure its effective implementation. They also addressed how the ECOSOC system can work more effectively to provide substantive leadership to support these changes and facilitate a smooth transition to the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

Experts shared their views and insights on the issues, which were thoroughly discussed and examined in the course of the two-day meeting. The outcome of the EGM will provide the analytical basis for the preparation of the Secretary-General's reports on the 2015 theme of the ECOSOC and on the 2015 Thematic Discussion, as well as for the preparatory activities for the next two cycles of the Council.

Capacity development

Strengthening environment statistics programmes



UN DESA's Statistics Division is organizing a sub-regional workshop for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries, entitled "Environment Statistics in support of the implementation of the

Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013)" in collaboration with COMESA. It will take place in Balaclava, Mauritius on 26-29 January with hosting and on-ground support being provided by UNDP and Statistics Mauritius.

This workshop follows the United Nations Statistical Commission's endorsement in 2013 of the revised FDES 2013 as the framework for strengthening environment statistics programmes in countries. The Commission also recognized the FDES as a useful tool in the context of Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The FDES 2013 is a multi-purpose conceptual and statistical framework which marks out the scope of environment statistics. It provides an organizing structure to guide the collection and compilation of environment statistics at the national level and is very relevant for policy analysis and decision making. This workshop will provide opportunity for participating Member States to strengthen national data production and coordinate efforts to improve environment statistics spanning topics such as water, biodiversity, agriculture, emissions of greenhouse gases, extreme events, environmental health and environmental management.

It is also very relevant to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) since many of the environment statistics to be discussed and analyzed are necessary for measurement of countries' progress towards achieving the goals. The implementation of the FDES 2013 will help countries address the increasing demand for integrated information in support of integrated policies in the follow-up to Rio+20 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda through the strengthening of environmental statistics and indicators.

Key elements of the workshop will include: in-depth presentation on and discussion about the FDES 2013, including its components, sub-components, topics and Basic/Core Sets of Environment

Statistics; application of the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT); definition of key concepts and terminology in the field of environment statistics; use of various data sources such as geospatial information systems, remote sensing, scientific research, administrative data; and introduction to the planned Methodological Manual for the Basic Set of Environment Statistics.

For more information: [The Environment Statistics Section](#)

Study visit presents national e-government programme



Within the framework of the Development Account Project on "Strengthening Capacities of the Public Sector in Least Developed Countries to Deliver Quality Services Equitably through the Transfer and Adaptation

of Innovative Practices", UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) is organizing a second study visit in order to expose the interested participants from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to Bahrain's National E-Government Programme.

The main purpose of the study tour, that will take place from 24 to 29 January 2015 in the Kingdom of Bahrain, is to support the adaptation and implementation of e-government practices in LDCs through an in-depth practical and hands-on learning experience.

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

For more information:

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

Data measuring a green economy



UN DESA's Statistics Division is organizing a regional workshop within the UN Development Account project "Supporting Developing Countries Measure Progress Towards Achieving a Green Economy" in Bangkok,

Thailand on 20-23 January. The project is led by the division in collaboration with UNEP, UNIDO, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

A similar workshop has taken place in December 2014 for the Latin American and Caribbean region and the new workshop will be based on experienced gained therein.

Recognising the importance of high quality statistics and their effective use in promoting evidence-based socio-economic policies and achieving internationally agreed goals, the project aims to enhance the national statistical systems' capacity in selected pilot countries. This is expected to lead to the production of good quality, timely and reliable statistics and indicators to inform about progress towards achieving a green economy in the context of sustainable development.

The workshop will serve as an opportunity to strengthen national data production and coordinate efforts for improving underlying environment, energy, agricultural and other statistics in the region. It will bring together statisticians and policy makers that use and produce such indicators. Moreover, the workshop is important given the current policy context and the emergence of the sustainable development goals in the context of the post 2015 development agenda, as well as national efforts to move towards sustainable development around the world.

Key elements of the workshop include: a review of potential indicators, suitable for developing countries, that can be used to inform on green economy and sustainable development issues; the sharing of experiences from the assessment exercise in the four pilot countries of the region; and a more detailed discussion of technical issues in selected areas of statistics that are relevant for the compilation of indicators informing on green economy issues. The workshop will be followed by direct technical assistance to the pilot countries in the next phase of this project.

For more information:

[Supporting Developing Countries Measure Progress Towards Achieving a Green Economy](#)

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Publications and Websites

Technical reports

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015



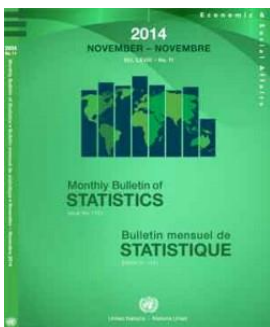
The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015 (WESP) will be launched in multi-city locations around the world in mid-January. The first chapter of the report on the “Global economic outlook”, pre-released on 10 December 2014, reveals that the global economy is expected to grow 3.1 per cent in 2015 and 3.3 per cent in 2016, compared with an estimated growth of 2.6 per cent for 2014.

WESP is produced at the beginning of each year by UN DESA, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the five UN regional commissions and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

- [More information](#)

Statistical compilations

Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online



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

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

- [For more information](#)

Outreach material

Sustainable Development in Action, Volume 2, Issue 11

The December issue of Sustainable Development in Action, published by UN DESA’s Division for Sustainable Development, is available online. The newsletter aims to feature the work carried out by Member States, United Nations system, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing sustainable development and leading the way to the Future We Want.

- [Read full issue](#)

Enable Newsletter

Prepared by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCRPD) within UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development, the November issue is now available, putting a spotlight on a draft resolution on disability by the General Assembly’s Third Committee; a call for a new International Albinism Awareness Day on 13 June; and on disability inclusion in post-2015 disaster risk reduction strategies. The newsletter features input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and civil society.

- [Read full issue](#)

Youth Flash Newsletter

Published by UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development Focal Point on Youth, the November issue highlights the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development. It also provides updates from UN Agencies including from ILO, sharing what employment services work for youth and why and from IOM and UNAOC regarding their PLURAL+ Youth Video Competition. The newsletter is

prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, and from youth organizations around the world.

- [Read full issue](#)

DESA NGO News

The latest issue shares information on the “Working with ECOSOC” booklet which is now available in French, that pre-registration for CSW59 is now open and that the deadline for requests to make oral statements at the Fifty-Third Session of the Commission for Social Development is approaching. Providing the most up-to-date information on news and upcoming events of interest to civil society at UN headquarters in New York, Geneva and elsewhere, the newsletter is published by UN DESA’s NGO Branch.

- [Read full issue](#)

Natural Resources Forum

The November edition of Natural Resources Forum, a United Nations Sustainable Development Journal, is available online including the following articles:

- Market-Based Conservation: Aligning Static Theory with Dynamic Systems;
- Has the Clean Development Mechanism Assisted Sustainable Development?;
- The relationship between sustainable development and resource use from a geographic perspective;
- The paradox of the modernisation of urban water systems in Europe: Intrinsic institutional limits for sustainability;
- Economics of Salt-induced Land Degradation and Restoration;
- Local people’s perceptions for participating in conservation in a heritage site: A case study of Wuyishan Scenery District, Southeastern China.

- [Read full issue](#)

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 73

Prepared by UN DESA’s Development Policy and Analysis Division, the December issue is available online with the following summary:

- Further appreciation of the U.S. dollar
- Japan registers technical recession during the third quarter
- Lower inflation rates in many countries across the world as oil prices decline

- [To download](#)

Comings and Goings

Comings



Mr. Juwang Zhu was appointed by the Secretary-General as Director of UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) effective 1 December 2014. Mr. Zhu has over twenty-five years of experience working with

the United Nations intergovernmental processes on sustainable development, including major UN conferences and summits, and with the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Prior to his appointment as Director of DPADM, he served as Chief in the Division for Sustainable Development where he led a team of analysts focusing on climate change, oceans, urbanization, transport and small island developing States.

Mr. Zhu has served as Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA, providing advice on policy and management issues, including policy and substantive advice to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. During the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), Mr. Zhu was Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the Conference. In his previous assignments, Mr. Zhu was also responsible for strengthening relations with the business sector and with civil society organizations and for coordinating inter-agency affairs and partnerships for sustainable development.

The following staff members were also promoted in December:

Rosanna Castro, Administrative Assistant, Executive Office

Katrina De Guzman, Budget Assistant, Capacity Development Office

Goings

The following staff member retired in December:

Margo Kemp, Meetings Services Assistant, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Calendar

January

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2015 (WESP)

Mid-January, New York

Second UN Forum on Forests Ad-Hoc Expert Group Meeting (AHEG2) on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)

12-16 January, New York

2015 UN-Water Annual International Zaragoza Conference

15-17 January, Zaragoza, Spain

Global Conference on a Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics

15-16 January, New York

Regional workshop on “Supporting Developing Countries Measure Progress Towards Achieving a Green Economy”

20-23 January, Bangkok, Thailand

Sub-regional workshop for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) countries

26-29 January, Balaclava, Mauritius

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 Communication Section/SPCS 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.