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Committed to a future we want

The world is counting down to one of the most important events of our times, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. "Rio+20 needs to show how we can move faster towards sustainable development, before it is too late", says Rio+20 Secretary-General Sha Zukang in an exclusive interview for DESA News. "My message is: come to Rio ready to commit."



World leaders and stakeholders of the nine Major Groups will gather in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro on 20-22 June with the ultimate goal of securing a sustainable future for our shared planet. Leading the preparations for this milestone event is Sha Zukang, who is also UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General. In the midst of intense preparations, he shares his visions and hopes for the conference and the remaining work leading up to it.

With less than 16 weeks to Rio+20, what is your message to different stakeholders around the world preparing for this historic conference?

"As noted by the Secretary-General, we need to make Rio+20 a great advance for human well-being. How is this done? By delivering actions, not more words. Rio + 20 needs to show how we can move faster towards sustainable development, before it is too late. It needs to secure strong political commitment at the highest levels of government and among all sectors of business and civil society, and re-energize the global partnership for sustainable development. My message is: come to Rio ready to commit. I encourage Major Groups and other stakeholders to announce at Rio+20 over one thousand new voluntary commitments for a sustainable future."

There are a few preparatory meetings prior to the Conference, what do these sessions need to accomplish for a successful Rio+20?

"These sessions need to achieve convergence on all elements of the zero draft of the outcome document so that heads of state and government can adopt it at Rio+20. The outcome document must provide a clear direction to guide action for sustainable development. The convergence of views needs to provide clarity on such issues as sustainable development goals, a sustainable development council, the strengthening of UNEP and a road

map for the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.”

Were you pleased with the zero draft of the outcome document and do you think it will serve as a catalyst for a successful conference?

“I am pleased with the zero draft document that the Co-Chairs have shared with Member States. It is a balanced text that seeks to take into account the diversity of views expressed in the more than six thousand pages of inputs from Member States, Major Groups, international organizations and other stakeholders. The zero draft represents the middle ground on which an ambitious outcome document can be built. I am encouraging all parties to be bold and to push the envelope as far as politically feasible to deliver an outcome document that heads of state and government would be proud to come to Rio to support.”

We know that there are challenges ahead, but what are the main advantages the world has now in creating a sustainable future?

“It is not a question of advantages but of dire necessity. Sustainable development is not optional. Over one fifth of humanity is severely deprived, lacking basic goods and services, including food, water and energy. Yet, on the other hand, some 20 percent of the world population is consuming 80 per cent of the natural resources. Collectively, the seven billion people on Earth are consuming each year more than 1.3 times the natural resources than the Earth can replace. This unsustainable consumption pattern must stop. The future we want is a world free from these deprivations where humanity as a whole lives within the planetary boundaries of one Earth. The long term survival of humanity requires us to commit to a sustainable future at Rio+20 and to launch concrete actions and initiatives to take us there.”

What makes Rio+20 different from other major international conferences?

“The Secretary-General has called Rio+20 a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Indeed, this will be an international conference like none other before. We are expecting some fifty to sixty thousand people to come to Rio de Janeiro for the Conference. The main difference will be the sharp focus on renewing political commitments and on implementation. In addition, the Conference will be characterized by the size and the unprecedented and strong engagement of the Major Groups of society – the non-state actors whose role is fundamental in building the future we want.

Furthermore, Rio+20 will differ from UNCED in 1992 in that Major Groups are now a part of the official proceedings, intervening and taking part in round tables alongside Member States and international organizations. At Rio 1992, Major Groups were largely confined to a global forum for civil society in Flamengo Park. The large gap between non-state actors and Member States has now been largely bridged.”

What would you like to say to citizens around the world aspiring to contribute to a sustainable future for themselves and generations to come?

“The Rio+20 Conference concerns every woman, man and child on this planet and also those yet to be born. This is your Conference, even if you are not physically present in Rio. Join the global conversation. Connect with the Conference through social media and our website. Make your opinions known to your official delegations and to your favourite Major Groups organizations. Launch initiatives of your own for sustainable development, no matter how big or small. Pitch in to build the sustainable future we all want.”

For more information:

[UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20](#)

[Rio+20 – the future we want campaign](#)

[Blog by Rio+20 Secretary-General, Mr. Sha Zukang](#)

Taking up emerging development issues

High unemployment is the Achilles Heel of the recovery. In fact, most developing and transition economies are still seriously challenged by high unemployment – especially among the youth. These and other matters will be addressed by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) at the annual meeting in New York on 12-16 March, chaired by Professor Frances Stewart.



Given the renewed economic volatility expected in the year to come and the persistent development challenges confronting the world economy, the main issues to be addressed by the fourteenth session of the Committee fall under the overall theme: “Confronting emerging development issues.”

[Providing advice on critical matters](#)

As a subsidiary body of the UN Economic and Social Council, the CDP provides independent advice on critical issues on the international development agenda. The Committee is also responsible for reviewing the list of least developed countries (LDCs) every three years. Comprised of a diverse group of experts, the 24 members on the Committee have been nominated by the UN Secretary General and appointed by the Council for a period of 3 years. At its plenary session, the CDP drafts its annual report which reflects its discussions on studies prepared by members with the assistance of the Secretariat. The report is then considered by the Council at its substantive session in July.

As a contribution to the Council's deliberations on the implementation of the millennium development agenda, the 14th session of the CDP will analyze the promotion of productive capacity and the generation of employment (the topic of this year's Annual Ministerial Review). It will also address the future of the international development agenda beyond 2015 and conduct the triennial review of the list of the LDCs.

Macroeconomics for development

In the Committee's view, policy approaches of the recent years were based on an incomplete view of macroeconomic policies, which stressed nominal balances and paid limited attention to output and employment and to the real economy. Thus, nominal macroeconomics must be replaced by macroeconomics for development, with particular attention to counter-cyclical policies to minimize the volatility of growth. Effective sectoral policies are also necessary for the generation of decent jobs, the promotion of a dynamic structural transformation of the economy and for sustaining growth.

MDGs agenda beyond 2015

Exploring the UN's future development agenda, the CDP argues that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the benchmark for global development policy since 2000. The current set of MDG targets will expire in 2015. Although progress has been made, many targets will not be met, while the MDGs do not incorporate some important objectives. A pertinent question then is what is the most effective way to take the MDG agenda forward after 2015? This is a political debate as well as a technical one. Thus, the Committee considers essential to take into account lessons from the past experience and to make recommendations for the future, which are not only helpful in charting future direction but also likely to be politically acceptable.

The triennial review

Finally, during the triennial review of the list of LDC, the Committee will consider which low-income countries would be eligible to join in the category and which countries currently in the list could be eligible for graduation. The LDC category was created due to the recognition of the need to alleviate the problems of underdevelopment of those developing countries that were persistently falling behind and to attract special international support measures for helping them to address those problems.

Graduation implies that LDC-specific support may no longer be available for countries that leave the list. Thus, as a follow up to the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs in Istanbul in May 2011, CDP will also review the existing transition mechanisms as specified in General Assembly resolution 59/209. The aim is to identify how existing provisions can be further strengthened and better monitored in order to facilitate a smooth transition from the category.

For more information:

[Committee for Development Policy](#)

Spotlighting challenges of today's youth

“Today we have the largest generation of young people the world has ever known. They are demanding their rights and a greater voice in economic and political life,” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the “World Youth Report”, published by UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development, was launched on 6 February.



Entitled “Youth Employment: Youth Perspectives on the Pursuit of Decent Work in Changing Times”, the report gathered responses from over one thousand young people around the world in an extensive online survey. It reveals that the greatest concerns among youth are the quality and relevance of their education, job vulnerability, labour migration, delayed marriage, and the rural divide, as well as age, gender and racial discrimination.

The report also shows that youth are seeking to innovate in areas such as green technologies and communications. “Young people are, in general, more conscious of global issues like climate change and social equity. I think that promotion of green economies among youth is a winning solution,” says Michael, a 23-year-old and a member of the World Esperanto Youth Organization.

The Secretary-General also urges, “We need to pull the UN system together like never before to support a new social contract of job-rich economic growth. Let us start with young people”.

Webcast: ["UN's global report on youth spotlights rising concerns over lack of job prospects"](#)

For more information:
[World Youth Report](#)

Press release:
[World Youth Report press release](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

ECOSOC and global governance

A special event will be convened at UN headquarters in New York on 7 March with support from UN DESA's Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

The objective of this event, themed “ECOSOC and Global Governance”, is to identify the world’s most pressing global governance challenges and examine how the UN - and the Economic and Social Council in particular - can better meet them. Panellists will particularly discuss global financial, economic and sustainable development governance, analyzing their implications for the UN and ECOSOC. The Council’s relationship with the G20 will be considered, as will ECOSOC’s role in the post-Rio+20 follow-up.

H.E. Mr. Gert Rosenthal, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the UN, will serve as moderator and panellists will include Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Professor of Professional Practice in International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; and a high-level representative of the Government of Mexico (TBC), which currently holds the G20 presidency.

For more information:
[UN ECOSOC](#)

Addressing range of emergent development issues

Fourteenth session of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) will meet at UN Headquarters in New York on 12-16 March

CDP is a subsidiary body of the UN Economic and Social Council, providing inputs and independent advice to the Council on emerging cross-sectoral development issues and on international cooperation for development, focusing on medium- and long-term aspects. The Committee is also responsible for reviewing the status of least developed countries (LDCs) and for monitoring their progress after graduation from the category.

The 24 members of the Committee are nominated by the UN Secretary-General in their personal capacity, and are appointed by the Council for a period of three years. Membership is geared to reflect a wide range of development experience as well as geographical and gender balance.

Chaired by Professor Frances Stewart, the annual meeting of the Committee will address the following issues:

- Promoting productive capacity and employment in a socially responsible environment, forming CDP’s contribution to the 2012 Annual Ministerial Review of the ECOSOC. It argues the importance of maintaining real macroeconomic balance beyond price-level stability and proactive policies, supported by public-private institutional arrangements, that aim at transforming the economic structure, for creating higher productive capacity and employment;
- Triennial review of the list of least developed countries and monitoring of graduating and graduated countries from the list of LDCs: it examines possible inclusions and graduation of developing countries into or from the LDC category and monitors socio-economic development of the countries that graduated and are graduating from the category;
- The UN development agenda beyond 2015: it provides a summary of the debate on the contribution of the MDG framework for global development policy and its shortcoming, and examines what would be the most effective way to take the MDGs agenda forwards after 2015, and;
- Strengthening smooth transition strategy provisions (CDP input to ad hoc working group of the General Assembly): it reviews the existing smooth transition mechanisms and identifies their benefits to graduating countries from the LDC category and their shortcomings, and how such mechanisms can be further strengthened and better monitored.

For more information:
[Committee for Development Policy](#)

Getting ready for Rio+20

First round of ‘informal-informal’ negotiations on the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document will take place on 19-23 March, followed by the 3rd Intersessional Meeting on 26-27 March



The UN Conference on Sustainable Development – known as Rio+20 – will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June with the goal of securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the

major summits on sustainable development, and addressing new and emerging challenges.

On 25-27 January, an informal preparatory meeting took place at UN headquarters to hold initial discussions on the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document. Member States devoted three sessions to general discussions and comments, and three sessions to informal negotiations on Sections I and II of the zero draft, covering the Preamble/Stage Setting and the objective of Renewing Political Commitment to sustainable development. Member States were invited to submit their written comments on those Sections in advance of the meeting.

The Rio+20 Bureau now invites Member States to hold the first round of 'informal-informal' negotiations on the zero draft. Delegations are invited to submit comments on sections III, IV and V of the document by 29 February for negotiation on 19-23 March. The zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document is available on the official Conference website.

Following the week of 'informal-informal' negotiations, Member States will be joined by Major Groups and other global stakeholders for the Third Intersessional Meeting of Rio+20. Throughout the intervening weekend (24-25 March), an Expert Group Meeting retreat for Major Groups and other stakeholders will be held in New York to facilitate coalition building behind various themes of sustainable development identified in the zero draft. More information about how Major Groups are supporting the Rio+20 outcome document is available on the Conference website, please see link included below.

Voluntary associations of NGOs will lead various thematic clusters in order to present stronger advocacy and more effective engagement with the intergovernmental negotiating process. Registration for the full segment of meetings is open through the CSO Net online events registration system.

For more information:

[Rio+20 Conference website](#)

[CSO-Net online events registration system](#)

[The Future We Want – Zero draft of the outcome document](#)

[Major Groups and NGO thematic clusters](#)

Promoting social development

The Fiftieth Session of the Commission for Social Development took place in New York on 1-10 February

This year was the policy session on the priority theme "Poverty eradication, taking into account its relationship with social integration and full employment and decent work for all". General discussions and a high-level panel discussion were devoted to this theme on 1 February. A Special Event on the financing of social development was organized on 3 February and a panel discussion was held as part of emerging issues on "youth: poverty and

unemployment" on 6 February.

Priority theme: poverty eradication

A high-level expert panel discussion preceded the general discussions on this agenda item. Delegations expressed concern about the ongoing financial and economic crisis which could further undermine the realization of the MDGs, especially poverty and hunger eradication. Job creation, economic growth and people-centered socio-economic policies should be at the core of the current macroeconomic policies to mitigate further worsening of the negative impacts.

Addressing the main causes of poverty – unemployment, inequality, instability and armed conflicts – remained a priority. Identification of sources of innovative financing for social development globally and mobilizing domestic resources of the developing countries were named among some tools to pursue, considering the current trends to reduce public budgets. Many delegations welcomed the social protection floor initiative.

Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups

The Commission heard a presentation by the Special Rapporteur on Disability, Mr. Shuaib Chalklen. The Rapporteur first briefed the Commission on his work during the past year and outlined latest steps in the promotion, monitoring, and implementation of the human rights and disability-specific instruments worldwide, with a specific focus on Africa. Mr. Chalklen stressed the need for disability to be mainstreamed into all development agendas. The upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 and the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development, to be held in September 2013, provide such opportunities.

Youth: poverty and unemployment

The Commission held a panel discussion on the topic of "Youth: poverty and unemployment", chaired by Mr. Mohamed Elbahi, Vice-Chair (Sudan). The panellists discussed social and economic policies to foster decent work opportunities for young people; EU's work to prioritize youth employment within the G-20 agenda, in partnership with the ILO; ways to better align education programmes to match the actual demands of the labour markets; more careful data collection and monitoring of youth employment trends to ensure better policy responses; and Uruguay's tri-fold approach involving young people, the State and private-sector companies to address youth unemployment.

Special event on financing of social development

The Commission held a special event on this topic moderated by the Director of UN DESA's Financing for Development Office, with presentations by representatives of the IMF, ILO, civil society and the President of the National Institute of Statistics of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The panellists discussed ways to leverage ODA for social protection systems; financing of social development as a national priority that has to be country-specific; innovative strategies that could help finance social development, such as taxing mineral exploitation, increasing social contributions, reducing non-essential spending, taxing hydrocarbon sales and cancelling debt; and finding the right balance between social and economic investments by mobilizing national resources, regulating foreign direct investment, establishing fair rules for world trade and initiating new instruments for development.

Session concludes

The Commission concluded its session by adopting seven draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council, covering topics that ranged from the mainstreaming of disability into the international development agenda, to the priority theme for the next session.

Several of the texts approved focused on organizational matters, including the Commission's future organization and working methods. By its terms, the Economic and Social Council would select "Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all" as the priority theme for Commission's fifty-first session.

Other draft resolutions approved focused on specific initiatives, including preparations for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family (1994), while others explored the social dimensions of existing international instruments, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

For more information:

[Commission for Social Development](#)

Coordinating international migration issues

UN DESA's Population Division organized the Tenth Coordination Meeting on International Migration at the UN from 9 to 10 February



The coordination meeting brought together representatives from UN entities, other relevant intergovernmental and regional organizations, Member States, civil society and the research community. In total, some 120 participants attended the two-day event.

The meeting discussed the contributions of relevant entities of the UN system and other organizations to the preparations of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration

and Development, which will be organized by the General Assembly during its sixty-eighth session in 2013.

The meeting also examined cooperation between international organizations and the 2011 and 2012 editions of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. The Global Forum is a voluntary, intergovernmental, non-binding and informal consultative process open to all Member States and Observers of the United Nations.

Experts from international organizations and academia informed participants about the latest research findings on global migration levels and trends, remittances, and the complex relationship between population, migration and the environment.

The coordination meeting allowed international organizations to exchange information on current activities and to present major new initiatives in the area of international migration. As such, the meeting provided a unique venue to enhance interagency coherence, in particular in responding to the growing demand from Member States for activities and support on issues relating to the multidimensional aspects of international migration and development.

The outcomes of the meeting will contribute to the report of the Secretary-General on international migration and development for the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and to the preparations for the 2013 High-level Dialogue.

In a recent message, marking the International Migrants Day on 18 December, 2011, Ban Ki-moon also highlighted the valuable role migrants play, "Migrants make vast contributions to host countries. As workers, they bring skills. As entrepreneurs, they create jobs. As investors, they bring capital... No migrant should be sent back to a place where he or she will be tortured. Every migrant woman should have access to health care, including reproductive health care. Every migrant child should be able to go to school."

For more information:

[Tenth Coordination Meeting on International Migration](#)

Forest heroes honoured at closing ceremony

People making special contributions towards protecting forests received the Forest Heroes Award at a special ceremony hosted by the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat to mark the conclusion of the International Year of Forests on 9 February



The ceremony also featured the winners of the 2011 Universal Postal Union letter-writing contest, which drew entries from more than 2 million children and youth worldwide, and the announcement of the winners of the 2011 children's art contest "Celebrate the Forests".

Film clips from the first-ever award-winning International Forest Film Festival were also shown, as well as the launch of the commemorative book *Forests for People* with 75 articles from 35 countries.

Jan McAlpine, Director of UNFF Secretariat and a member of the jury panel for the Forest Heroes Awards, said the well-being of forests was a concern for everyone. "Each of us, all 7 billion people on Earth, has our physical, economic and spiritual health tied to forests. We launched the UNFF Forest Heroes Awards for the International Year of Forests 2011 to identify and honour the countless individuals around the world who are dedicating their lives to nurturing forests in quiet and heroic ways. The programme aims to spotlight everyday people working to make positive changes for forests."

Through many activities, the 2011 International Year of Forests helped promote awareness of the issues confronting the world's forests and the people who depend on them. Forests cover 31 per cent of the world's total global land area, store more than 1 trillion tons of carbon and provide livelihoods for more than 1.6 billion people. Deforestation accounts for 12 to 20 per cent of the global greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming.

The UNFF Secretariat received 90 nominations from 41 countries and selected 15 finalists. After a long and difficult deliberation, the jury finally decided on the following regional winners: Africa's Paul Nzegha Mzeka (Cameroon), Asia's Shigeatsu Hatakeyama (Japan), Europe's Anatoly Lebedev (Russian Federation), Latin America's Paulo Adario (Brazil) and North America's Rhiannon Tomtishen and Madison Vorva (United States). The jury decided to add a special award in recognition of the deceased couple José Claudio Ribeiro and Maria do Espírito Santo, two activists tragically murdered in Brazil while trying to protect their natural forests.

Each hero embodied innovative approaches and grass-roots initiatives that make a direct impact on the forests to which they have dedicated themselves.

Since its launch in February 2011, global observance of the International Year of Forests has been dedicated to raising public awareness of the vital role of people in sustainable management and catalysing actions in the development and conservation of all types of forests.

For more information:
[International Year of Forests 2011](#)

Trends and Analysis

Decent jobs and inclusive growth in focus

The 2012 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) e-discussion on “Jobs, Decent Work and Inclusive Growth” runs from 8 February to 14 March

UN DESA is currently hosting this e-discussion in partnership with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO). It is an open, multi-stakeholder space for experts, practitioners and policy-makers to discuss a series of questions pertaining to the AMR theme. Mr. Stephen Pursey (ILO) and Mr. Selim Jahan (UNDP) are serving as expert moderators, leading participants through a discussion of public policies and strategies to support aggregate demand, foster enterprise development, create decent jobs and ensure inclusive growth.

The recommendations that emerge from the e-discussion will feed into the preparations for the 2012 AMR. If you are not already a member of UNDG’s MDG-Net, UNDP Poverty Reduction Network, Gender or Human Development Report Networks and would like to participate, please register by sending a request to support.amr@unteamworks.org.

For more information:
[Annual Ministerial Review](#)

Catalysts for job creation

2012 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) regional meeting will be arranged in Addis Ababa on 25 March focusing on “Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as drivers of productive capacity and job creation”

AMR is a function of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the purpose of assessing progress made towards the MDGs and the implementation of other goals and targets agreed at major UN conferences and summits, forming the UN development agenda. It also aims at contributing to scaling-up and accelerating action to realize the development agenda, by serving as global high-level forum with broad-based participation, where lessons learned are exchanged and successful practices and approaches that merit scaling-up are identified.

The meeting in Addis Ababa is organized by UN DESA, jointly with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the International Labor Organization, within the context of the Fifth Joint Meeting, African Union Conferences of Ministers of

Economy and Finance and ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, to be held from 22-27 March.

The outcomes of the meeting will be presented during the ECOSOC high-level segment to be held in New York in July 2012.

For more information:
[UN ECOSOC](#)

UN Public Service Awards sees nomination increase

The 2012 United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA) has seen an unprecedented number of 471 nominations, marking a 58% increase in comparison to 2011 and over 100% growth since 2010

The United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA) is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. It rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions that lead to a more effective and responsive public administration in countries worldwide. Through an annual competition, the UN Public Service Awards promotes the role, professionalism and visibility of public service.

The 2012 UNPSA has seen a record number of nominations. Member State participation has also increased from 57 in 2011 to 73, including 16 countries partaking for the first time, almost doubling Member State involvement which was 39 in 2008.

The 2012 UNPSA programme has been accepting nominations from 15 September to 31 December 2011 and are now going through the first amongst a series of evaluations which will culminate in the final evaluation to be done by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) in April 2012.

The increase in the number of nominations can largely be attributed to the intensive and innovative communication and outreach strategy employed by the UNPSA team which has engaged the Permanent Missions to the UN through three briefing sessions and continuous open communication, prepared material for the delegates, who attended the 66th Session of the General Assembly, and collaborated with multiple partners at regional and national levels to sensitize public institutions in their regions.

For more information:
[UN Public Service Awards](#)

Understanding today's economic volatility

On 7 February, the Economic and Social Council with support from UN DESA's Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination arranged an "Interactive dialogue on the current economic and financial situation"

"Clouds are particularly dark over developed economies," remarked Mr. Rob Vos, Director of the Development Policy and Analysis Division of UN DESA while moderating the event featuring distinguished economists sharing their views on the current global economic and financial situation.

At the outset of the discussion, the President of the Council and Chair of the ECOSOC Special Briefing, H.E. Mr. Miloš Koterec (Slovakia) also stated, "With growing inequality within and among countries, it is my view that the current development model needs to be revisited... Studies estimate that the global crisis has caused between 47 million and 84 million persons to fall into or remain trapped in poverty. Furthermore, prolonged unemployment affects medium-term growth prospects due to its impact on workers' income and skills. I believe that a more inclusive and balanced growth strategy should be adopted in order to address these challenges."

The objective of the event was to allow UN Member States to better understand the systemic and other challenges facing the global economy and explore possible policy responses. The panellists addressed three main topical subjects: what major structural fragilities still exist in the global economy and their implications for recovery; what alternative development models there are for sustainable, equitable and inclusive growth and job creation; and what are the most appropriate arrangements are for effective global policy coordination to mitigate uncertainties.

The panellists included Peter Diamond, Institute Professor and Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and 2010 Nobel Economics Laureate, and Carmen Reinhart, Senior Fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

For more information:
[Webcast of the event](#)
[UN ECOSOC](#)

Financing social development

A special event was arranged within the Fiftieth session of the Commission for Social Development on 3 February

The event was jointly organized by UN DESA's divisions Financing for Development Office (FfDO) and the Division for Social Policy and Development in line with the General Assembly

resolution "Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development". The panel discussion was chaired by the Vice-Chair of the Commission, Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Elbahi (Sudan) and moderated by Mr. Alex Trepelkov, Director of FfDO.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of resource mobilization for social development, as sufficient financial resources are critical to achieve progress in such key social areas as poverty eradication, job creation, education, health, social inclusion, food security and reduction of inequalities. In order to strengthen financing of social development, challenges resulting from the recent global financial and economic crisis and the food and energy crises need to be addressed.

It is also necessary to tackle long-term, structural bottlenecks. In this context, enhancing domestic resource mobilization, including through effective tax systems, is of critical importance. At the same time, domestic efforts need to be complemented by international resources, such as ODA, innovative financing mechanisms, FDI, trade, migrant workers' remittances and debt relief.

The panel discussion featured four panelists. Mr. Elliot Harris, IMF Special Representative to the UN, assessed comparative advantages of various types of financing for social purposes and suggested to use external financing predominantly for finite projects with measureable results.

Ms. Christine Bockstal, Chief, Technical Cooperation and Country Operations Group, Social Security Department, ILO, presented findings of the CEB Social Protection Floor Advisory Group, according to which some degree of basic income security that ensures access to essential goods and services for everybody was affordable at all levels of development.

Ms. Eva-Maria Hanfstaengl, Director, Social Justice in Global Development, stressed the role of domestic resource mobilization, including through progressive taxation, taxes on capital gains, and repatriating stolen assets. Mr. Elias Eljuri Abraham, President, National Institute of Statistics, Venezuela, highlighted experiences from his country in reducing poverty and inequality through public investments in key social areas such as housing, employment, education and health.

In the ensuing discussion, participants followed up on some issues raised by the panelists, including feasibility of social protection floors, introduction of financial transactions tax and policies to reduce inequalities. Some participants also supported the creation of a Commission on Financing for Development and the upgrading of the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters to an intergovernmental body.

In his closing statement, the Chair identified four key messages of the special event:

- in the face of multiple crises, both developed and developing countries need to scale up social spending;
- countries need to channel their recent prosperity into a more ambitious social development agenda;
- countries should prioritize social protection financing; and
- it is important to further strengthen financial inclusion and the role of cooperatives.

For more information:

[Financing for Development](#)

Capacity development

Analyzing population and housing census data

The Kenya Seminar on Census Data Analysis is scheduled to be held on 19-22 March in Nairobi, Kenya



The main objective of the national seminar is to provide an opportunity for the staff members of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics to further analyze data from the 2009 population and housing census of Kenya on selected topics. The ultimate objective is to promote greater analysis and dissemination of the data collected from the Kenya 2009 census. After the seminar,

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

The national seminar will cover the following topics:

- population projections at sub-national and sectoral level,
- analysis of data on international migration, and
- analysis of data on gender issues.

For more information:

[2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme](#)

Strengthening statistical capacity development

International workshop on Household Income, Consumption and Full Accounting of the Households Sector will be held in Beijing, China, on 26-28 March

UN DESA's Statistics Division in collaboration with the National Bureau of Statistics of China is organizing this workshop as part of the project to strengthening statistical capacity development in China and other developing countries in Asia funded by the Chinese Government.

It will present an overview of the Households Sector as an institutional sector in National Accounts and will train participants on how to compile a full sequence of non-financial accounts for it.

Particular attention will be given to the compilation of GDP by income approach with emphasis on the income by corporations and households, adjustments for the conceptual differences between the estimates derived using the results of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey and National Accounts, and the use of

extrapolation and benchmarking techniques for compilation of annual accounts for the Households Sector.

For more information:

[UN DESA's Statistics Division Calendar of Events](#)

Improving global gender statistics

4th Global Forum on Gender Statistics will be held at the Dead Sea, Jordan on 27-29 March, back-to-back with the 6th Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) on 25-26 March



The Forum is being organized by UN DESA's Statistics Division and the Department of Statistics of Jordan, in collaboration with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN-Women and the World Bank. It is held as part of the Global Gender Statistics Programme

promoted by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) with the purpose of enhancing the capacity of countries to collect, disseminate and use quality gender statistics.

The forum will provide an important opportunity to review and discuss new initiatives and data collection tools for the improvement of gender statistics and focus on women's empowerment, including: economic empowerment, autonomy and physical empowerment, adolescent girls, and knowledge empowerment.

The 6th Inter-agency and Expert Group (IAEG) meeting will bring together representatives of international agencies within and outside UN system, statisticians from National Statistical Systems, and development partners, to review progress and provide guidance on future activities geared at advancing gender statistics.

For more information

[UN DESA's Statistics Division's site on gender statistics](#)

Transparency in legislatures

International Meeting on "Achieving Greater Transparency in Legislatures through the Use of Open Document Standards" was arranged at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. on 27-29 February

The meeting was organized by UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) and

its Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the U.S. House of Representatives.

It convened Secretaries-General and staff of Parliaments, currently using Extensible Markup Language (XML) for parliamentary records with a view to: a) determine how XML has been implemented by parliaments around the world and how it is being used by them and by civil society organizations to enhance citizens' participation; b) exchange experiences about the policy and organizational challenges faced by Parliaments' senior management to increase transparency; c) identify current best practices and state of the art applications; d) outline projects anticipated by legislatures over the next five years and explore venues of possible collaborations and synergies to reduce costs; and e) elaborate policy and technical recommendations for the use of open document standards in parliaments.

Other invitees included legislative and legal informatics experts from a selected number of international organizations, universities, foundations and civil society organizations. Approximately 100 participants took part in the policy and technical debates during the three-day agenda.

For more information:

[Event website highlighting "Achieving Greater Transparency in Legislatures through the Use of Open Document Standards"](#)

resources, knowledge management and the Millennium Development Goals.

For more information:

[UNPAN Online Training Centre](#)

Public service capacity building

The Government of the Republic of Moldova, through its e-Government Centre (eGC), partners with UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) to make e-learning courses available

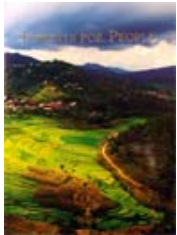
In its endeavour to strengthen the capacity of its public service, the Government of the Republic of Moldova, through its e-Government Centre (eGC), recently requested DPADM to partner with them in making DPADM's e-learning courses on United Nations Public Administration Network's (UNPAN) Online Training Centre available for their use on a larger scale and in a more systematic way.

They propose to make the courses mandatory for all public servants as part of their ambitious Strategic Programme for Technological Modernization to bring services closer and more accessible to citizens and businesses and to improve quality through the intelligent use of ICT. In response to this request, DPADM is working with the government focal point to develop a concrete plan for implementation.

The UNPAN Online Training Centre delivers courses on various topics in public administration. Its main goal is to increase opportunities for government officials and citizens from all over the world to access training materials on e-government, human

Publications and Websites

Forests for People



On 9 February, DESA's UN Forum on Forests Secretariat launched the Forests for People book as part of the special event marking the closing of the International Year of Forests 2011. It celebrates the interconnections between people and forests and promotes greater understanding of their economic, environmental and social values. The 300-page fully illustrated

publication is a collaborative effort between the UNFF Secretariat and Tudor Rose publishing.

The book includes articles from 75 authors from 35 countries, showcasing best practices in sustainable forest management from governments, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels.

Forests for People features statements from Ministers, and the heads of Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) and other international organizations. Their commentaries draw upon experiences around the world, reflecting how people are changing their interaction with forests to improve their sustainability. The book also features a foreword by Ms. Jan L. McAlpine, Director of the UNFF Secretariat, who also authored an article highlighting activities conducted during the International Year of Forests 2011 and its legacy. The informative publication features photos and graphics which help illustrate the multiple values of forests and present a snapshot of sustainable forest management in action.

Tudor Rose is a professional publishing and marketing company based in London, UK, that has collaborated on a variety of publications for the United Nations since 1999, including amongst others UNESCO, UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and UN International Year of Freshwater.

For more information:
[International Year of Forests 2011](#)

Limited copies of the book are available upon request by contacting the UNFF Secretariat at forests@un.org.

Technical reports

Disability and the Millennium Development Goals



Released in December 2011, the report Disability and the Millennium Development Goals: A Review of the MDG Process and Strategies for Inclusion of Disability Issues in Millennium Development Goal Efforts, examines the MDGs and its relation to disability issues with a view to impact the post-2015 development agenda.

The MDGs represent a concerted effort to address global poverty. Yet there is a striking gap in the current MDGs, where persons with disabilities – the 15 per cent of the global population, who live with one or more physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health impairments – are not mentioned in any of the 8 Goals or its 21 targets and indicators, nor in the Millennium Declaration, itself.

For more information: [UN Enable](#)

Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments 2012

In 2008 and 2010, UN DESA, through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, jointly published the first and second edition of the World e-Parliament Report. Praised by many parliaments, organizations and research centres, these reports have helped to advance a shared knowledge base among the parliaments of the world, to guide parliaments in modernizing their processes and to promote international debate on ICT in Parliament.

The recommendations and findings presented in the World e-Parliament Reports were based on the results of surveys conducted by the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament. The first survey in 2007 received responses from 105 parliamentary assemblies. In 2009, the number of responses reached 134.

In preparation for the World e-Parliament Report 2012, the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament is conducting a new survey which will allow to measure progress of e-parliament including the changes due to recent technological developments. The results of the survey will be of significant benefit to the world community of parliaments, which is increasingly using technology to enhance transparency and reach out to the public at large.

For more information:
[Global Survey of ICT in Parliaments](#)
[World e-Parliament Reports](#)

Statistical compilations

Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online



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

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This month, the following tables, which are featured in the MBS on a quarterly or bimonthly basis, are presented along with the regular recurrent monthly tables: 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:

[Monthly Bulletin of Statistics Online](#)

Demographic Yearbook 2009-2010



The Demographic Yearbook 2009-2010 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. 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.

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. Consequently, for this issue the annual questionnaires were modified and extra worksheets were added, so that data for the latest two available reference years could be reported by the National Statistical Offices.

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.

For more information:

[Publications of UN DESA's Statistics Division](#)

Publications in other languages

The following publication has been translated into Arabic:

Measuring the Economically Active in Population Censuses: A Handbook ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/102

For more information:

[Publications of UN DESA's Statistics Division](#)

Publications on international migration

The following publications are released by the Population Division of DESA:

- [International Migration Report 2009: A Global Assessment](#)
- The CD-ROM and an on-line version of the database [Trends in International Migrant Stock: Migrants by Age and Sex](#)
- The CD-ROM and an on-line version of the database [International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries: The 2010 Revision](#)
- The wallchart [The Age and Sex of Migrants 2011](#)

Meeting records

Report of the Seminar on “Challenges and Opportunities of Participatory Governance in North African countries: Engaging Citizens and their Organizations in Public Development Affairs through Adequate Institutions”

The report on the seminar held on 20-21 October in Rabat, Morocco, is being released and it aims at disseminating information assisting governments, civil society and the private sector to further reflect on effective and viable participatory approaches and institutions that may contribute to further foster development in North Africa.

The seminar was organized by UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), with the support of the Kingdom of Morocco.

The report highlights the need for participatory governance as a key concept with specific and high value for the citizens and States of the North African region. Its prerequisites include: access to information and enhanced transparency; interactive processes of public administration to enhance participatory democracy; institutionalization of social accountability; fight against corruption; and capacity building for governments and citizens on interactive processes. The report also emphasizes the need for a greater awareness of the potential of ICT to spearhead a culture of openness, transparency and stronger citizen engagement.

The report finally reflects participants' call to the United Nation to support participatory approaches, support and accompany the transition phase in North Africa.

For more information: [DPADM seminar report](#)

Documentation for the forty-fifth Commission on Population and Development

Documentation for the forty-fifth Commission on Population and Development is now available on the CPD website (including advance, unedited versions).

For more information:
[Documentation for the forty-fifth Commission on Population](#)

Outreach material

Rio+20 Newsletter Focuses on Jobs

On 14 February, the UNCSD newsletter Rio+20: Making It Happen released a special issue focusing on green and decent jobs, one of the seven emerging issues identified in the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document. Today nearly 200 million people are unemployed, however 1.3 billion do not earn enough to lift themselves and their dependents out of poverty. As job creation remains a vital part of economic recovery, green and decent jobs can play a critical role in protecting the environment, promoting social inclusion and aiding in a transition to a low-carbon economy. Also in this issue: important deadlines, the launch of the 2011 World Youth Report, an e-Discussion with ECOSOC, news from Major Groups, and upcoming events.

For more information: [Rio+20: Making it Happen](#)

DESA NGO News

The latest issue highlights the 2012 regular session of the Committee on NGOs, the ECOSOC E-Discussion on Jobs, the Commission for Social Development, Third Intersessional Meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, the 45th session of the Commission on Population and Development, the 11th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the 2012 Resumed Session of the Committee on NGOs and Rio+20 Conference.

The online monthly newsletter provides 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.

For more information: [DESA NGO News](#)

Working papers

Super-cycles of commodity prices since the mid-nineteenth century

Decomposition of real commodity prices suggests four super-cycles during 1865-2009 ranging between 30-40 years with amplitudes 20-40 percent higher or lower than the long-run trend. Non-oil price super-cycles follow world GDP, indicating they are essentially demand-determined; causality runs in the opposite direction for oil prices. The mean of each super-cycle of non-oil commodities is generally lower than for the previous cycle, supporting the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis. Tropical agriculture experienced the strongest and steepest long-term downward trend through the twentieth century, followed by non-tropical agriculture and metals, while real oil prices experienced a long-term upward trend, interrupted temporarily during the twentieth century.

To download: [DESA Working Paper No. 110](#)

Is the Distribution of Foreign Aid MDG-sensitive?

This paper examines whether Official Development Assistance (ODA) is disproportionately allocated to countries that need to make the most progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We expect MDG-sensitive distribution of foreign aid – or a good donor-recipient match – to be guided by the principles of the Global Partnership for Development. When we apply the MDG-sensitivity criteria for aid allocation, the results indicate that ODA allocation since the Millennium Declaration has become more MDG-sensitive – ODA is given to countries that need it most. While such trends in aid disbursements are commendable, total aid flows, however, fall short of promised levels.

To download: [DESA Working Paper No. 111](#)

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 39

This issue highlights several economic trends that developed in 2011. Over the course of the year, the momentum for economic growth faltered progressively, especially in developed countries, where unemployment remained elevated.

For more information:

[Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 39](#)

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 40

The February issue covers recent events affecting the world economy such as the Long Term Refinancing Operation (LTRO) by the European Central Bank (ECB). Conditions around the world remain mixed, with slower growth appearing in a variety of countries. Financial markets have regained some stability recently, but credit remains tight in the real sector. Also, EU leaders agreed to a new fiscal compact enhancing fiscal discipline which must be ratified by a two-thirds majority later this year.

For more information:

[Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 40](#)

Websites



Global Gender Statistics Programme
The new website of the Global Gender Statistics Programme provides a platform for the dissemination of materials and information in the field of gender statistics. It also provides a

forum for the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics to access and share information on their various areas of activity.

To browse: [Global Gender Statistics Programme](#)

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff member was promoted in February:

Arlene Cezar, Programme Assistant, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Goings

The following staff members retired in February:

Sergei Gorbunov, Economic Affairs Officer, Financing for Development office

Pacita Montanez, Finance & Budget Assistant, Executive Office
Peter Trupia, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Calendar

March

Special event on ECOSOC and global governance

New York, 7 March

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

Fourteenth session of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP)

New York, 12-16 March

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

First round of 'informal-informal' negotiations on the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document

New York, 19-23 March and 26-27 March

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.html>

The 2012 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) e-discussion on "Jobs, Decent Work and Inclusive Growth"

8 February - 14 March

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

Seminar on Census Data Analysis

Kenya, 19-22 March

[2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme](#)

2012 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) regional meeting

Addis Ababa, 25 March

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

3rd Intersessional Meeting of UNCSD, Rio+20

New York, 26-27 March

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=13&nr=46&menu=46>

International workshop on Household Income, Consumption and Full Accounting of the Households Sector

Beijing, 26-28 March

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

4th Global Forum on Gender Statistics

Dead Sea, Jordan, 27-29 March

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/default.html>

April

11th session of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration

New York, 16-20 April

<http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/CEPA/11thSession/tabid/1505/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

45th Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development

New York, 23-27 April

http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/ngopart_45.htm

DESA News is an insider's look at the United Nations in the area of economic and social development policy. The newsletter is produced by the Communications and Information Management Service of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with DESA Divisions. DESA News is issued every month. Please click [here](#) to send inquiries.