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Reviving the Rio Spirit

The Earth Summit, the first UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, shifted paradigms. For the first time, during this unprecedented UN meeting, governments and UN leaders from across the globe re-thought economic development and fully recognized the integral and interdependent nature of our home, the Earth. The summit's shared message was to ensure a healthy planet by drastically changing our attitudes and behaviours. State leaders acknowledged the urgency of a deep change in consumption and production patterns.

During the Rio Summit, Agenda 21, a programme of action for sustainable development, was adopted. The document, which contains the Rio Declaration, further reaffirmed that sustainable development was delimited by the integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars.

Since the adoption of the Rio Declaration, progress has been made. In 2002, during the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), leaders met to renew the global commitment. Today, the concept of sustainable development has been incorporated in the agendas of every government and the private sector, and it has also been included in many UN declarations. More and more green jobs are being created,

alternative sources of energy are being developed and used, and production and consumption patterns have been modified.

However, efforts have fallen short of what was expected two decades ago, and the consequences are evident. Five million infants still die every year of preventable diseases. Two billion people live in poverty, many lacking access to basic services like health and primary education. Small island states are at high risk of environmental catastrophes, and even their own survival is a stake. Climate change and food and energy insecurity are threatening the world's stability. The weakened economic situation experienced since 2008 has drastically affected growth, and thus, nations have had to respond to new emerging challenges.

Today, more than ever before, there is a need to revive the enthusiasm and spirit experienced in 1992, and Rio+20, the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, will be the perfect place to renew commitments and prepare for new and emerging challenges.

About Rio+20

Recognizing the need to revitalize the discussions on sustainable development and to effectively prepare for emerging challenges, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2009 agreeing to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 in Brazil.

The summit's three objectives are to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assess progress and gaps in the implementation of agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges.

In order to focus the discussion and successfully reach the goals, the conference will consider two themes: “A green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication,” and “the institutional framework for sustainable development.”

It is expected that during the preparatory process and at the conference all sectors will bring innovative ideas and solutions focusing on the advancement of a green economy, which is the key for rapid progress on sustainable development.

In his statement to the Expert Meeting on the Green Economy in Geneva in October 2010, Mr. Sha Zukang, in his capacity as Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development said: “A green economy provides the missing entry point to accelerated progress, it offers new avenues and opportunities for pursuing the integration of the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development.”

Focusing on green economy also ensures that the discussion moves forward from just a low carbon economy. In fact, green economy is characterized by low inputs, low emission, low wastes, higher efficiency in resource uses and better product designs, as well as creating jobs that can lift people out of poverty.

In that sense, Rio+20 is expected to become the new historic UN meeting where solutions to the emerging challenges of the last 20 years will be explored. However, to meet the summit’s expectations and to reach its goal, the preparatory process becomes one of the most vital elements of the conference.

On the Road to Rio+20

To make Rio+20 an unprecedented success, it is crucial to facilitate the broadest possible participation from all the key stakeholders. As a result, the Rio+20 Secretariat has invited formal contributions from national delegations, UN system entities, and thousands of registered civil society organizations from all over the world.

The preparatory process will also include three meetings of the Preparatory Committee where procedural and substantive matters will be discussed and agreed upon. The first meeting was held in New York from 16-18 May 2010. The second one is intended to take place from 7-8 March 2011. The last meeting will be held in Brazil in 2012 to discuss the outcome of the Conference, immediately preceding UNCSD 2012.

Although DESA is in charge of organizing the 2012 conference, it has been recognized that to achieve the anticipated results, it is necessary to engage the entire UN family.

According to Mr. Sha, DESA needs the broad engagement from other secretariat departments, regional commissions, funds and

programmes and specialized agencies – in other words, the entire UN family – in order to provide effective, efficient and coordinated support for the preparation and organization of UNCSD 2012.

So far there are clear signs of collaboration for the preparatory process among members of the UN family. For example, DESA, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have organized a series of expert meetings in green economy.



It has also been realized that the only way to achieve comparable engagement to the Earth Summit from civil society is through outreach efforts. Consequently, at the Headquarters in New York, DESA and the Department of Public Information (DPI), jointly with other UN system entities and agencies, are creating communications campaigns for Rio+20.

To revive the Rio spirit there is a need to unite efforts across the board. Member States, the UN family, and civil society must actively participate in the preparatory process and at the conference. Without joint efforts, rekindling the Earth’s Summit enthusiasm will be a significant challenge.

During his statement to the Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) Plus meeting, on 12 November Mr. Sha said, “We had gotten off to a good start and we will continue along the path of collaboration. It is no exaggeration to say that it takes the whole UN family to support a successful UN Conference on Sustainable Development.”

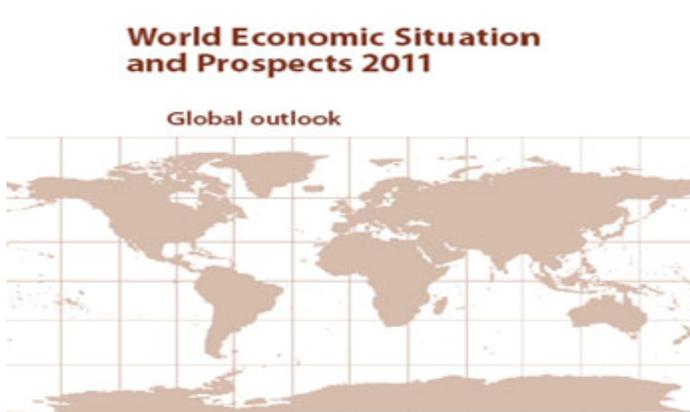
For more information: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Global economic outlook is marked by risks and uncertainties

World economic recovery will be uneven in the coming years. Prospects for advanced economies are marred by persistent high unemployment, withdrawal of stimulus measures, and continued financial fragility. Sovereign debt distress and tensions over exchange rates risk affecting global stability, which could also affect the till now much more robust performance of most developing countries.

According to the UN report the “World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2011”, to be released worldwide on 18 January, the expected economic expansion will be 3.1 per cent in 2011 and 3.5 per cent in 2012, which is far from optimal to enable economic revitalization.

The economy of the United States is expected to grow by 2.2 per cent in 2011; a slowdown from the 2.6 per cent growth in 2010. Economic recovery in the Euro area is forecasted to come to a virtual halt, with output expanding at a mere 1.3 per cent in 2011 and 1.9 per cent in 2012. In a more pessimistic scenario, the UN report predicts that Europe could well see a double-dip recession, while the economies of the United States and Japan might virtually stagnate and possibly also fall back into recession during 2011.



The global economy is being held up by robust recovery in developing countries since the third quarter of 2009. But the weakening economic landscape of developed nations is expected to moderate growth in developing countries from 7.0 per cent in 2010 to 6.0 per cent on average during 2011-2012.

Risks and Uncertainties

Rob Vos, Director of the Development Policy and Analysis Division of DESA emphasized that “We are not out of the woods yet and greater risks are looming.”

Factors affecting the economic recovery include the diminished cooperative spirit among major economies, reflected in uncoordinated monetary responses leading to turbulence and uncertainty in financial markets. At the same time, fiscal stimulus is being withdrawn in many economies, which in the present context threatens to keep unemployment high and drag the recovery in the near outlook.

Between 2007 and 2009 at least 30 million jobs were lost, and this number could even be greater, as it does not consider increases in precarious employment in the informal sector and rates of underemployment. Unemployment rates in most developed economies, except a few such as Germany and Australia, have stayed high and hardly come down.

In the United States, for instance, the unemployment rate may increase to 10 per cent at the beginning of 2011, up from 9.6 per cent in the third quarter of 2010. Some European countries are facing even more daunting prospects, such as in Spain where the rate jumped to 20.5 per cent in 2010 and where more than 40 per cent of the youth are without a job. The report predicts that unemployment rate will come down in the Euro zone at a snail's pace. With many without a job, household consumption will remain sluggish and drag output growth down. Vice versa, weak output growth will limit the creation of jobs.

Besides the lack of job creation, volatility in currency markets resulting from uncoordinated monetary expansions has increased tensions over currencies. This is adding more uncertainty to the already unstable macroeconomic landscape. The report explains that the strong quantitative easing (in simple terms, printing more dollars) in the United States, is putting downward pressure on the value of the world's reserve currency, causing ripples in currency markets worldwide. The UN warns that heightened tensions over currency and trade could potentially trigger renewed turmoil in financial markets.

Key challenges ahead

Providing more fiscal stimulus in the short run is the first of five key challenges that needs to be addressed according to the report. It provides evidence that most developed countries still have ample fiscal space and hence could provide such stimulus to regain the momentum of the recovery. Such action should be adequately coordinated among the major economies to ensure a reinvigoration of global growth that will also provide external demand for those economies which have exhausted their fiscal space. Absent of a new net fiscal stimulus and a faster recovery of bank lending to the private sector, growth is likely to remain anaemic in many countries in the foreseeable future.

The report sees a redesign of the fiscal stimulus as the second challenge. Thus far, stimulus packages in developed countries have focused mostly on income support measures, with tax-

related measures accounting for more than half of the stimulus package. Expanding public investing on renewable clean energy is a measure that the report cites as an adequate vehicle to aid economic recovery as this type of stimulus provides significantly greater employment effects. Monitoring closely the way in which income growth and productivity gains are shared in society, providing job-search training, and enhancing social protection policies are some of the other ways in which nations can redesign their fiscal spending.

As indicated, uncoordinated monetary expansion has been a cause of damaging exchange rate instability. The third challenge, therefore, is to avoid damaging international spillover effects, reaching cross-border agreements about the magnitude, speed and timing of quantitative easing policies will reduce the likelihood of increased global imbalances.

The fourth challenge is to ensure that there is sufficient financing for achieving the MDG's and also to increase investments for sustainable development in low-income countries. The report highlights that these countries have reduced fiscal space while facing large development deficits. Apart from delivering on existing aid commitments, donor countries should consider mechanisms to delink aid flows from their business cycles so as to prevent delivery shortfalls in times of crisis, when the need for development aid is most urgent.

Governments in major economies have become more focused on domestic policy challenges than on the spillover effects of their actions. Consequently, the fifth challenge will be to find effective ways to strengthen international policy coordination. According to the report, the focus in recent policy debates on exchange-rate realignment is too narrow and bilaterally focused.

In this regard, there is some urgency in making the G20 framework for sustainable global rebalancing more specific and operational. The report suggests that establishing concrete "current-account target zones" might be a meaningful way forward. Having clear and verifiable targets for desired policy outcomes would help make parties accountable, while the possible loss of reputation through non-compliance would be an incentive to live up to policy agreements.

Such target zones would also highlight the need for both surplus and deficit countries to contribute to sustaining global effective demand. The target zones should not, however, be seen as an end in themselves, but rather as a guide towards a sustainable growth path for the world, which should encompass the proposed actions to address all five key challenges.

As stated by Mr. Vos, "The road to recovery will be long and bumpy." However, if a cooperative spirit among developed economies is revived, economic responses are coordinated, and fiscal stimulus is resigned, a more optimistic scenario for the world economy could become within range.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.html>

UN climate change talks pave way for new gains

video



The United Nations climate change talks in Cancun concluded on 11 December with a package of decisions to help countries advance towards a low-emissions future, delivering a victory in the battle against one of today's biggest challenges.

The outcome is an "important success for a world much in need of it," Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, following the conclusion of the two-week meeting. "Governments came together in common cause, for the common good, and agreed on a way forward to meet the defining challenge of our time."

Video: <http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2010/12/un-climate-change-talks-score-important-success-pave-way-for-new-gains.html> (1:08 minutes)

Statement: <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp?nid=4993>

Website: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

Global Dialogue on Development

High demand for consultative status

2011 Regular Session of the NGO Committee will be held from 31 January to 9 February to examine applications for consultative status

The Committee on NGOs, a standing committee of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will meet to review a record number of applications by NGOs seeking consultative status with ECOSOC. Accreditation is important to many NGOs, as it allows for access and participation in all of the subsidiary bodies of the Council, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. In addition, ECOSOC consultative status allows for participation in the Human Rights Council and many of the human rights treaty bodies of the United Nations.

The Committee is expected to review over 170 new applications, and will also deal with an additional workload of reviewing 180 applications from NGOs deferred from earlier sessions.

Of the roughly 3,400 NGOs currently accredited to the Council, some 2,000 organizations in the highest two categories of accreditation, namely General and Special consultative status, are required to report every four years on the work they have undertaken in support of the goals of the Council and the United Nations. In January, over 200 of these reports will be reviewed.

With such a heavy work load, the deliberations of the Committee are facilitated by a unique conference services system, called the Paperless Committee. The 19 member States represented in the Committee are each provided with a laptop to review detailed documentation of each NGO being considered. The system has been recognized by the granting of the UN21 Award in 2008.

For more information: www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo

Securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development

First intersessional meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development will be held in New York on 10-11 January

This first meeting will update on the preparatory process leading to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio + 20), secure renewed political commitment, discuss the Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and focus on the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The meeting will also introduce the Synthesis Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the Objective and Themes of the Conference (A/CONF.216/PC/3). More than 100 member States, Major Groups' organizations, and United Nations system entities responded to the five-part questionnaire that was proposed by the first Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in May 2010, soliciting their views and requesting information pertaining to the objectives and themes of the Conference.

The Synthesis Report is a reflection of these responses, examining growth in political commitment to sustainable development and evaluating progress in implementation since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit; identifying new and emerging challenges; and offering opinions and suggestions that will set the foundation for future discussions and actions on the themes of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (GESDPE) and the institutional framework for sustainable development. The results will continue to evolve as additional responses are compiled and synthesized as part of the UNCSD preparatory process.

For more information:

http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=73&Itemid=124

Sustainable patterns of consumption and production

High-level intersessional meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development on a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) will be held from 13-14 January in Panama City

Transitioning to more sustainable patterns of consumption and production is at the heart of sustainable development, and international co-operation is essential to effect that transition. Recognizing this, governments at the Johannesburg Summit in 2002 called for the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production that will promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems.

This meeting is jointly organized by the Government of Panama, DESA's Division on Sustainable Development and UNEP. It

will provide a non-negotiating space for Member States, Major Groups, and UN Agencies to discuss potential programs to be included in the 10Year Framework of Programs on SCP (10YFP) to support regional and national initiatives, the structure the 10YFP could take, and the possible visions and objectives it could serve.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_scpp/scpp_tenyearframprog.shtml

ECOSOC reaches out for education goals in Africa

High Level Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will be held on 21 January in Kenya

In support of the 2011 United Nations Economic and Social Council's Annual Ministerial Review, an African Regional Ministerial Meeting will take place in Nairobi focusing on the theme "The Right to Education for All in Africa: Reinforcing quality and equity". The meeting will be hosted by the Republic of Kenya in cooperation with DESA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The meeting will take place in the context of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All (EFA) International Conference on "Teachers for EFA in Africa: Collaborative action to address the teacher gap", to be held in Nairobi on 18-20 January.

The meeting will make an important contribution to the upcoming ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review to be held at United Nations Headquarters in Geneva in July 2011 on the theme "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to education" and will bring together senior regional practitioners and experts to identify integrated approaches and concrete policy measures that ECOSOC can promote to accelerate progress on the international education goals.

For more information:

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

Forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication

Government delegates, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and representatives from intergovernmental organizations and major groups will come together at the 9th session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF9) from 24 January – 4 February in New York

This year's session will focus on forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication and include community-based forest management, social development and indigenous and other local and forest-dependent communities, as well as social and cultural aspects. Discussions will also assess progress made on the implementation of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests and towards the achievement of the four global objectives on forests.

During the High-level Segment on 2 February, UNFF9 will officially launch the International Year of Forests 2011, in which Heads of State and Ministers are expected to participate. It will also feature four roundtables on Forests for people, Finance for forest-dependent communities, Forests-plus: Cross-sectoral and crossinstitutional approach and Forests & green economies.

The session will also include panel discussions, including a panel on food, energy and economic challenges and opportunities with special focus on women and youth and another panel on regional and sub-regional perspectives on forests for people, livelihoods and poverty eradication.

In addition, the meeting will discuss enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, including the provision of further guidance to the CPF. It will also hold an Interactive dialogue among Member States, major groups and CPF members on the agenda item on Multi-stakeholder dialogue.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

Forest and climate change: Time to act

More than 1,500 people attended "Forest Day 4" on 5 December, which was held in conjunction with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16), in Cancun, Mexico

The Day featured a range of issues under discussion on the role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, including forest biodiversity, as well as forest finance issues and the challenges surrounding REDD+ and sustainable forest management.

Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, addressed the opening plenary session of Forest Day 4, and stressed the need to communicate the benefits of forests beyond their influence on our environment. "We need to go beyond simply touting the environmental importance of forests. I want to emphasize that a people-centered approach must become a cornerstone of any debate on forests including the debate on forests and climate change," said Mr. Sha.

Mr. Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, President of Mexico, addressed the opening plenary session of Forest Day 4. “Here and now, it's time for all of us to push and push hard for full incorporation of REDD+ into a long-term international climate change agreement,” President Calderón said.

The theme for Forest Day 4 was "Time to Act," highlighting the necessity of taking action to help preserve and sustainably manage the world's forests, the biodiversity they embrace and the people who depend on them. “We have to change the way we do things or climate change will change us,” President Calderón noted.

DESA's UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat co-organized a Forest Day 4 sub plenary session on “Biodiversity: Synergies in policy and practice” together with the Secretariat of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). Participants stressed that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are not just co-benefits for REDD+ but also provide prerequisites for the success of REDD+ initiatives.

“There is greater awareness of the benefits forests provide in stabilizing climate change, protecting biodiversity and in the livelihoods of billions,” said the Director of the UNFF Secretariat, Ms. Jan McAlpine. Forests and forest soils store more than one trillion tons of carbon— twice the amount found in the atmosphere.

The UNFF Secretariat also co-organized a learning event on “REDD+ and Forest Finance: The need for a 360 degree perspective on Forest Finance” together with UNEP/ UNREDD. Speakers stressed the need for additional financing to implement REDD+ at scale, and pointed out that financing pledges made to date fall short of estimated funding needed to stimulate and pay for early REDD+ action at scale, technology transfers, capacity building and the development of national and sub-national MRV systems.

“Forest financing can contribute significantly to the national economy and reducing poverty, proving that forests provide more than just timber and carbon,” said Ms. McAlpine.

With the International Year of Forests 2011 fast approaching, Forest Day 4 will help continue momentum towards greater action and awareness on the links between forests, biodiversity, climate change and human well-being in 2011. The event was hosted by the Government of Mexico, through the National Forestry Commission, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and the Centre for International Forest Research (CIFOR).

The International Forest Film Festival

More than 170 entries for the International Film Festival were received across all six categories, from over 25 countries. The films will be reviewed over the next month, with winners' films being screened during the Ninth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests in New York. The submissions window for the International Forest Film Festival has closed, and the festival is currently in the judging stage.

After winners are announced, the film festival will move into the screening stage. Member states, major groups, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector are encouraged to hold screenings of films from the festival, with DVDs being provided by the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival. Over 100 screening requests from around the world have already been received, and more continue to come in each day.

Launches and events

The official launch of Forests 2011 will take place at United Nations Headquarters during the high-level segment of the Ninth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (2 February 2011), in which Heads of State and Ministers are expected to participate.

There are some national launch events that the Secretariat has been informed of as well. Germany's national campaign will be launched by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection during the International Green Week in Berlin on 21-30 January 2011. Switzerland will officially launch its national campaign for Forests 2011 on 27 January 2011 during debates of the Swiss Forestry Society. Countries and organizations that have not notified the Secretariat should do so by sending an email to forests@un.org or a letter by post to the UNFF Secretariat.

“Bridging” from Biodiversity 2010 to Forests 2011

There is a clear synergy between the International Year of Biodiversity, which took place in 2010, and the forthcoming Forests 2011. To commemorate both Years, a “bridging event” was held as part of the closing ceremony of the International Year of Biodiversity in December 2010. The event featured high level speakers, including Mr. Kiyoo Akasaka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Ms. Jan McAlpine, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat and Mr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. There are plans to build on the successes of the International Year of Biodiversity and carry the momentum forward into Forests 2011.

Logo translation and dissemination

After its launch in July, the Forests 2011 logo has been distributed to over 375 groups, including Member States and other organizations. It has been translated into 40 languages: Austrian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, German, Greek, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Kyrgyz, Latvian, Lithuanian, Malay (Brunei), Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovakian, Slovenian, Swedish, Swahili (Tanzania), Swiss (4 languages), Turkish and Welsh.

For more information:

<http://www.forestsclimatechange.org/?id=276>

Second Committee adopted 40 resolutions

The Economic and Financial Committee – also known as the Second Committee – concluded its session on 1 December with the adoption of thirty-six resolutions by consensus, four resolutions by vote and three decisions

The Committee had also several new resolutions, all of which were adopted by consensus. The resolution on “Innovative Mechanisms of Financing for Development” stressed that innovative financing mechanisms could make a positive contribution in assisting developing countries and calls for the convening of a separate meeting of the Committee during the 66th session of the GA.

The resolution on “Promotion of ecotourism for poverty eradication and environment protection” illustrates the inter-linkages between sustainable development and the fight against poverty and hunger. The resolution on cooperative measures on waste originating from chemical munitions dumped at sea noted the importance of raising public awareness of the environmental effects related to this waste.

In the resolution on the protection of coral reefs, the Committee urges States and competent international organizations to take all practical steps to protect coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development.

In addition, the resolution on the Second Decade on Poverty Eradication (2008-2017) emphasized the importance of education and training as critical factors, with a particular emphasis on the role played by UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF in this regard.

The Committee sent a strong message to the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Committee also decided that the 66th session of the GA will hold a one-day high-level event on desertification on 20 September 2011. The Committee further decided to proclaim

two International Years: 2012 for Sustainable Energy for All and 2013 for Water Cooperation.

The Second Committee also benefited from the high-level events that took place in September on the MDGs, biodiversity and SIDS, as well as the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October. Many of the resolutions built on their outcomes, putting them into implementation.

Finally, the adoption of the decision, “Improving the working methods of the Second Committee”, submitted by the Chair, marks an important step forward in guiding and improving the work of the Committee.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/index.shtml>

Adoption of landmark resolution on ageing

The Third Committee adopted resolution A/C.3/65/L.8/Rev.1 on 19 November in which the General Assembly decided “to establish an open-ended working group, open to all States Members of the United Nations, for the purpose of strengthening the protection of human rights of older persons by considering the existing international framework of the human rights of older persons and identifying possible gaps and how best to address them, including by considering, as appropriate, the feasibility of further instruments and measures, and requests the Secretary-General to provide all necessary support within existing resources for the duration of its mandate.”

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/ga_resolutions/A-C3-65-L8-Rev1.pdf

Trends and Analysis

Indigenous peoples' rights to forests

International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Forests will be held in New York from 12-14 January

Forests account for 30 percent, or 3.2 billion hectares, of the earth's land area and are the traditional territories for many indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples living in forests possess clearly defined rights to land and natural resources, including communal ownership of their ancestral lands. They manage the natural resources on their territories, exercise their customary laws, and represent themselves through their own institutions.

However, these rights are often denied by development and conservation schemes. Indigenous peoples suffer disproportionately from large-scale development and conservation projects and are often forced to relocate, while their rights to compensation are often denied or overlooked. These actions very often result in serious consequences for indigenous peoples.

In 2006, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2011 the International Year of Forests and invited Governments, the United Nations system, relevant non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other actors to make concerted efforts to raise awareness at all levels to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

Sustainable forest management is seen to contribute extensively to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals with respect to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. It is also seen to contribute towards the global effort to fight climate change and combat desertification and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, along with numerous other benefits for the betterment of the livelihoods of people.

For indigenous peoples, the International Year of Forests has the potential to have a central voice in the global debate on forests, as well as find a way forward to the often contentious interactions that occur between indigenous peoples, States, commercial and corporate forest interests.

At its ninth session, the Permanent Forum decided to hold an Expert Group Meeting, coinciding with the International Year of Forests. At its regular session on 22 July 2010, the Economic and Social Council approved the Permanent Forum's recommendation in decision 2010/248.

The meeting will include indigenous experts from the seven Permanent Forum regions as well as Permanent Forum members, States, UN Agencies, Indigenous Peoples' Organizations and academics. The findings of this Expert Group Meeting will be presented to the Tenth Session of the Permanent Forum in May 2011.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/workshops.html>

Dealing with discrepancies and gaps of MDG data

Workshop on MDG Monitoring for Countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region will be held in San Jose, Costa Rica from 31 January – 3 February

The workshop, which is organized by DESA's Statistics Division in collaboration with ECLAC, will bring together representatives from national statistical offices, line ministries and international agencies, to review recommendations for reporting of MDG data and to establish strategies for dealing with data discrepancies and data gaps at the national and international level; particularly for poverty, labor and health related MDG indicators.

In addition, the workshop will provide participants with skills needed to improve the production and dissemination of MDG indicators, and aims at explaining data differences between national and international figures.

For more information:

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

Advance international public policy issues for the Internet

Open consultations on enhanced cooperation on international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet took place in New York on 14 December

On 14 December 2010, Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, convened a face-to-face consultation with Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector on the process towards enhanced cooperation on Internet-related public policy issues in response to ECOSOC resolution 2010/2. Participants were invited to reflect, above all, what international public policy issues are not being adequately addressed by current

mechanisms and what specific processes should be pursued to enhanced cooperation in these areas.

While the range of issues continues to reflect the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in broad terms, opinions are divided on how to pursue cooperation in different areas. Suggestions range from discussion within existing institutional frameworks to the creation of a new international Internet organization. Speakers included representatives from 14 Governments, 3 international organizations, 8 civil society organizations, and 5 from the private sector. DESA Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) also received written contributions from 7 Governments, 7 international organizations, 28 civil society organizations, and 9 from the private sector.

DPADM will continue to collect written inputs from accredited entities through 31 December 2010. All inputs, both written and oral, will be synthesized by the Secretary-General and submitted as a report to the United Nations General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council next year, which will be prepared by DPADM.

For more information: <http://www.unpan.org/dpadm/wsisfollowup/>
<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2010/12/special-event-consultations-on-enhanced-cooperation-of-international-public-policy-issues-pertaining-to-the-internet-am.html>

Accountability, auditing and citizens' engagement for development

International seminar on Strengthening External Public Auditing in the ASOSAI Region was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 13-18 December

The Development Management Branch (DMB) of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) represented DESA in the international seminar on "Strengthening External Public Auditing" in the Asian Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI) Region. The seminar was hosted by the Board of Auditing and Inspection (BAI) and was attended by the Asian members of the International Association of Supreme Auditing Institutions (INTOSAI). Mr. Roberto Villarreal, Chief of Branch (DMB), delivered a keynote presentation in the seminar on the topic of Accountability, Auditing and Citizens' Engagement: Public Policy Issues to Enhance Development.

BAI has hosted seminars on various issues for the ASOSAI member Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) every three years since 1983 with a view to enhancing audit capacity of member SAIs. This year, the BAI seminar functioned as a regional follow-up to the INTOSAI Conference on Strengthening External Public Auditing in INTOSAI Regions held in Vienna, Austria from 26-27

May, 2010, in which Dr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant-Secretary-General of DESA delivered a keynote presentation on "the Importance of Independent SAIs for the Implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals."

Attended by high-ranking officials of the ASOSAI member SAIs, the seminar involved a series of discussion sessions where participants delivered presentations on their respective countries' level of independence. Several expert lectures were also delivered by eminent audit experts, such as current and/or former heads of SAIs, and the INTOSAI Secretariat officials.

Preventing and combating corruption in the public service

First Intersessional Meeting of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on the Prevention of Corruption was held in Vienna from 13 to 15 December

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) represented DESA in this high-level event, which was organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The meeting was attended by over 100 national delegations for a total of approximately 500 delegates, including representatives from the World Bank, UNDP, OECD and others.

Following a new United Nations Public Service Awards category on "Preventing and Combating Corruption in the Public Service", jointly established by DPADM and UNODC, the Division was invited to make a presentation about the Awards programme and innovative practices in governance. During the same session, UNODC presented a background paper entitled "Good practices in the prevention of corruption and regulation models in the public sector", highlighting, among others, the work carried out by DPADM "on the nexus between corruption, poor administration and mismanagement". Particular emphasis was given to the United Nations Public Service Awards, analytical studies, compilations of laws and practices, the Charter for the Public Service in Africa and the Ibero-American Charter for the Public Service. DPADM was also invited to make a presentation on the role of e-procurement and citizen engagement in the fight against corruption.

The Working Group is to adopt a report on its meeting, which is expected to contain recommendations for consideration and action by the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption at its fourth session. The Working Group was established by the Conference of the States Parties to the UN Convention against Corruption to advise and assist the Conference in the implementation of its mandate on the prevention of corruption.

The Conference also decided that the working group will: (a) Assist the Conference in developing and accumulating knowledge in the area of prevention of corruption; (b) Facilitate the exchange of information and experience among States on preventive measures and practices; (c) Facilitate the collection, dissemination and promotion of best practices in corruption prevention; (d) Assist the Conference in encouraging cooperation among all stakeholders and sectors of society in order to prevent corruption.

For more information:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/working-group4.html>,

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/December/new-united-nations-public-service-award-category-on-corruption.html?ref=fs6>,

<http://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/WorkingGroup/s/workinggroup4/2010-December-13-15/V1056726e.pdf>

Examining current trends in e-governance programmes

Expert Group Meeting on the United Nations e-Government Survey 2012: Towards a More Citizen-Centric Approach was held in New York from 6-7 December

A comprehensive revision of the United Nations e-Government Survey questionnaire was undertaken and new indicators were proposed at an EGM organized by DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) to review and examine the Survey's methodology in response to current trends in e-government programmes. A group of e-government experts from academia and research institutes participated in the EGM. The discussions mainly focused on six proposed initiatives: i) user take-up and training of the public service delivery through ICT tools; ii) accessibility of Internet or mobile connectivity to all; iii) accessibility of e-services to vulnerable groups; iv) citizen engagement in e-service delivery; iv) Whole-of-Government and one-stop service provision; and vi) information services on environment related issues.

Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar, Chief of the Communication and Outreach Branch, represented the Division of Sustainable Development at the EGM, particularly contributing to initiative vi mentioned above. This exercise also helped address the contribution DPADM will provide to the Rio+20 Conference. A set of suggestions for consideration on the upgrading of the United Nations e-Government Survey methodology and questionnaire has been developed as a result of the EGM, which will be used as a reference for the preparation for the forthcoming e-Government Survey.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/BrowseEventsbyCalendar/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1646/language/en-US/Default.aspx?selecteddate=12/6/2010>

Strengthening the use of ICT to achieve the MDGs

2010 GAID Global Forum and Annual Meeting took place on 5-6 December in Abu Dhabi

The Global Alliance for ICT and Development (GAID) held its 5th annual Global Forum – “Information and Communication Technologies for achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Moving from Advocacy to Action” at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The Forum convened relevant stakeholders for an action-oriented dialogue on emerging issues and challenges in the field of ICT for Development. Throughout the two days, the participants performed a collective ‘reality check’ on the progress made thus far in using ICT to achieve the MDGs and what still needs to be done to ensure that ICT fulfills their vast potential for accelerating development.

During the Forum the Alliance also presented its major, recently launched initiative – the MDG eNabler, a free web-based set of ICT-based tools and resources designed to assist governments and all development practitioners in their work towards achieving the MDGs.

In the afternoon of the first day of the Forum, seven “solution salons” were held and allowed participants to break into thematic groups of their choice for intimate, focused sessions on issues related to the use of ICT for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Led by leading UN organizations, private sector companies and academic leaders, including WHO, UNESCO, Intel and Columbia University, among others, each session's participants worked to identify the key issues and problems of their respective salon subjects, design and present solutions to these issues and problems and then report back to the larger Forum group the following day on their results and recommendations for GAID and the broader development community. These sessions were lauded by the event's participants and the recommendations will be used to guide the work of the Alliance moving forward.

The Alliance also held Board and Strategy Council meetings in Abu Dhabi, where the future plan of action for the Alliance and

the future development of the MDG eNabler initiative were discussed. There was wide recognition of the positive and forceful impact that the Alliance was making in the expanding field of ICT for Development, in particularly in its recently streamlined mandate to promote the use of ICT for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

For more information: <http://www.un-gaid.org>

Promoting Public Service Awards in Latin America

Briefing session to the Permanent Missions on the UN Public Service Awards 2011 was held on 23 November in New York

As a follow-up to a request by representatives of Permanent Missions to the United Nations who attended the briefing session on the UN Public Service Awards programme on 3 November 2010, DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) organized a special briefing session on 23 November 2010 for representatives from Latin American countries.

DPADM briefed the representatives about the UN Public Service Awards programme and the 2011 call for nominations. Mr. Limon Rodriguez of UNIFEM (part of UN-Women) made a presentation about the new UN Public Service Award category on gender-responsive delivery of public services. Representatives of Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru attended the briefing and expressed great appreciation for this initiative. The session was very well received by the representatives and many offered to disseminate information to their respective capitals and to local levels.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/UNPSDayAwards/UNPublicServiceAwards/tabid/1095/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Capacity Development

Online training courses in public administration

UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN) Online Training Centre's new improved face, which was launched on 1 November 2010, has been positively received by its learners

The 7 interactive courses available were upgraded with an improved assessment and certification engine and three new courses were launched - one in English and two in Spanish. The courses, which are free of charge, cover various topics on electronic and mobile government, institution and human resources management in public administration, knowledge management in government and millennium development goals.

Already 67 users enrolled in the courses in less than four weeks and more than 80 per cent of these learners completed the courses. One of the learners, Mr. Abbas S. Kudrati, Head of E-Government Authority of Bahrain, praised the new platform and courses by stating that "these are amazing and eye openers". Another learner, from the Economics and Finance Department of the Catalonia Regional Government of Spain, informed DESA that his institution has agreed to include UNPAN courses in the annual training record of staff.

A new course on "Introduction to Citizen Engagement in Public Governance for the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals" provides an overview of the ideas, issues, tools and examples of practices and methodologies of participatory public governance that can be effective in fostering the achievement of the MDGs. The objective of the training course is to enhance knowledge and capacities, and to motivate for action. It is addressed to practitioners, including community leaders, responsible for the formulation and implementation of development policies and programmes, as well as scholars and students of public administration.

The new training course is integrated by eight modules: Awareness of Development Needs and the MDGs; Awareness of Citizen Engagement to Promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment; Public Governance for MDGs Achievement; Citizen Engagement Fundamentals; Framework of Participation; Role of Intergovernmental Organizations, Government and Civil Society; Modalities and Practices of Participation; and e-Participation. The course will be launched to the public in early January on the UNPAN online training platform.

More information: <http://www.unpan.org/elearning>

Publications and Websites

Technical reports

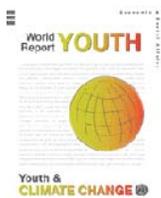
Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2011

The report, to be released worldwide on 18 January, predicts weaker global growth in 2011 and 2012 as the recovery has lost momentum since the middle of 2010. World gross product is forecast to expand by 3.1 per cent in 2011 and 3.5 per cent in 2012, following estimated growth of 3.6 per cent in 2010. The report emphasizes that the outlook remains uncertain and surrounded by serious downside risks. The cooperative spirit among major economies is waning, which has debilitated the effectiveness of responses to the crisis. Uncoordinated monetary responses, in particular, have become a source of turbulence and uncertainty in financial markets.

The recovery may suffer further setbacks if some of the downside risks materialize, in which case a double-dip recession is looming for Europe, Japan and the United States. In the short run, more fiscal stimulus will be needed to reinvigorate the recovery, but that it will need to be better coordinated with monetary policies and reoriented to provide stronger support to employment generations.

The report further indicates that the lack of employment growth is the weakest link of the economic recovery. Between 2007 and the end of 2009, at least 30 million jobs were lost worldwide as a result of the global financial crisis. As more governments embark on fiscal austerity, the prospects for a fast recovery of employment look even gloomier.

For more information: <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/index.html>



World Youth Report: Youth & Climate Change

The new report is intended to highlight the important role young people play in addressing climate change, and to offer suggestions on how young people might be more effectively integrated as individuals and collective agents of change within the realm of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

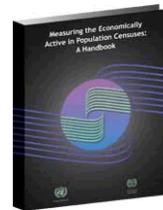
The report is designated to assist youth and youth organizations in educating themselves and to become more actively involved in combating the threat of climate change. It is also meant to affirm the status of young people as key stakeholders in the fight against climate change. The publication comes at a time when efforts to

address climate change are receiving unparalleled attention on the international arena, offering youth a unique opportunity for their voice to be heard in the debate.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/wyr10.htm>

Handbooks



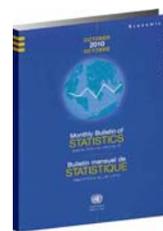
Measuring the Economically Active in Population Censuses: A Handbook

This handbook provides guidance on the measurement of economic characteristics in population censuses, based on relevant experiences of countries, with a particular focus on the questions used and the requirements for processing of responses. The handbook is intended to provide census planners with a variety of approaches to assess the questions and methods of collecting economic characteristics used in their national census, as they evaluate the performance in the past decade and plan for the 2010 round of censuses. Users of census results may also find the present text useful when evaluating the quality of census results.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pubs/gesgrid.asp?id=432>

Statistical compilations



Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online

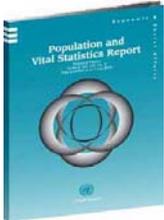
The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics presents current economic and social statistics for more than 200 countries and territories of the world. It contains over 50 tables of monthly and/or annual and quarterly data on a variety of subjects illustrating important economic trends and developments, including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

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This month, the following tables, which are featured in the MBS on a quarterly or annual basis, are presented along with the regular recurrent monthly tables: Earnings in manufacturing, by sex; Total exports and imports by regions: volume and unit value

indices and terms of trade; World exports by commodity classes and by regions.

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



Population and Vital Statistics Report

This issue presents data available as of 1 July 2010, for countries or areas on population size (total, male and female) from the latest available census, estimated total population size for 2008 or 2009 (the later available year), and the number and rate of vital events (live births, deaths, and infant deaths) for the latest available year within the past 15 years (1995-2009).

These data are presented as reported by national statistical authorities to the Demographic Yearbook of DESA's Statistics Division. This issue also presents data for the world and its major areas and regions on estimated population size for both 2008 and 2009. These estimates were prepared by DESA's Population Division.

For more information:

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

Meeting records

Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council: Achieving Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation

This publication presents the key debates that took place during the 2010 High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council, during the Council's Annual Ministerial Review on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women". It also contains a summary of the debates on themes discussed during the Council's second biennial Development Cooperation Forum.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/index10.shtml>

"Development cooperation for the MDGs: Maximizing Results" - The International Development Cooperation Report (IDCR)

DESA launched an independent report on trends in international development cooperation. The flagship report draws together analysis produced for the 2010 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) on international development cooperation, with a particular focus on the views of various stakeholders, as well as additional research.

The report reviews trends and coherence in development cooperation. It also analyses a broad range of issues that affect the effectiveness of development cooperation, such as the impact of the multiple crises, climate change, policy coherence and changes in the global aid architecture. Building on the DCF's work, special emphasis was placed on mutual accountability on development cooperation and aid transparency as well as South-South and triangular cooperation.

The report advocates for the United Nations to take greater leadership in the area of aid quality, building on the comparative advantages of the DCF and other aid effectiveness processes, in view of producing better development results.

For more information:

[http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf10/10-45690\(e\)\(desa\)development_cooperation_for_the_mdgs_max_results.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/julyhls/pdf10/10-45690(e)(desa)development_cooperation_for_the_mdgs_max_results.pdf).

Working papers

Growth, Poverty and Inequality: From Washington Consensus to Inclusive Growth

This paper reviews recent economic policy debates about the relationship between growth, poverty and inequality. These debates have tended to focus on whether market-led growth is sufficient to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality, or whether specific policies are necessary because untargeted growth may be insufficient or even perverse.

The paper charts the degenerating outcomes of these debates, and the emergence of the inclusive growth (IG) paradigm within the World Bank. A critical examination of IG suggests that its weaknesses are best addressed through a more ambitious restatement of the pro-poor goals of economic policy.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2010/wp100_2010.pdf

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects

The Monthly Briefing No. 26 states that the euro area's sovereign debt crisis continues, despite the agreement reached on 28 November which put together a bailout package worth 85 billion euro for Ireland. In addition, stock markets have fallen with the increased financial volatility and the exchange rates of major currencies continued to be highly volatile.

For more information:

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

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in December:

Dinah Del Rosario-Ugay, Administrative Assistant, Division for Sustainable Development

Laura Dix, Staff Assistant, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Ana Marie Francia, Administrative Assistant, Division for Sustainable Development

Renata Kaczmarska, Social Affairs Officer, Division for Social Policy and Development

Calendar

January

First intersessional meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

New York, 10-11 January

http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=73&Itemid=124

International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Forests

New York, 12-14 January

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/workshops.html>

2011 Regular Session of NGO Committee

New York, 31 January - 9 February

www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo

High-level intersessional meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development on a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

Panama City, 13-14 January

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_scpp/scpp_tenyearframprog.shtml

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2010

January 18

<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.html>

High Level Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Kenya, 21 January

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/amr2011kenya.shtml>

9th session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF9)

New York, 24 January – 4 February

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/session.html>

Workshop on MDG Monitoring for Countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region

San Jose, Costa Rica, 31 January - 3 February

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

February

Commission for Social Development

49th Session, New York, 9-18 February

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011.html>

Statistical Commission

42nd session, New York, 22-25 February

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission_42nd_session.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.