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The future we want

“Sustainable development is not a luxury, it is an imperative,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the launch of the UN campaign for Rio+20 on 22 November featuring a global conversation on the future we want. The campaign aims at engaging people to contribute ideas for new visions of a sustainable future.



“Opportunities like Rio+20 do not come along often,” the Secretary-General further stated. “The Rio+20 conference offers us a unique chance to discuss the challenges which we face and

the solutions we can pursue.... It’s a chance to visualize and plan for the future we want.”

The new campaign, Rio+20: The Future We Want, was launched to promote next June’s Rio+20 conference and the need for sustainable development by engaging people in a global conversation on the kind of communities they would like to live in twenty years from now.

The campaign will work through public participation to envision how societies in all parts of the world can build a future that promotes prosperity and improves people’s quality of life without further degrading our planet’s natural environment.

It aims to encourage people everywhere to engage in a global conversation that will be collected and melded into visions of the future to be exhibited in Rio de Janeiro at the conference. Rio+20 will bring together world leaders and thousands of participants representing all sectors of society, including academia, agriculture, business and industry, indigenous peoples, mayors and local authorities, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, women and youth.

“Rio+20 is our best chance to define pathways to a sustainable future,” said Rio+20 Secretary-General and DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang. “World leaders, along with thousands of participants from the private sector, NGOs and other groups, will come together to shape how we can reduce poverty, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection on an ever more crowded planet.”

Mr. Sha also said that focusing on building green economies is especially important now, as the world faces a global economic crisis. “The green economy can help accelerate progress towards sustainable development and poverty eradication and re-orient

public and private decision-making so that it reflects, and respects, natural capital.”

The UN also unveiled its new website – www.un.org/sustainablefuture – linking the Rio+20 Conference and The Future We Want project. The website also serves as a platform for informing the public about several key sustainable development issues, including cities, disasters, energy, food, jobs, oceans and water. A wide range of actions and results on these key issues will be presented at Rio+20.

“With today’s launch of Rio+20: The Future We Want, we are launching a global conversation about our future. Through this conversation, we are looking to engage people everywhere on what this future should look like, and what we need to do to realize this vision,” said Kiyo Akasaka, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

“We need to do more to take sustainable development out of the realm of the abstract and make it real to people. We need to show, now more than ever, that it is possible to have development that generates prosperity for everyone and an improved quality of life while protecting our natural environment.”

For the campaign, the UN is working with a non-governmental organization, The Future We Want, to develop the exhibit for Rio. Through electronic and non-electronic formats, especially for those without Internet access, the project asks everyone to join the global conversation and voice their ideas for a better future. The online contributions, together with people’s videos, photos, letters, essays and drawings offering different perspectives on a sustainable future, will form the basis on the exhibit.

The Conference will take place in Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June 2012.

For more information:

The future we want global conversation:

www.un.org/sustainablefuture

Rio+20 Conference: www.uncsd2012.org/

Rio+20: The future we want video:

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2011/11/rio20-the-future-we-want.html>

Webcast from the launch of the campaign:

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2011/11/launch-of-a-global-conversation-the-future-we-want-in-the-lead-up-to-the-un-conference-on-sustainable-development-rio20.html>

Spotlighting UN Public Service Awards winner

Every year the UN honours winners of the UN Public Service Awards, highlighting excellence in public service delivery. In 2011, the Ministry of Public Administration of Mexico won first place for the Latin America and Caribbean region in two categories. DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management, which administers the programme, interviewed Vice Minister Uriel Marquez Carrasco, to discuss the winning initiatives.



The Ministry of Public Administration of Mexico won the first place in Category 1, “Preventing and Combating Corruption in the Public Service” for the initiative “The Guillotine of Administrative Regulations,” an innovative regulatory reform, and in Category 3, “Fostering Participation in Policy-Making Decisions through Innovative Mechanisms,” for the initiative “The Most Useless Bureaucratic Procedure Contest,” a programme to involve citizens in the identification of useless regulations, government transactions and red tape.

Vice Minister Marquez Carrasco travelled to the Awards Ceremony and Forum, which was held in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, this past June. This interview will be the first in a series of interviews with winners of the Awards to highlight their winning cases and the impact of the UN Public Service Awards (UNPSA) programme at the national, regional and international levels.

How did you first hear about the UNPSA programme?

“Through the Internet, someone read about the programme and suggested that we apply to share our initiatives with others in the world.”

The winning cases were extraordinary in the number of regulations cut and procedures simplified, what can you tell us was the source or driving force behind them? What do you feel is unique about the programme?

“The objective of the regulatory reform is not only to cut redundant regulations, but actually to make it easier for the private sector to do business. The initiative was initiated in 2008, and it was incredibly important to implement this during the financial crisis, since too many regulations resulted in a high cost for administration and business operations. The President gave an order to simplify regulations to increase economic activity. As a result of this initiative we advanced 35 places in the World Bank index of doing business and many new jobs were created. Therefore, the ultimate goal of these initiatives is to improve internal government efficiency, but most importantly to have a greater impact on economic performance and social well-being.”

What difference does it make for the ordinary citizen that regulations have been simplified?

“With a decrease in the amount of administrative operations and amount spent, 60 million pesos saved from the reduction of expenses could be directed to yearly social transfers, as well as infrastructure and high-impact projects. Every three months, the administration deals with 40 million transactions. We had a 4 per cent increase in citizens’ satisfaction. According to Transparency International in Mexico, the measure of corruption in public administration has decreased by 30 per cent thanks to these initiatives. We conducted 29,000 interviews with citizens to check the quality of services, and the level of corruption reported was only 2 per cent, as well as very low levels of discrimination were reported. An example of just one improvement is the case of a child who is about 9 years old and has a critical health problem. In the past, due to cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, this child had to wait many days before he could get his medication, but thanks to the new system, which has been made available online, he can get his medication immediately and on a regular basis.”

Did your institution become more prone to innovation and did your institution promote other innovations?

“Public administration is leading the improvement of performance and it is responsible for 239 agencies in Mexico so it is a huge task. By winning this Award, we have been able to demonstrate to other government institutions that what we are doing at the federal level is very valuable because it has been recognized and is seen as a best practice by the UN. It has helped us to move from a bureaucratic culture to one that focuses on results. We are now able to teach other agencies that we must be innovative and that we can change for the better. Before the local agencies would not pay much attention to us, but after winning the Award, they respect us for our achievement and are willing to undertake innovative projects that improve the quality of life for our citizens. In fact, as a result of winning the Awards, there are 30 projects from Mexico

that will be submitted for the 2012 UNPSA. Now when we convene meetings with the agencies, we write on the invitation: “Regulatory reform in Mexico, best practice as recognized by the United Nations Awards.” This gives us a lot of credibility.”

Did it enhance the morale of civil servants and thus encourage a positive environment for change?

“Yes, of course. Everything is about developing a people-minded organizational culture and about changing people’s mindsets. We can now ask civil servants to work hard because we have shown that our work has had a very high impact on the society and economy. We are now moving towards integrating 155 procedures to open a business and have a one-stop-shop for that. Another initiative is the integration of scholarships in one portal. One million scholarships will be hosted in one website so that each student can register their preference, age and we will also avoid giving to the same person two scholarships.”

Has the United Nations Public Service Awards significantly contributed to increasing attention by outside partners and institutions to your innovation? Has your innovation been replicated in other parts of your country or abroad? Are you sharing your experience with others? If yes, where and when?

“Yes, at the beginning of the programme we did not get much attention at the local level, but the Award has helped us be even more effective locally. We have held 9 seminars with different states where we have invited municipal employees to learn about how to improve procedures and services to the citizens. The State of Puebla and the State of Sonora have now adapted our initiative. We have supported them in this process. We are also sharing our achievements with other countries, including: the Dominican Republic, where 120 officials attended an event at which we presented what we did; two major events in Mexico City where we invited all countries from Latin America; a meeting with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) where we presented our initiatives, which will be included in the Observatory on Innovations that they are setting up; and at a meeting of the Center for Administrative Development in Latin America (CLAD). We will also be going in 2012 to Colombia, El Salvador and Costa Rica to share our experience.”

How did you feel when you found out your institution won? What crossed your mind?

“It was very emotional. I was head of unit with only 36 employees and we had a very hard task to improve the performance of 239 agencies. We had to work a lot for weeks and weeks, staying at work late at night to implement these initiatives and to fight a bureaucratic culture and encourage others to take risks. We were fortunate because we had support from the President and the Minister of Public Administration. Getting recognition was really very important because it did not

only give a clear message on the significance of the initiatives, but also validated our hard work and acknowledged our efforts. After winning, our work has been much easier and now we have gained trust and we are sought after for help because people have respect for us.”

What was the best part, or two best things, you experienced going to the forum itself in Tanzania and receiving the Award? What did you learn?

“Societies face similar problems around the world, and it was inspiring to listen to other government officials from other countries, to learn from them, and to have the opportunity to share with others the energy and desire to constantly do better for the benefit of our citizens. It was indeed a great honour to be there.”

What is the future looking like for the programme?

“It is part of a strategic programme for improving government performance. The next steps are to implement different projects; more one-stop shop windows or portals for critical economic and social development services, the integration of inter-agency processes, particularly in health, social and economic development, and the use of e-government tools in areas such as infrastructure and disaster response initiatives. Our emphasis is that a problem must be solved by more than one agency, it’s an inter-agency process, and we need to encourage openness and cooperation.”

How has the award changed the lives of people there — and also your life, we learned that you have been promoted to the position of Vice-Minister?

“Prior to winning the Award I was Head of Unit of Policies for the Improvement of Public Management at the Ministry of Public Administration. So, I was very pleased when, upon my return from Tanzania, I was designated as Vice-Minister. Because I strongly believe in developing human resources at all levels, I proposed, after I was appointed Vice-Minister, that a number of my team members be promoted to higher levels. One of the staff in my team was appointed Vice-Minister of the State of Puebla to help replicate the initiative. Moreover, the Minister now takes into account our opinion on the achievements of civil servants working in the various agencies. In sum, we believe that this UN Public Service Awards programme is extremely important because it goes beyond the academic discourse and focuses squarely on how to solve the problems our societies are facing. Therefore, the Awards programme is instrumental for finding and sharing compelling solutions to common problems.”

INITIATIVES AT A GLANCE

The Ministry of Public Administration devised an innovative regulatory reform to reduce, standardize and simplify existing rules across the Federal Government with a view to improving public governance, curbing corruption, reducing administrative costs and increasing social transfers to vulnerable groups, as well as improving private sector competitiveness and promoting economic growth. As a result of this initiative, the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) has ranked the Mexican economy the second most competitive in Latin America. In addition, Mexico gained nine spots this year from its World Bank 2010 ranking to number 38th globally, placing Mexico as the best country to do business in Latin America. So far 15,688 regulations and 2,189 overlapping procedures/services have been eliminated. The initiative has produced significant savings of \$4,500 million dollars in 2009 and \$ 2,500 million dollars in 2010, which is equivalent to 10 per cent of the total administrative costs. There has been a 45 per cent reduction of regulations of the Federal Government; a 69 per cent reduction of regulations inside the government; a 28 per cent reduction of regulations applied to businesses and citizens.

In September 2008, the Federal Government of Mexico launched a contest to reward citizens who denounced the most absurd bureaucratic procedure they had faced and who proposed the best solutions to cut red tape and bribery. The submissions for the “most useless procedure/transaction” contest spin tales of lengthy lines; unfriendly bureaucrats; the elicitation of bribes and requirements lacking common sense. The innovativeness of this initiative rests in the fact that the government involved citizens in cutting red tape and curbing corruption. At the same time, the government began a series of reforms, including the elimination of unnecessary rules, placing limits on the issuance of new rules, granting limited exceptions in attempts to issue provisions, and providing assurance, through transparency, to citizens concerning such reforms. This involved generating quality standards, automation and integration of internal processes of all agencies with a vision centered on the citizen, across all areas. Based on a thorough assessment of the existing regulations, and procedures/services, 29 per cent of the total procedures/services were eliminated during phase one of the initiative. During the second phase, regulations were simplified and standardized. Every 3 months the administration reviews 300 procedures on quality of customer service, information, corruption index, installation access, discrimination and overall satisfaction. During the third phase, modern technologies were adopted to provide easy access to public services through automation, reengineering, and one shop window projects.

For more information: <http://www.unpan.org/unpsa>

Nominations for the UN Public Service Awards 2012 (must be made online; deadline 31 December):
<http://www.unpan.org/applyunpsa2012>

Highlighting importance of cooperatives

Cooperatives account for 100 million jobs worldwide and serve 1 billion members, putting people before profit. “Cooperatives contribute to food security, rural development, and other social services,” said General Assembly President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, as the International Year of Cooperatives was launched on 31 October.



Owned by people and democratically run, cooperatives improve livelihoods and strengthen economies worldwide. During 2012, their contribution to societies and development will be in the spotlight under the theme “Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World“.

Sha Zukang, DESA’s Under-Secretary-General and Rio+20 Secretary-General, also highlighted their importance for the environment: “One of the two themes of Rio+20 is a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Cooperatives have an important role to play in the transition to a green economy. They offer a business model with comparative advantage in creating socially inclusive... and environmentally sound... economic practices,” he said.

For more information:

International Year of Cooperatives (IYC):
<http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>

UN launches Year of Cooperatives with spotlight on development:
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=40262&Cr=cooperatives&Cr1=>



Global Dialogue on Development

Preparing for Rio+20

Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, Rio+20) for the UNECE region will take place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 1-2 December

About 300 delegates representing Governments, intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies, and civil society organizations will gather to identify the specific challenges and priorities of the region represented by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) with regard to the Rio+20 Conference.

The results of the meeting, including policy recommendations and good practices, will be transmitted to the global preparatory process and presented at the Second Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD to be held in New York on 15–16 December.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development is scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) from 20 to 22 June 2012. The official discussions will focus on two main themes:

- how to build a green economy to achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty, including support for developing countries that will allow them to find a green path for development;
- how to improve coordination for sustainable development at international, regional and national levels.

The Regional Preparatory Meeting for the UNECE region was mandated by the UN General Assembly as part of the preparatory activities for Rio+20. It will be co-chaired by deputy-ministers from Poland and Kazakhstan. The Secretary-General of the Rio+20 Conference, DESA's Under-Secretary General Sha Zukang, will participate in the meeting delivering opening and closing remarks.

The meeting will tackle the same issues as the Rio+20 Conference itself, however, with a focus on measures required and existing good practices in the UNECE region.

At the Seventh Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” that took place in Astana/Kazakhstan in September 2011 the Ministers of the Environment from the UNECE region declared “We agree to take the lead in the transition to a green economy and to make a substantive contribution to the discussions on green economy within the context of sustainable development and

poverty alleviation at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development....”.

The Regional Preparatory Meeting will build on the Astana outcomes on green economy. It will furthermore assess how developed countries from the UNECE region can assist poorer countries in and beyond the region in their transition to a green economy.

A series of 12 side events will be organized to discuss specific topics:

<http://www.unece.org/env/sustainabledevelopment/rpm2011/rpm2011.html>

For more information:

<http://www.unece.org/env/sustainabledevelopment/rpm2011/rpm2011.html>

Towards inclusive development for all

Official commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities will be held in New York on 2 December under the theme “Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development”

Persons with disabilities make up an estimated 15 per cent of the world's population. Almost one-fifth of them, or between 110–190 million, encounter significant difficulties. Furthermore, a quarter of the global population is directly affected by disability, as care-givers or family members.

Persons with disabilities encounter many disadvantages in their societies and are often subjected to stigma and discrimination. They remain largely marginalized, disproportionately poorer, frequently unemployed and have higher rates of mortality. Furthermore, they are largely excluded from civil and political processes and are overwhelmingly voiceless in matters that affect them and their society.

Experience shows that when persons with disabilities are empowered to participate and lead the process of development, their entire community benefits, as their involvement creates opportunities for everyone – with or without a disability. Including persons with disabilities and their communities in developmental efforts is important to advance the development agenda.

Thus it is imperative that development efforts around the world include disability issues when determining policies, programmes, as well as allocating funds for developmental programmes and projects. Mainstreaming disability in development is a strategy for achieving equality for persons with disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is both a human rights treaty and a development tool, provides an opportunity to strengthen developmental policies related to the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), thereby contributing to the realization of a “society for all” in the twenty-first century.

The General Assembly in its most recent resolution 65/186, seeks to convene a High-Level meeting on disability in 2012, with a view to strengthening efforts to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.

Themes and events for commemorating the international day

This year, DESA requested the input of its partners and the general public for suggestions on a theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2011. Many responses were received from both the UN system and civil society.

Now, for the first time, the Day will be commemorated under a general theme with supporting sub-themes to draw attention to key areas that would work in synergy to mainstream disability in all development processes.

Although the international day is on 3 December, it will be officially commemorated in New York on 2 December, where events will include an opening ceremony with Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and a performance by students from the New York Institute for Special Education.

Panel discussions will follow on the themes *Towards inclusive development: improving data and statistics on disability and Mainstreaming disability in the global development agenda: experience in other development issues*. The UN Enable Film Festival will also present a series of short films.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1561>

Exploring how greening efforts can be scaled up

Second Intersessional Meeting of Rio+20 will be held on 15-16 December in New York

The second round of informal discussions will focus on the objective and themes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, which has been charged by the General Assembly to see how efforts to achieve sustainable development can be scaled up, as well as to explore how countries can green their economies and to determine how to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development.

At Rio in June 2012, governments, businesses and civil society leaders will gather to assess progress, gaps and challenges and

renew political commitment for achieving sustainable development.

The third intersessional meeting will also take place in New York on 26–27 March 2012.

For more information: www.unctsd2012.org

Getting the most out of aid

Symposium was arranged in Luxembourg on 18-19 October on “Maximizing the development impact of aid”, in preparation for the 2012 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)

The symposium focused on a critical question of how to deploy limited aid resources as a catalyst for mobilizing other financial flows such as investment, microfinance and domestic resources from taxation. This theme was also relevant to the forthcoming Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in late November.

The meeting was opened by the Minister of Development Cooperation of Luxembourg, the Deputy Secretary-General and ECOSOC President. It was attended by some 160 participants from developing and developed countries, including a few Ministers, Directors-General of Development Cooperation, parliamentarians, international organizations (OESD/DESA and FFDO/DESA, IMF, OECD/DAC), NGOs and the private sector. The DSG’s message that commitments made must be met by all was echoed in the discussions that ensued.

A number of key messages came out of the symposium. First, the “current political economy” and rising public anger in many countries were threatening aid flows. It was imperative that these limited resources should be used in more effective manner. Second, aid should aim to mobilize the kind of financial flows that have the greatest impact on the achievement of MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. Third, representatives of LDCs underscored that aid to their countries must, as a priority, help mobilize FDI and other resources to bolster the productive sector. However, some of the NGOs were of the view that aid had maximum impact when it is used to support social programmes such as health and education. Finally, it was reiterated that recipient countries are the ones who should decide about where to deploy aid resources.

Successor arrangements to the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF IV) were also the subject of exchanges. At this stage, it is expected that the HLF IV will be replaced by a “country heavy” and “global light” architecture for effective development cooperation. The draft Busan outcome document proposes a “Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation” which would oversee follow-up through a Steering Committee. H.E. Mr. Tae-yul Cho, Ambassador of Korea for Development Cooperation, and Mr. Talaat Abdel Malek (Egypt),

who chairs preparations for Busan, both participated in the symposium. Ambassador Cho suggested a greater role for the UN at the country level. This was seen as constructive proposal that needed further careful consideration.

Overall, the debates were both substantive and lively. Many participants came from the capitals of developing countries, and were personally engaged in aid management. The participation of several Permanent Representatives to the UN in New York will enable to make the link between the symposium and NY processes. Participation of NGOs and parliamentarians also brought important ideas and candor to the discussions. The report of the Symposium will be presented to the DCF in June/July 2012.

For more information:

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

Trends and Analysis

Strengthening processes for national voluntary presentations

Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening the NVP Process through the Development of an Analytical Framework and Regional Knowledge Networks (RKN) is taking place in New York on 30 November and 1 December

The Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) of DESA will convene this meeting, bringing together experts and policymakers from the NVP community, as well as representatives from governments, civil society, UN regional commissions, and other UN agencies and organizations.

The purpose is to develop and propose a standardized analytical framework for the NVP; discuss implementation arrangements to establish regional knowledge networks in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Asia; strengthen capacity for NVP review and follow-up; and make recommendations to UNDESA on proposals for an NVP analytical framework and establishing Regional Knowledge Networks (RKN).

For more information: <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/>

Reviewing development goals performance

Regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific in support of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), is being arranged in Kyoto, Japan on 7 December

OESC is organizing this first regional consultation in preparation for the 2012 AMR, with the objective of undertaking a review of the overall performance of the region in achieving the development goals related to productive capacity and employment (2012 AMR theme).

Additionally, the consultation will support preparations for and enable countries to engage at an early stage in the process leading to the AMR session to be held during the ECOSOC high-level segment in New York, in July 2012.

The consultation will support the global review by focusing on aspects that could foster productive capacity and employment in the countries of the region. The outcome of this review would contribute to the analysis in support the Council's deliberations in July, and would also feed into the preparation of the Secretary General's report on the AMR theme.

The meeting is being held in collaboration with ILO and UNESCAP, in tandem with the ILO Regional Meeting which is taking place on 4-7 December.

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

Workshop to prepare for the 2012 Annual Ministerial Review

Training workshop on productive capacity, employment and decent work, preparing for the 2012 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), will be held in New York on 14 December

DESA's Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination (OESC) is organizing this training workshop for DESA staff, which will bring together experts from international organizations, academia, civil society, the private sector and foundations as resource persons.

The main objective of the workshop is to increase staff knowledge of challenges and policy options to accelerate progress towards the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work and sustained, inclusive and equitable growth and to identify key priorities to be addressed in all activities leading up to July 2012 ECOSOC substantive session.

The issues identified at the workshop will help define the focus of the different AMR preparatory events held at the global, regional and national levels. They will also serve as an important input to the report of the Secretary-General on this year's theme, which will serve as a key input for the Ministerial Declaration to be adopted by ECOSOC at the high-level segment in July 2012.

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

Ageing populations to be discussed

Expert Group Meeting on the National Transfer Account Manual: Strengthening Capacity in the Production and Use of NTAs will take place in Belo Horizonte, Brazil on 6-7 December

DESA's Population Division is organizing the meeting in collaboration with ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA with the main objective to improve the production and use of national transfer accounts (NTA) by national policy analysts in developing countries.

This gathering of international experts will assess NTAs as a way of addressing the socio-economic consequences of changing population age structures.

The information produced will guide national policies adapt to the changing living conditions of different generational groups, including children and the elderly. The participants will also provide feedback on the NTA manual contents for the final version.

The meeting will be held in conjunction with the 8th Annual Meeting on National Transfer Accounts to discuss intergenerational approaches to social and economic policy.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm>

<http://ntaccounts.org/web/nta/show/Documents/Meetings/NTA%20Manual>

Meeting addresses mortality crises

On 14-15 November, experts gathered in New York to address the mortality crises associated with violence, natural disasters, famine and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

The main objective of the meeting was to review the state of the art in regard to evidence and understanding of crises that cause significant rises in mortality and to discuss how current knowledge on this issue could inform the preparation of mortality estimates.

Organized by the Population Division of UN DESA, the theme of the meeting was “Mortality Crises: Conflicts, Violence, Famine, Natural Disasters, and the Growing Burden of Non-communicable Diseases”. It brought together scholars from, among others, Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health, the Harvard School of Public Health, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the London School of Economics, John Hopkins University, the International Rescue Committee, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the World Health Organization.

Challenges in collecting reliable data from areas in conflict and measuring mortality were addressed by Prof. Greenough of the Harvard School of Public Health. Prof. Roberts of Columbia University focused on mortality caused by the conflict in Iraq. Mr. Brunborg from Statistics Norway presented the work carried out by statisticians working for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia to buttress the case of the prosecutors in proving the commission of genocide. Prof. Dyson of the London School of Economics talked about the effects of famines and underscored that they not only had an effect on mortality but were also related to major drops in the number of births.

Mr. Mathers of WHO presented a review of the approaches that WHO follows in integrating estimates of excess mortality associated with different crises into their overall mortality estimates. Mr. Pedersen, Research Director of FAFO, Norway, discussed the strengths and limitations of the methods presented.

The presentations were followed by a brainstorming session focusing on methodological issues whose purpose was to identify best practices and discuss whether the use of a harmonized approach was possible when the types of crises were so varied, their impact differed markedly not only between countries but also within national populations, and the nature and quality of the data available were also so different.

The major outcome of the brainstorming session was that more work was needed to assess the strengths of the approaches presented and reduce their limitations. A harmonized approach was not yet a possibility.

The meeting also focused on trends in mortality from non-communicable diseases and of the major risk factors associated with non-communicable diseases. Mr. Mathers presented the estimates currently available on trends in the major non-communicable diseases and the methodology used to assess attributable risk to the different causes of death.

There were separate presentations on the impact of cigarette smoking on mortality trends and differentials by sex in developed countries; on the effects of body weight on survivorship, and on the impact of alcohol use. Special presentations on increasing body weight and its impact on disease prevalence in China and on the different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean followed.

A major finding was that the prevalence of cigarette smoking explains the relatively slow increase in life expectancy that has prevailed in the United States in relation to other European countries and that increases in cigarette smoking among women in the United States explain the declining differences between male and female life expectancy at age 50.

The prevalence of tobacco use is also the major cause of the differences in mortality trends by sex after age 50 among European countries. In the United States, the recent success in reducing cigarette smoking is expected to improve the survival chances of people over age 50 in the next few decades.

With respect to body weight, the data presented showed that obesity was associated with higher prevalence of non-communicable disease, especially diabetes. The evidence also showed that higher mortality was associated with underweight. The lowest levels of risk of disease and death were found among the overweight, that is, the category of people with a body mass index in the category just above that considered normal.

These findings imply that there is more uncertainty about the effect that the increasing levels of body mass in developing countries may have on future mortality than there is in ascertaining the detrimental effect on survival of the increasing proportions of people in middle income countries who smoke.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm>

New revision of the UN Model Double Taxation Convention adopted

Following five days of intense negotiations in Geneva at the end of October, the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters adopted the 2011 Update of the UN Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries

This culminated the work of the Committee over the past 10 years, since the last update of the UN Model in 2001.

This new revision of the UN Model has been long-awaited by the international community, especially by developing countries which seek assistance in negotiating modern bilateral double-tax treaties reflecting their current circumstances and policy priorities.

The UN Model Tax Convention, as well as the OECD Model Tax Convention have had a profound influence on international treaty practice. They form the basis for most of the treaties between countries, aiming at protecting taxpayers against double taxation, with a view to improving the flow of international trade and investment as well as the transfer of technology, while retaining appropriate taxing rights to Governments.

The particular aim of the UN Model is to facilitate entering of bilateral tax treaties by developing countries, which would contribute to attaining their development goals. The similarities between the models of the UN and OECD reflect the importance of achieving consistency, while the important areas of divergence reflect different memberships and priorities of the two organizations.

The UN Model generally preserves a greater share of tax revenue to the “source State”, the country where investment or other activity takes place. While the OECD Model preserves a greater share to the “residence State”, the country of the investor, trader, etc. The UN Model thus normally allows developing countries more taxing rights on income generated by foreign investments in these countries.

The main updates of the UN Model are: (1) it provides for mandatory binding arbitration (for countries wishing so) when a dispute cannot be resolved under the usual Mutual Agreement

Procedure, (2) it confirms and clarifies the importance of exchange of information under the UN Model; (3) it provides the rules under which States may assist each other in tax collection; (4) it addresses possible tax evasion related to taxing capital gains; and (5) it deals with income from independent personal services in line with the OECD Model.

The Committee also addressed other important areas of its work, including the Practical Manual on Transfer Pricing for Developing Countries. The complete draft Manual is expected to be adopted at the 2012 session, providing much needed assistance to developing countries in practical application of the arm’s length principle.

It also discussed its future work, including the agenda for its 2012 session. It decided to devote substantial attention to the Manual on Transfer Pricing as well as the Manual for the Negotiation of Bilateral Tax Treaties. The Committee also decided to establish a Working Group on Tax-treaty Issues relating to Climate Change mechanisms, including Emissions Permits and Clean Development Mechanism credit. The next annual session will be held on 15-19 October 2012 in Geneva.

For more information:

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

Capacity Development

Fundamentals of environment statistics

Workshop on Environment Statistics will take place in Hanoi, Vietnam, on 5-7 December for the South-East Asian countries

DESA's Statistics Division, in cooperation with the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam, will organize the workshop within the framework of the UNDESA Development Account Project on Building Statistical Capacity in the Low Income Countries of South-East Asia.

This workshop is aimed at assisting the participating countries by providing the fundamentals of environment statistics from the global and national perspectives, while learning more closely about the environmental challenges and statistical needs from the countries; introducing the Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics, the Core Set of Environment Statistics and the UNSD/UNEP Questionnaire on Environment Statistics.

The need for environment statistics and indicators, methodological developments, global data collections and international sources of environment statistics, as well as resources needed to engage in production of environment statistics will also be discussed at the workshop.

Participating countries will include the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (host), the Kingdom of Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

For more information:

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

Adopting list of environmental statistics for Central Africa

Workshop on environment statistics for the francophone Central African countries will be organized in Yaounde, Cameroon, on 5-9 December

DESA's Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Economic Commission of Africa, is organizing a workshop with the main objectives to: (a) adopt a list of environmental statistics and indicators for the Central African region for national and regional reporting; (b) review methodologies for the ECOWAS regional core set of environmental indicators for use in this region; (c)

develop a way forward for a draft regional programme on environment statistics; (d) train participants from national statistical offices and environmental ministries/agencies on basic concepts, methods and best practices in environment statistics; and (e) provide a forum for exchange of information on the status of national environment statistics.

For more information:

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

Demonstrating potentials of CensusInfo

National Workshop on CensusInfo will be organized in Kampara, Uganda, on 5-9 December

Organized by DESA's Statistics Division in collaboration with Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the workshop is designed to demonstrate through in-depth, hands-on experiences, the potential of CensusInfo as a platform for disseminating census data at any geographical level.

The participants of UBOS will learn various processes involved in the adaptation of CensusInfo including preparation of CensusInfo template and database, importing data, language translation and customization of the software package.

The sessions will include hands-on training on using CensusInfo User Interface and Database Administration applications as well as an introduction in the process of web-enabling the CensusInfo database. The objective of the training is to create a first version of a Uganda CensusInfo application including maps and a subset of data/indicators based on data of the 2002 census and earlier censuses if available.

For more information:

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

Compiling trade statistics

Meeting will be held on compilation issues of IMTS 2010, on 6-9 December in Mexico City

DESA's Statistics Division and INEGI (the national statistical office of Mexico) will jointly organize a meeting on compilation issues of international merchandise trade statistics.

The purpose of the meeting is to review the full draft Compilers Manual for the collection, processing and dissemination of trade statistics and to gather country experiences and good practices. Participants in this meeting will be trade statistics experts from developing and developed countries.

The meeting will cover all aspects of quality assurance of merchandise trade statistics and will discuss issues like data sources (customs administration and enterprise surveys), institutional arrangements for data exchange, integration of trade data from different sources, data processing, preparation of meta-data, dissemination of data and the calculation of external trade indices.

For more information:

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

Analysing data on youth, migration, employment and education

National Seminar on Census Data Analysis will take place in Monrovia, Liberia, on 12-14 December

DESA's Statistics Division in collaboration with the Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services (LISGIS) will organize a National Seminar on Census Data Analysis in the context of the 2010 World Programme for Population and Housing Censuses.

The purpose of the Seminar is to assist the LISGIS on undertaking in-depth analysis of census data to produce an analytical report on the selected topics. The national seminar will cover the following topics: (i) youth and internal migration and (ii) employment and education. During the national seminar, the staff of LISGIS will attend the lectures on the topics of focus and engage in preliminary data analyses of 2008 census data.

After the seminar, participants are expected to produce thematic analytical reports, based on analyses generated during the seminar.

For more information:

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

Publications and Websites

Technical reports

Pre-launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2012

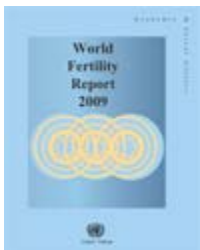
The first chapter of the WESP 2012 on “The Global Outlook” will be launched in New York on 1 December.

The WESP is a joint product of DESA, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the five United Nations regional commissions. It provides an overview of recent global economic performance and short-term prospects for the world economy and of some key global economic policy and development issues. One of its purposes is to serve as a point of reference for discussions on economic, social and related issues taking place in various United Nations entities during the year.

For more information:

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

World Fertility Report 2009



This report, published by the Population Division, is the third in the series of the analysis of reproductive behaviour worldwide. It discusses levels and trends of fertility, the timing of childbearing, marriage, contraceptive use and national policies with respect to fertility and childbearing for 196 countries or areas.

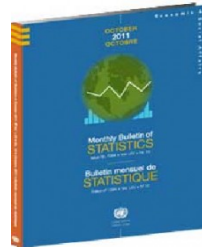
The data presented are obtained from civil registration statistics, population censuses and nationally representative sample surveys. Information on national policies is obtained mainly from the responses of Governments to periodic United Nations inquiries and official sources of information on government policies and programmes. This report comes with online data and metadata on a comprehensive set of indicators on fertility, nuptiality, contraceptive use and national policies related to childbearing for 196 countries or areas.

To download:

http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WFR2009_Web/Main.html

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: Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials; Civil aviation traffic: passenger km and cargo net ton km; Total exports and imports by countries or areas: volume, unit value, terms of trade and purchasing power of exports, in US dollars.

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

2010 International Trade Statistics Yearbook, Volume I, Trade by Commodity



The 2010 International Trade Statistics Yearbook (2010 ITSY), Volume I – Trade by Country presents an analytical and condensed view on the trade performance of a total of 175 countries (or areas) with the 2010 data on imports and exports by commodity and trading partner provided for 93 countries (areas), representing approximately 74% of world trade of 2010.

Volume I – Trade by Country is compiled early in 2011 (in May 2011) to allow for an advanced release of an overview of international merchandise trade in 2010 and for a much earlier publication of the available 2010 country (area) data. Volume II – Trade by Commodity contains the detailed tables showing international trade in main commodity groups and is finalized approximately six months after the completion of Volume I as the preparation of those tables requires additional country data which, normally, become available later in the year. Volume II

contains also updated versions of the two world trade tables published in Volume I.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pubs/gesgrid.asp?id=448>

Online Publication of Demographic Yearbook 2009-2010, 61st Edition

This issue is the sixty-first in a series published by the United Nations since 1948. It contains tables including a world summary of selected demographic statistics, statistics on the size, distribution and trends in national populations, fertility, foetal mortality, infant and maternal mortality, general mortality, nuptiality and divorce. Data are shown by urban/rural residence, as available. The Demographic Yearbook 2009 – 2010 presents demographic statistics for two reference years: 2009 and 2010 in an effort to make it as up to date as possible.

To accommodate the presentation of the statistics for two reference years, in population and vital statistics tables presenting time series, the available data for reference years 2009 and 2010 are presented side by side. As for the detailed population and vital statistics, two sets of tables, one referring to 2009 and the other referring to 2010, are displayed one after the other.

The Demographic Yearbook 2009-2010 is now available online at:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2.htm>

Compendium of Housing Statistics

DESA's Statistics Division released the seventh edition of "The Compendium of Housing Statistics". The first edition of the Compendium of Housing Statistics was issued in 1971, followed by its 1972, 1975, 1983, 1995 and 2001 editions.

The 2011 version contains 21 tables presenting statistics on the characteristics of housing units by country as well as the distribution of households and the general population by occupied dwellings. Data are shown by urban/rural area, as available. In addition, the 2011 volume will offer technical notes and a synoptic table to better service its users.

This publication will be available from December 21, 2011 on the UN Statistics Division website: <http://unstats.un.org>.

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects

November issue highlights the agreement recently reached by EU leaders to scale up measures to solve the simmering debt crisis and reviews the main steps taken so far. It also reports on the G20 Cannes meeting and the absence of a coordinated action for jobs creation. In developed countries, in particular, unemployment is still rising and lasting longer.

For more information:

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

Outreach material

Rio+20: Making it Happen

The latest issue of the Rio+20: Making it Happen newsletter focuses on the sustainable management of oceans and marine resources (blue economy), one of the seven priority issues to be addressed at the Conference, and highlights the launch of the Conference's communications strategy on 22 November, aiming at increasing public engagement to promote the sustainability agenda. In addition, it announces the new Conference dates.

For more information:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=40>

Social Development Link

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

As its title shows, the newsletter will serve as a link between DSPD and its major partners, from civil society actors to social development practitioners and scholars. This is an electronic publication – no printed edition is generated.

For more information:

<http://social.un.org/index/Newsletters/SocialDevelopmentLinkNewsletter.aspx>

United Nations Youth Flash

The October issue is now available featuring a story on how school children in Nicaragua has gained access to the digital world through an International Telecommunication Union (ITU) pioneering project. The newsletter is a service of the UN Programme on Youth to keep the public informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. It is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and from youth organisations around the world.

View full issue at:

<http://social.un.org/index/Youth/Youthflash/2011/October.aspx>

United Nations Enable Newsletter

The latest issue is now available online, highlighting among other things the current session of the General Assembly and its work on disability issues. Two reports of the Secretary-General are being considered on the "Status of the Convention on the

Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol” and the “Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities”.

ENABLE Newsletter is prepared by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (SCRPD) within UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development, with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and civil society.

View full issue at:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?PID=312>

Mobile applications



The application versions of the following publications are now available on the UN Publications website.



UN CountryStats

This is a free data visualization app that gives users portable access to social, economic and environmental data from 216 countries. It enables users to compare various indicators across multiple countries and years.

Score the Goals

The app version of ‘Score The Goals: Teaming Up to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals’ is an educational comic book app featuring 10 football UN Goodwill Ambassadors, challenged to tackle the eight MDGs. The book is aimed at 8-14 year-old children and provides a fun and interactive way to help them understand and reflect about poverty and development issues.

Basic Facts about the United Nations

This is the portable reference of choice for those interested in the UN.

UN News Reader

This is a mobile news application for quick and easy access to UN news. The user finds real-time news or can browse through news organized by subject or geographic region. News can be saved to read later, shared on social networks or emailed to a friend.

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

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in November:

Jaspreet Dourg, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Francesca Grum, Chief of Section, Statistics Division

Lingyan Hu, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Graham Osborn, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Goings

The following staff members retired in November:

Karen Eckerson, Administrative Assistant, Executive Office

Maria Rossi, Finance Assistant, Capacity Development Office

Calendar

December

66th session of the General Assembly

- Second Committee
3 October - December
<http://www.un.org/ga/second/>
- Third Committee
3 October - December
<http://www.un.org/ga/third/>

Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening the NVP Process through the Development of an Analytical Framework and Regional Knowledge Networks (RKN)

30 November - 1 December, New York
<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/>

Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) for Rio+20

1-2 December, Geneva
<http://www.unece.org/env/SustainableDevelopment/RPM2011/RPM2011.html>

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

2 December, New York
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1561>

Workshop on Environment Statistics for the South-East Asian countries

5-7 December, Hanoi, Vietnam
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Workshop on environment statistics for the francophone Central African countries

5-9 December, Yaounde, Cameroon
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

National Workshop on CensusInfo

5-9 December, Kampara, Uganda

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

Meeting will be held on compilation issues of IMTS 2010

6-9 December, Mexico City
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Expert Group Meeting on the National Transfer Account Manual: Strengthening Capacity in the Production and Use of NTAs

6-7 December, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
<http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm>

Regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific in support of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR)

7 December, Kyoto, Japan
<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/amr.shtml>

National Seminar on Census Data Analysis

12-14 December, Monrovia, Liberia
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Training workshop on productive capacity, employment and decent work, preparing for the 2012 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR)

14 December, New York
<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/amr.shtml>

2nd Intersessional Meeting of Rio+20

New York, 15-16 December
www.uncsd2012.org

January

Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, Regular Session

30 January – 8 February, New York
<http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=80>

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.