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Strengthening cooperatives beyond 2012

“As a strong partner in development, the cooperative movement works with the United Nations every day to empower people, enhance human dignity and help achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in a statement as the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) 2012 came full circle on 19-20 November with events and festivities at UN Headquarters in New York.



Some 150 representatives gathered for this two-day event themed “Promoting Cooperatives Beyond 2012”. A range of sessions, including on global food security, sustainable livelihoods, jobs creation and youth empowerment, were arranged to highlight the important role of cooperatives worldwide. Forthcoming initiatives to strengthen cooperatives beyond 2012 were also discussed.

The event was organized by DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) and consisted of panel discussions, a youth forum, and the official closing ceremony that culminated with the IYC Short Film Festival. The panel discussions and youth forum were organized in collaboration with various partners, including the International Labour Organization, the Permanent Mission of Mongolia to the UN, Desjardins Group, and Rabobank.

Seven winning films were presented from countries including Brazil, Canada, Peru, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago and USA. The films focused on various themes, including cooperative stories about chili farmers, women crafters, food coops and cooperative housing. These films put spotlight on cooperatives as a member-owned enterprise model that places people at the heart of business.

Movement energized by international year

Participating in the events, Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), shared some of the year’s major accomplishments with DESA News.

“This year has been fantastic,” Ms. Green said, emphasizing how the year has brought the cooperative movement together, creating a sense of cohesion. “They see themselves now as a global movement, looking up at the worldwide cooperative

family, owned by a billion people, employing 100 million people in every village, town and city across the world”.

Ms. Green also underscored the importance of building on the achievements of the international year. “We absolutely have to keep the momentum of this year. We owe it to the next generation of cooperators, this is like a watershed moment for the global cooperative movement,” she said. Ms. Green also explained that with the impact of the global economic crisis still being felt by many, this is the right moment to show the potential of cooperatives serving different types of economies around the world.

Ms. Green described how the international year has brought people back to understanding that by working collectively, they can secure their communities, build cooperative businesses together and support the real economy on the ground. “The member-owned businesses are keeping their communities whole, keeping them going, giving hope and aspirations to people,” she said. “We’ve got to grow our movement across the world going forward, not just now when the economy is in crisis.”

Bank cooperatives show resilience

Also keeping the economy going are the 53,000 credit cooperatives and credit unions in operation around the world. In recent years, they have withstood tests brought by market failures and tough economic times. This is discussed in a new book just released by one of the main supporters of the IYC 2012, Rabobank, a cooperative and one of the 30 largest financial institutions in the world with headquarters in the Netherlands.

The book, “Raiffeisen’s Footprint – The Cooperative Way of Banking”, provides reflections on the cooperative business model and the governance structure of cooperative banks. It also features a series of case studies of cooperative banks in times of crisis.

“Cooperative banks have proven very resilient during the crisis,” said Bouke de Vries, Head of Financial Sector Research in Rabobank and one of the main contributors to the book, who also attended the events in New York.

“In the European countries, the cooperative model has done well right across the board. And now the challenge is, with the government crisis and the Euro crisis, all cooperative banks and commercial banks face enormous difficulties, and I really hope that the cooperative model will prove resilient again,” Mr. de Vries said.

Working for and with youth

With nearly 75 million young people unemployed and about 152 million young workers living in households below poverty line, youth development is an urgent concern and where cooperatives are believed to be able to play a vital role.

“We have the hope that cooperatives will bet on youth so that they can self-employ themselves, create cooperatives, create employment,” said José Antonio Chávez Villanueva, Chair of the

ICA Youth Network Executive Committee. “This is an answer to the unemployment and the integration of youth into society.”

Mr. Villanueva chaired one of the interactive dialogues of the Youth Forum which was held as part of the IYC closing events. The Forum discussed benefits and challenges of youth engagement in cooperatives, with particular emphasis on issues of empowerment, employment and civic engagement.

During this session, it was stressed that there is a need for communities to listen to their youth and to take them seriously in decision making processes. Lack of awareness, resources, capacity and supportive environment were pointed out as some of the biggest obstacles for cooperatives in effectively engaging young people. Panelists agreed that more rigorous actions on global youth employment and entrepreneurship strategies were needed. An international cooperative youth statement was also delivered highlighting the role cooperatives can play to empower youth across the globe.

Ms. Monique Leroux, CEO of Desjardins Group, delivered the keynote address in the youth forum encouraging young people to be bold and be ambitious for themselves. She added, “You need to dream big and not be afraid to share your dreams with others... The co-op model belongs to all of us, but it will be your heritage. It will be yours to pass on to the next generation as we are doing with you.”

Pauline Green also emphasized the importance of working with young people, saying that “the critical thing that cooperatives have to do is to start looking how we develop with young people. How we bring young people into our family, how we maximize the value of the young to the young,” pointing to different events across the globe where young people are crying out for freedom and economic justice. “They want to be visible in the economy and I think the cooperative movement can do that for them, but to do that, we need to engage them,” Ms. Green explained.

Going forward, going green

In addition to focusing on young people, Ms. Green also highlighted cooperatives in Africa as another priority area going forward. “The other [priority for cooperatives] is to look after people particularly in the African continent, which I believe has the strong potential for development growth,” she said. “We have to start working with cooperative farmers at grass roots level, to build an African cooperative economy in agriculture. That’s the future, and we’ve got to drive it.”

Addressing the closing ceremony, Shamshad Akhtar, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in DESA, also talked about the route going forward and the opportunities for societies going green with the help of cooperatives.

“The cooperative movement is in an excellent position to promote the priority theme of a green economy – especially considering that energy cooperatives are already key providers

in many countries. The successful experiences of cooperatives in operating renewable energy sources, such as wind farms and solar fields, can guide and inspire others,” Ms. Akhtar said.

As an eventful year came to a close, Ms. Akhtar concluded, “I would like to congratulate the one billion strong members of the cooperative movement who are strengthening economic vitality and upholding social responsibility.”

[Watch video highlighting IYC2012 closing events](#)

For more information:

[International Year of Cooperatives 2012](#)

[Closing Ceremony of the International Year of Cooperatives](#)

Webcast:

[Global Food Security and the Role of Cooperatives – Panel Discussion \(part 1\)](#)

[Cooperatives and Youth: Empowerment, Employment and Engagement – Youth Forum \(part 2\)](#)

[Closing ceremony of the International Year of Cooperatives on the theme “Promoting cooperatives beyond 2012 \(part 3\)](#)

[Closing ceremony of the International Year of Cooperatives on the theme “Promoting cooperatives beyond 2012 \(part 4\)](#)

Working towards an inclusive new development agenda

Efforts towards building a new global development agenda are intensifying with only three years left to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) expiration date in 2015. While it is still too early to speak of specific goals, many stakeholders agree on a number of issues that were not adequately reflected in the MDGs and have become more pressing ever since.



“We hope to bring views from all corners of the world together because what we are striving for is an agenda that will take us to a shared, secure and sustainable global development for all, our

generation and all future ones,” said Rob Vos, Director of DESA’s Division for Development Policy and Analysis, as the department together with UNDP held an online Facebook chat with more than 900 participants.

During the two-hour chat themed “Keeping the momentum beyond 2015 – Moving forward towards a new global development agenda”, members of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda answered a wide range of questions on topics including on poverty, disability rights, hunger eradication, social justice, democratic governance and sustainable development.

The live chat was one of the many activities currently taking place to secure an inclusive development agenda moving forward after 2015. Efforts to gather and include perspectives from all corners of the world are also being carried out in other ways.

Thematic consultation to secure an inclusive agenda

Seeking to ensure that the vision of the world we want to live in takes into account the perspectives from a broad base of civil society and marginalized groups, eleven thematic consultations have been established by the United Nations Development Group. Online discussions are being held on issues that include: inequalities; governance; growth and employment; health; education; environmental sustainability; food security and nutrition; conflict and fragility; population dynamics; energy; and water.

These themes have been selected because they are part of the Rio+20 Outcome Document “The Future We Want”. These themes have also been included in the work of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. DESA is currently engaged in ten of the eleven thematic consultations (to the exclusion of the one on education).

The thematic consultations are co-lead by two or more UN agencies and they receive support from other UN agencies, civil society organizations, private sector representatives and academia. The web portal – World We Want 2015 – jointly owned by representatives from the United Nations and civil society, is serving as the online platform for all eleven thematic consultations.

Enabling informed decisions moving forward

The consultations include initiatives as diverse as calls for papers, online consultations and discussions, expert group meetings, newsletters and panel discussions. Each thematic consultation will organize one global thematic meeting to summarize and discuss their findings. Governments in the global South and North have been contacted to host these final meetings.

The thematic consultations serve several purposes. First and foremost will be the analytical inputs they provide to the ongoing process. With in-depth discussion on a specific thematic

area and how it links to other areas they provide analytical thinking on ways to incorporate important issues into the global development agenda beyond 2015. The thematic consultations will inform Member States' decisions on the content of the post-2015 development agenda.

These thematic consultation solicit inputs from all stakeholders to help create ownership of the new agenda amongst people from all strands of life. They will feed into other ongoing consultation processes through the use of reports that consolidate the findings.

Different formats for each discussion

Each thematic consultation follows a design most suited to the topic that the consultation focuses on. One example is the consultation on population dynamics, which is jointly led by UN DESA, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and UN Habitat, with support from the International Organization of Migration, the International Labor Organization and UN-Women and in partnership with the Government of Switzerland.

This consultation kicked the process off with an Expert Group Meeting in New York in mid-November 2012. Roughly 40 experts and practitioners assembled for two days to discuss how to phrase the discussion on population dynamics in the post-2015 development agenda. During the meeting experts were also interviewed on camera on population dynamics issues. These short clips will be featured on the population dynamics website shortly.

The outcomes of this Expert Group Meeting will not only shape the global meeting on population dynamics to be held in early 2013 but have also helped to initiate several online consultations that have just been launched.

Keeping Member States updated

Member States briefings are also being organized to inform missions in New York about the outcomes of the ongoing discussions. The thematic consultation on health held a Member State briefing on 29 November 2012; organized in collaboration with the Missions of Botswana and Sweden.

The consultation on peace and conflict has chosen to host three regional meetings focusing on different aspects of peace and conflict in addition to the high level global meeting that will be organized in Finland in February 2013. The first meeting in Indonesia at the end of October 2012 focused on disaster risk and resilience. At the end of November there will be a meeting in Liberia to address the issue of conflict and fragility. The final regional meeting on organized violence and citizen security will take place in Panama in January 2013.

The thematic consultation on growth and employment started with a high-level global meeting held in Tokyo, Japan in May 2012, which culminated in a outcome report, available at <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/employment>. Drawing on this report, the consultation is currently in the process of setting up a newsletter with articles and opinion pieces from academia, civil society, policy makers and UN experts. Other outreach measures

will include online discussions inputs by experts and a briefing for Member States.

With all these different processes in place, the online discussions are supporting the broad and inclusive consultations that stakeholders including Member States, civil society organizations, citizens and academia have called for, and which the United Nations is committed to support.

“As the time for achieving the Millennium Development Goals draws near, the international community is working to accelerate their progress. This is our priority, first and foremost,” said DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo in a statement to the General Assembly’s Third Committee, adding that preparations for the Post-2015 UN development agenda will build on lessons learned from the MDGs. The new agenda “... will also draw on input from the full range of partners, and will hold at its core sustainable development, including its social dimensions,” Mr. Wu said.

The world community has a unique opportunity to get involved in the post-2015 process by participating in the online discussions, sharing knowledge, opinions and ideas. All thematic consultations can be accessed via the World We Want Platform where you can sign up to receive regular updates and to contribute to the ongoing e-consultations.

Photo credit: iStock photo

For more information:

[World We Want Platform with all thematic consultations](#)

ECOSOC Vice President responds to online questions

Following up on the social media initiative “Building the Future We Want”, held in the lead up to ECOSOC’s Special Ministerial Meeting on 24 September, the Vice President of the Council, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, took time to address some of the questions related to Rio+20 follow-up, the green economy, youth involvement, peace and development.



“I would like to thank all of you for your online participation in our social media campaign, “Building the Future We Want”. We are very happy that this campaign led to so many comments and that participants followed the Ministerial Meeting on 24 September,” said Ambassador de Alba, referring to the high online engagement on the Facebook page of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), from people from all corners of the world.

Next steps following up on Rio+20

Addressing one of the questions regarding Rio+20 and the next steps of the UN to implement sustainable development and tackle climate change, Ambassador de Alba said, “the main responsibility we have as a follow up is to try to get a better balance in the integration of the three chapters of sustainable development, the economic, the social and the environmental chapter.”

He also described the number of processes established in Rio, which aims to find that balance and to remedy what is described as a somewhat fragmented agenda. He also underscored the importance of introducing the environmental dimension into development programmes of the UN, as well as to draw attention to the social agenda.

De Alba also emphasized the need to ensure that the post 2015 agenda builds upon the MDGs but also includes sustainable development, “so that the post 2015 agenda will both cover the continuation of the Millennium Development Goals that were agreed in 2000, but will include the sustainable angle and the sustainability input,” he said.

“In addition to that, we are also working on the green economy and trying to facilitate and support the actions by different countries to move towards an economy that would be greener and an economy that would make better use of sustainable energy,” he explained, underscoring also the need to address climate change and to dramatically reduce the levels of emissions.

Bridging the digital divide

Another online question brought up the issue of new technology and what possible mechanisms could be put in place by the United Nations and international private and public stake holders to bridge the digital divide.

“To get a greener economy and a much more efficient use of energy, we will also need to make better use of new technologies,” responded de Alba, and highlighted that there are a number of initiatives being developed within the private sector.

“I will highlight for instance a declaration that has been agreed by very important private companies, dealing with information technologies that will come to support actions by the United Nations, reducing the cost of communications and helping the development processes, both at the national, regional and the international level,” he continued.

Importance of involving youth

“There are a number of opportunities for young people to get engaged. Young people have been identified since 1992, as one of the main constituencies that have to be involved into the discussions and the decision-making processes dealing with sustainable development,” said Ambassador de Alba in response to a question on how proceedings on sustainability and development can be made more inclusive for young people from around the world.

Ambassador de Alba also highlighted climate change negotiations as one area where young people are especially involved, where the aim is getting a new treaty that will complement or replace the Kyoto protocol by 2015. “That new instrument will obviously aim to increase dramatically the commitments to reduce emissions, but more specifically to make better divisions of the shared responsibilities of countries,” he explained.

“From 2015 we expect a greater number of countries to commit to legally binding instruments to reduce emissions, and young people are playing a very important role in setting up that agenda”.

Inter-linkage between peace and development

How can the UN ensure that peace and security goals are included in the post-2015 agenda? This was another question posted by the Global Peace Index to which de Alba responded that he sees the linkage between peace and sustainable development as fundamental. “I cannot conceive peace without development or development without peace. And when you look

into areas of conflict, you will see that very frequently, this inter-linkage, is at the origin of the conflict, and frequently also, it is part of the solution,” he said.

Concluding the Q&A session addressing online input, Ambassador de Alba thanked the online community and also underscored the importance of continuing this dialogue. He also called for suggestions and new ideas on how things could be done. “New ideas that could help us advance a common agenda,” he explained, emphasizing the importance of an inclusive decision-making processes. “In other words, the UN of tomorrow is a UN which needs to open its door to a greater level of influence and participation. And I hope through this campaign, in building the future we want, we will be able to do it in that spirit.”

**[Watch video with ECOSOC Vice President
Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba](#)**

For more information:

[United Nations Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#)
[Facebook page of the Economic and Social Council](#)
[Twitter account of ECOSOC President Miloš Koterec](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

Promoting a society accessible for all

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities will be celebrated with a number of events at UN Headquarters on 3 December under the theme “Removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all”

The United Nations has a long history of advocating for the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development. Persons with disabilities – more than one billion persons – who make up more than 15% of the world’s population – have so much to contribute when and if the barriers are removed for their participation.

The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons, proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1992, aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for action toward protecting and promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

As the global population with disabilities continues to grow, an accessible and inclusive world is more important and essential than ever.

This year’s event will focus on the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development (HLMDD), which will take place on 23 September 2013 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/124. It will also mark the official opening of the preparatory process for the High-level Meeting. The President of the 67th session of General Assembly along with the co-facilitators of the HLMD will officially launch the preparatory process on Monday, 3 December 2012 at a high-level opening ceremony of the International Day.

The commemorative events for the Day will also include a panel discussion under the theme: “The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond” and will culminate with the annual United Nations Enable Film Festival (UNEFF), featuring short films to help raise awareness concerning disability issues with a view to promoting the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development.

The event will be co-sponsored by the Office of the President of General Assembly, Governments of the Philippines and Spain and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

“Together, we must strive to achieve the goals of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: to eliminate discrimination and exclusion, and to create societies that

value diversity and inclusion,” said the UN Secretary-General in his message for the day.

For more information:

[International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)

Women in development

The Vienna Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality will take place on 13-14 December to discuss how to anchor gender equality and the empowerment of women in the evolving post-2015 UN development agenda

Given the centrality of women as critical drivers of development, the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) Vienna Policy Dialogue will discuss how to firmly anchor gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and the protection of their rights in the changing landscape of international development cooperation and in the post-2015 UN development agenda.

Organized by DESA, in partnership with UN Women and the Government of Austria, the Vienna Policy Dialogue, will bring together senior representatives, experts from national and local governments, civil society organizations, parliaments, women’s organizations and the private sector with representatives of international organizations to develop concrete policy recommendations to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women in response to the profound shifts in international development cooperation.

The Vienna Policy Dialogue is the first in a series of consultations in preparation of the 2014 DCF. The DCF is the principal multi-stakeholder platform for global dialogue and policy aimed at reviewing trends and progress in international development cooperation. It provides policy guidance and recommendations to promote more effective and coherent international development cooperation.

For more information:

[Vienna Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality](#)

Rewarding public service excellence

The United Nations is calling for nominations for the UN Public Service Awards 2013, which is an international event designed to promote and support innovations in public service delivery worldwide (deadline 7 December 2012)

The awards are open to public organizations of all kinds, including governments and public-private partnerships involved in delivering services to citizens.

An annual United Nations event, the Public Service Awards are bestowed on those public institutions that have distinguished themselves in the following categories: Preventing and Combating Corruption in the Public Service; Improving the Delivery of Services; Fostering Participation in Policymaking Decisions through Innovative Mechanisms; Promoting Whole-of-Government Approaches in the Information Age; and Promoting Gender-Responsive Delivery of Public Services.

“The winners of the United Nations Public Service Awards set an example in improving delivery, promoting accountability and combating corruption. Through the search for innovative approaches to public governance challenges, they are building a better future for us all,” the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon noted in his 2012 United Nations Public Service Day welcome message.

The United Nations Public Service Day was established by the Economic and Social Council in 2003 to promote better delivery of services by governments and to encourage excellence in the public service through the collection, transfer and adaptation of innovative public service initiatives. Learning from other countries’ experiences in reinventing government can inspire new reforms, and in some cases help countries to leapfrog stages of development. “Such successful innovations and initiatives are concrete evidence proving that in order to find solutions to challenges of our times we need to learn from each other and think outside the box,” stressed Mr. Wu Hongbo Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

The United Nations Public Service Awards winners, selected by the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, receive a trophy and a certificate of recognition during the United Nations Public Service Awards Ceremony and Day held annually on 23 June. The global event is organized by the Division of Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in partnership with UN Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

While contenders cannot nominate themselves, interested institutions deemed to have very good performance in any one of the categories can have their name put forward by governments or civil society organizations.

Nominations for 2013 are being accepted online until 7 December 2012 at [UN Public Service Awards Application](#)

Keeping the momentum beyond 2015

A live chat on Facebook was arranged on 27 November to engage the online community in a discussion on the post-2015 development agenda



“We hope to bring views from all corners of the world together because what we are striving for is an agenda that will take us to a shared, secure and sustainable global development for all, our generation and all future ones,” said Rob Vos, Director of DESA’s Division for Development Policy and Analysis (DPAD).

More than 900 participants took part in the chat themed “Keeping the momentum beyond 2015: Moving forward towards a new global development agenda”. Panelists from the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda included DPAD Director Rob Vos with DPAD colleagues Diana Alarcon and Sabrina Axster, Fred Soltau from DESA’s Division for Sustainable Development and Jose Dallo and Gina Lucarelli from the UNDP Bureau of Development Policy.

The live chat was jointly organized by DESA and UNDP to engage various stakeholders in the preparations for a global development agenda beyond 2015 that can build on the progress of the MDGs and meet the new challenges ahead.

The chat was very popular among the online audience and the engagement level was high. Words of appreciation came from many including from this participant in Malaysia, who said that “it is a very healthy two-way interaction platform that has been created by the UN to engage online participants in a transparent way and interactive chat.”

For more information:

[Video promoting the event](#)
[Facebook event page](#)

Trends and Analysis

With a focus on new trends in migration

Expert Group Meeting on “New Trends in Migration: Demographic Aspects” will take place in New York on 3 December

Organized by DESA’s Population Division, the meeting will focus on internal and international migration trends and their relevance for development. It is held in preparation for the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Population and Development to be held in New York in April 2013.

The meeting will also inform the preparations for the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the follow-up to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 2014.

For more information:

[Expert Group Meeting on “New Trends in Migration: Demographic Aspects”](#)

E-Government as an enabler of collaborative governance

Expert Group Meeting on “2014 UN E-Government Survey: E-Government as an Enabler of Collaborative Governance” will be held at UN Headquarters in New York on 4-5 December

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of DESA is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on the topic “United Nations E-Government Survey: E-Government as an Enabler of Collaborative Governance”.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide a forum for discussion to allow high-level world-wide experts to (a) exchange views on emerging trends and issues related to the thematic areas of 2014 UN E-Government Survey, with reference to the overall UN development agenda, (b) review and examine the Survey’s methodology, as well as (c) review and update the questionnaire. The experts will provide advice and recommendations on how to integrate these issues into the next edition of the UN e-Government Survey, which is a flagship publication of DESA.

Indeed, this publication is among the top ten most viewed publications among over four hundred produced every year by the Department; has been translated in Chinese and is currently being translated in Arabic and Spanish. The Survey provides unique, global and up-to-date information about the e-government ranking of 193 Member States and highlights major emerging trends and

issues, as well as good practices in the area of e-government development across the globe.

The Survey has become a major reference publication for decision-makers world-wide, and for numerous international and regional institutions working in this area. It is an important tool for capacity-building as Governments utilize the Survey in order to gauge information about their ranking and, based on their own needs, request DESA’s advisory services to support them in further building their own capacity. As a result of DESA’s capacity building activities in this area, several Governments have been able to perform better and deliver services in more efficient, accountable, transparent and citizen-centric manner, thus progressing towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

According to the UN e-Government Survey 2012, progress in online service delivery continues in most countries around the world. The United Nations E-Government Survey 2012 finds that many have put in place e-government initiatives and information and communication technologies applications for the people to further enhance public sector efficiencies and streamline governance systems to support sustainable development. Among the e-government leaders, innovative technology solutions have gained special recognition as the means to revitalize lagging economic and social sectors.

The overall conclusion that emerges from the 2012 Survey in today’s recessionary world climate is that while it is important to continue with service delivery, governments must increasingly begin to rethink in terms of e-government – and e-governance – placing greater emphasis on institutional linkages between and among the tiered government structures in a bid to create synergy for inclusive sustainable development. An important aspect of this approach is to widen the scope of e-government for a transformative role of the government towards cohesive, coordinated, and integrated processes and institutions through which such sustainable development takes place.

For more information:

[Expert Group Meeting on “2014 UN E-Government Survey: E-Government as an Enabler of Collaborative Governance” UN E-Government Surveys](#)

Large turnout for Internet Governance Forum

More than 1,630 onsite participants from over 128 countries convened at the 7th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in Baku, Azerbaijan on 6-9 November, while more than 3800 unique visitors connected remotely

There were 429 government representatives, 161 representatives from the technical and academia community, 268 representatives from the private sector, 541 from the civil society, 96

representatives from international organisations, and 123 accredited journalists.

Remote participation has become a major strength of the IGF process as this feature enables unprecedented access to and interaction with experts for any individual with an Internet connection. It also significantly increases knowledge sharing, information dissemination, partnership building and capacity building in a way that makes the IGF meetings unique. Forty-nine remote experts and panelists participated via video and audio during the week. Fifty-two different remote ‘hubs’ allowed over 3,800 IGF enthusiasts to gather together to follow the proceedings in Baku.

The event held a record number of workshops, best practice forums, dynamic coalition meetings and open forums. The theme for this year’s IGF was “Internet Governance for Sustainable Human, Economic and Social Development”.

These sessions allowed participants to delve into both complicated and oftentimes controversial issues in an open and intimate manner. Topics at the workshops and other meetings ranged from issues related to cyber-security and child protection online, the rise of social networks, the use of “big data”, and various aspects of human rights as they relate to the Internet, among many others.

DPI has so far gathered over 1,000 articles published in 30 countries in English, German, Azerbaijani, Turkish and Russian. The bulk of the coverage has been in the United States, Germany, India and in the host country, Azerbaijan.

DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo took part in the opening of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

For more information:
[7th Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#)

Practical Transfer Pricing Manual approved

The 8th session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (the Committee) was held on 15-19 October in Geneva

This was the last meeting of the current Membership of the Committee, expiring in June 2013. A new Membership will be selected by the Secretary-General, following nominations by Member States next year and will take up their 4-year term on 1 July 2013. While nominated by countries, Members of the Committee act in their personal capacities.

United Nations Model Tax Convention update

The Committee took note of the publication by the Secretariat of the updated English version of the UN Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries (the

UN Model). It also reiterated the importance of the update for developing countries as the UN Model forms the basis of the double tax treaty practice of many of them and its revised and expanded version will better fulfill that purpose. The Committee also reaffirmed the importance of translation of the UN Model into all the official UN languages. It also expressed support for more frequent updates of the Model.

Transfer Pricing: Practical Manual for Developing Countries and related issues

In a major development, the Committee adopted its Practical Transfer Pricing Manual for Developing Countries subject to editing and formatting by the Secretariat working with the Coordinator of the Transfer Pricing Subcommittee, Mr. Stig Sollund of Norway. The assistance of the European Commission and Norway in completing the project was acknowledged.

Transfer pricing addresses the pricing of transactions within multinational enterprises (MNEs), which must set prices for such transactions for their own purposes. This also creates opportunities for profits to be booked in low or no tax jurisdictions and losses to be booked in higher tax countries, including developing countries. Payments for the use of MNE “brands” or intra-group services often require special scrutiny to see if they have these sorts of tax avoidance consequences.

The standard under the UN Model Double Taxation Convention, and its OECD counterpart, is that such pricing can be adjusted by countries where it is not at an “arm’s length” rate – in other words if it is not at market rates. Establishing “arm’s length prices” for complex MNE transactions is notoriously difficult because of the lack of direct market comparables for intellectual property and other MNE transactions, which often comprise unique assets, complex set-offs and linked arrangements.

The Manual seeks to assist developing countries in addressing these issues, including in developing and retaining the skills needed, establishing a suitable legislative framework, and identifying and accessing relevant information. It is the first UN “product” to address this important aspect of taxation of MNEs and it was recognized by the Committee that to fully achieve its goals it will need to be regularly updated.

Now that the Manual has been approved, the way has been opened for a thorough discussion of the approach taken to transfer pricing in the UN Model, and its relationship to the OECD work in that area. This is likely to be a key and contentious issue for the first meeting of the new Membership of the Committee in October 2013.

Tax treatment of services

As services become an increasingly important and valuable component of global trade, the issue of how profits on services transactions should be taxed is an increasingly urgent one. While there is agreement that it would dampen such trade if both the country of the provider of the services and the country where the services are provided doubly-taxed the profits on the services,

there is disagreement on which of those countries should be allowed to exercise the taxing jurisdiction for services transactions under tax treaties, and whether such a taxing right should be limited.

Work on seeking a coherent framework for distributing taxing rights over services between countries will no doubt continue as a high priority for the Committee. The key outcome of the 8th session was an agreement that there should be a special provision in the next version of the UN Model for countries wishing to include in their treaties a right of countries wherein advisory services are provided to tax such payments.

Inclusion of the “fees for technical services” provision will be a very useful practical addition for developing countries, offering stronger guidance and support for such proposals in treaty negotiations and in implementing such treaties. It will also sharply differentiate the UN Model from the counterpart OECD Model Tax Convention.

UN Model Convention and climate change mechanisms

A detailed paper on the taxation of profits from emissions trading under the UN Model was discussed and suggestions were made for finalizing the paper. This will help clarify the issues in terms of avoiding double taxation of profits that could dampen such trading, but also ensuring that developing countries receive their appropriate taxing rights over such profits. While profits in this area are not immediately likely, it was considered important to consider the issues at an early stage and to show leadership on the issue. This is also an important landmark for the UN Tax Committee as it represents the first sustained consideration of taxation issues related to the environment.

Building capacities

The need for greater UN capacity building on tax cooperation issues was noted, as was the need to, as far as possible, work cooperatively with others active in the area. The Secretariat provided an update on relevant developments within its new Capacity Development Programme in International Tax Cooperation, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the ministries of finance and national tax authorities in developing countries to develop more effective and efficient tax systems, which support the desired levels of investment, and to combat tax evasion. These included: the new mandate contained in ECOSOC resolution 2012/33, progress of work on developing the “UN Course on Double Tax Treaties” based on the 2011 Update of the UN Model Double Taxation Convention and other capacity development initiatives.

Value added tax issues

The Committee heard a presentation on some international tax issues relevant to value added taxes, especially as they relate to the interaction of value added taxes and income taxes addressed by the UN Model. This was the first Committee consideration of VAT issues, as it has previously focused on direct taxes, and therefore an important landmark in light of the importance of VATs to most developing countries and some of the abuses that occur in that

field. The Committee responded positively to the proposal that it consider international tax issues in that area and the relevant work will continue over the coming year.

Foreign direct investment

Some of the policy issues driving country approaches to taxation of economic rents were explored in a presentation by one of the Committee Members, and the Committee agreed to examine the issues further and to create a Working Group to consider extractive industries taxation issues for developing countries and some possible approaches.

The next meeting of the Committee, with its new Membership, will be held on 21-25 October 2013. The provisional agenda was set for approval by ECOSOC. Key issues will include transfer pricing policy and practice, discussion of a proposed provision on fees for technical services, taxation and climate change issues, capacity building, international VAT issues, and taxation of extractive industries.

For more information:

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

Capacity development

Incorporating gender perspective into statistics

Workshop for sub-Saharan African countries on Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics will take place in Kampala, Uganda on 4-7 December

DESA's Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), is organizing a capacity building workshop for sub-Saharan African countries on Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics.

The purpose of the workshop is to present the newly developed Manual for Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics and train national statisticians on the production and use of gender statistics.

For more information:
[Calendar of Events of the Statistics Division](#)

Building capacities for citizen engagement

Capacity development workshop on citizen engagement and the post-2015 development agenda in the Arab Region will be held on 5-6 December in Beirut, Lebanon

Senior government officials and civil society representatives from the Arab region will discuss the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of engaging citizens in setting and delivering the national development agenda, beyond 2015. They will do so at a workshop organized by DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), following up to the requests for further work on participatory governance, received during a seminar in Rabat, Morocco in October 2011, also organized by DESA with ESCWA.

In Beirut, around 30 delegates from 14 countries are expected to discuss how governments can foster more public participation and social inclusion in the region, in the transition after the 2011 uprisings. Workshop plenary and group sessions are designed to allow for an enriching exchange of views in anticipation of national consultations on setting the global, regional and national post-2015 development agendas.

Participants will discuss the specific conditions that their countries are facing, taking into account the characteristics of gradual or more rapid transition, particularly in relation to public participation

in development management and public policy setting. They will also make recommendations on how best to assess their public institutional capacities to provide information to and consult with the public and involve citizens in decision-making. An important focus of the workshop will be the presentation of a draft Citizen Engagement Self-Assessment Questionnaire, designed to assist governments in carrying out this assessment, for discussion and pilot. Other expected outcomes include a summary of deliberations and enhanced knowledge on the part of the participants on workshop topics.

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

Statistics to measure international trade services

UN Regional Workshop on Statistics of International Trade in Services will be held on 11-14 December in Bogota, Colombia

In 2010, the United Nations Statistical Commission adopted the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS 2010) and requested the international community to make extra efforts in providing capacity building activities to developing countries. In this context DESA's Statistics Division will organize a training workshop on compilation issues of MSITS 2010 for Latin American countries. The workshop is organized jointly with the national statistical office of Colombia and with support from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The agenda of the workshop will cover topics such as the general framework of MSITS 2010, the main data collection and data processing issues with special attention to enterprise surveys and the use of ITRS, the compilation issues related to measuring Travel services and Tourism-related international trade in services, the compilation of foreign affiliates statistics and some cross-cutting issues such as quality management, meta-data and the use of information technology.

For more information:
[Calendar of Events of the Statistics Division](#)

UNPAN Partners and SADC Member States meet in South Africa

At a training workshop of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) Partners and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Member States took place in Cape Town, South Africa, 10-12 October 2012

Ms. Haiyan Qian, Director of DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM),

delivered welcome remarks and a substantive presentation on “What is Open Data and Open Government Data Around the World” through pre-recorded video messages.

Participants agreed that : i) an enabling environment is fundamental to the effective implementation and sustainability of Open Government Data (OGD) initiatives and that the initiatives have to start at the top, in the middle, and at the bottom; (ii) creating open processes for design and implementation of OGD initiatives is equally important; (iii) political, legal, organizational, technical, economic and social dimensions should be carefully considered while developing benchmarking frameworks to measure open data progress in countries; (iv) records are fundamental to the effective implementation and sustainability of open government data initiatives in order to provide verifiable, quality sources of information; (v) more research is needed to measure the impact of open government data initiatives.

Participants also discussed the future of UNPAN, focusing on what the network needs to do differently to stay current and relevant to policy makers, experts and practitioners, particularly in view of deliberations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda which are underway. They also discussed the issues surrounding open government data and reviewed the draft open government data toolkit currently under development by DPADM.

Strong interest was registered by Member States, particularly from Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, and Zambia, to contribute to a global open data portal in the event that the platform is offered by DPADM. Introduction of the Open Government Data Toolkit was found very useful and timely not only by Member States but also by the regional organizations present in the Workshop.

The workshop was organized by DPADM in cooperation with the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) of the Ministry for Public Service and Administration of the Republic of South Africa.

More information:

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

Publications and Websites

Technical reports

Pre-launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2013

The chapter on global economic outlook of the WESP 2013 will be launched in New York on 18 December at 11 am at the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium. 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:

[World Economic Situation and Prospects](#)

Statistical compilations



Monthly Bulletin of Statistics (Print and Online)

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

In addition to regular monthly tables, the October 2012 issue includes the following quarterly and bimonthly tables:

8. Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials.
36. 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: [Monthly Bulletin of Statistics](#)

Demographic Yearbook 2011

Tables of the Demographic Yearbook 2011 are now available online. This Yearbook is the sixty-second issue in a series

published by the United Nations since 1948. It contains tables on a wide range of demographic statistics, 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. In addition, the volume provides Technical Notes, a synoptic table, a historical index and a listing of the issues of the Demographic Yearbook published to date. This issue of Demographic Yearbook contains data as available including reference year 2011.

For more information: [Demographic Yearbook](#)

Meeting records



The Future We Want – Booklet

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – or Rio+20 – took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June 2012. It resulted in a focused political outcome document – the Future We Want – which contains clear and practical measures for implementing sustainable development.

To download: [The Future We Want – Booklet](#)

Outreach material

DESA NGO News

The November issue is now available online highlighting events including the dialogue between the President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly and Civil Society, as well as a day of informal discussions on the development of a new generation of development goals. The online monthly newsletter is published by DESA's NGO Branch, providing the most up-to-date information on news and upcoming events of interest to civil society at UN headquarters in New York, Geneva and elsewhere.

Read full issue: [DESA NGO News](#)

Youth Flash Newsletter

The latest issue of Youth Flash is now available online and features a story on Georgia establishing the Youth Delegate Programme. 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 organizations around the world.

Read full issue: [Youth Flash Newsletter](#)

Enable Newsletter

The November issue is now available putting spotlights on the many events being arranged to commemorate the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December. It also highlights the work of the General Assembly's Third Committee. The ENABLE Newsletter is prepared by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCRPD) within DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development, with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and civil society.

Read full issue: [ENABLE Newsletter](#)

Websites

Most recent site additions and updates

New updates have been included in the Forty-fourth session of the Statistical Commission website. The Commission is scheduled to be held at United Nations Headquarters, New York from 26 February to 1 March 2013 in the United Nations Secretariat Building. All meetings will be held in the Conference Room 3 (Temporary North Lawn Building).

For more information: [44th session of the Statistical Commission](#)

Main documentation site:

[Documents for the forty-second session of the Statistical Commission New York, 22 – 25 February 2011](#)

Others



United Nations at a Glance

Published by the Department of Public Information, this book explains what the UN does, how the UN does it, who the actors are, and when historical milestones occurred. Illustrated with photos and stories from the field, the guide examines the work of the UN in

international peace and security, economic and social development, human rights, and humanitarian action.

For more information: [United Nations at a Glance](#)

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in November:

Htike Htike Kyaw Soe, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Matthias Kempf, Economic Affairs Officer, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Matthew Stockton, Information Systems Assistant, Population Division

Lynn Thway, Finance & Budget Officer, Executive Office

Nadia Tse, Budget & Finance Assistant, Executive Office

Calendar

December

General Assembly, 67th session

New York, 18 September - December

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

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

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

3 December

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=111>

Expert Group Meeting “2014 UN E-Government Survey: E-Government as an Enabler of Collaborative Governance”

New York, 4-5 December

<http://bit.ly/Va9Rhh>

Workshop for sub-Saharan African countries on Integrating a Gender Perspective into Statistics

Kampala, Uganda, 4-7 December

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

Capacity Development Workshop on “Citizen Engagement and the Post-2015 Development Agenda”

Beirut, Lebanon, 5-6 December

<http://www.unpan.org/beirut2012>

UN Regional Workshop on Statistics of International Trade in Services

11-14 December, Bogota, Colombia

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

Vienna Policy Dialogue on Gender Equality

Vienna, 13-14 December

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

Pre-launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2013

New York, 18 December

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

January

Regular Session of the Committee on NGOs

New York, 21-30 January

<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.