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Feature Articles

Building the future of the MDGs

Ahead of the High-level event on Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda, on 25 September, it's time to look back to 13 years of actions and efforts, during which UN DESA's work has been central. To better understand the issues to be discussed this month, let's watch our interview of Ms Shamshad Akhtar, Assistant Secretary-General of DESA.

[Watch the video interview](#)



Shamshad Akhtar

Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are [eight international development goals](#) that were officially established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, and the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. All 189 United Nations Member States represented in 2000, agreed to achieve these goals by the year 2015. National efforts have been supported by the UN system and other international organizations.

A life of dignity for all

Ahead of an upcoming special event organized by the President of the General Assembly next month, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has released a report, *A Life of Dignity for All*, containing his updates on the Goals and vision for the road ahead. While providing an assessment of progress to date, the report also identifies policies and programmes that have driven success in the achievement of the Goals and can contribute to accelerating it. These include emphasizing inclusive growth, decent employment and social protection; allocating more resources for essential services and ensuring access for all; strengthening political will and improving the international policy environment; and harnessing the power of multi-stakeholder partnerships.

How does UN DESA assess MDGs progress?

- **The Millennium Development Goals Report**

Since 2005 UN DESA has prepared an annual **Millennium Development Goals Report**, assessing the global and regional progress. The Report uses the most updated data series provided by the partner agencies and members of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG). The latest version of the MDG Report was launched by the Secretary-General in Geneva on 1 July 2013.

Unprecedented progress in poverty eradication has been made globally and in individual countries. The MDG Report 2013 shows that key MDG targets have already been met ahead of time, or are within close reach by 2015. 700 million fewer people lived in conditions of extreme poverty during the two decades since 1990. Over 2.1 million people gained access to improved drinking water sources in the past 21 years. The lives of more than 200 million slum dwellers have been significantly improved over the same period. Remarkable gains have also been made in the fight against malaria and tuberculosis, saving millions of lives.

- **The MDG Gap Task Force Report**

Since its creation by the Secretary-General in 2007, the **MDG Gap Task Force** has been measuring progress in implementing global commitments to support the MDGs as crystallized in Goal 8 – “the global partnership for development”. MDG-8 calls for strengthening Official Development Assistance (ODA), improving access of developing-country exports to international markets, enhancing cooperation to achieve sustainable external debt situations in developing countries, and deepening developing-country access to affordable essential medicines and new technologies. In addition to reporting progress in these areas, since its first report in 2008, the Task Force has identified the gaps between commitment and delivery and has called upon the international community to fill those gaps. The 2013 report will be launched by the Secretary General in September.

Accelerating progress is a moral imperative

There is a need to redouble efforts to meet the MDGs by the 2015 deadline, by leveraging all available resources and by adopting policies at national, regional and global levels which promote an enabling international environment. The economic and financial crisis has complicated efforts, progress in improving market access for many developing countries has been slow, and “aid for trade” has not escaped the impact of reduced ODA.

Accelerating progress towards the MDGs by 2015 is a moral imperative and central to the commitments made by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration in 2000. It thus must be a global priority. Meeting the present commitments will put us in the best

position to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030 and to put the world on a more sustainable growth path.

The lessons learned from 15 years of MDG implementation will contribute to the definition of an ambitious agenda to complete any un-finished MDG items and to expand the development agenda in response to new development challenges.

How is UN DESA involved in the Post-2015 Development Agenda?

UN DESA is the co-chair of the UN Task Team (UNTT) for the post -2015 development agenda created by the Secretary General in November 2011. From that capacity, DESA has been coordinating the analytical work done by the UN System with representation from over 60 UN agencies and entities. The UN Task Team has launched three reports: “Realizing the Future We Want for All” in July 2012; “Towards a renewed global partnership for development” in March 2013; and “Statistics and Indicators for the Post 2015 Development Agenda” in July 2013.

UN DESA has also been actively engaged in helping policy makers in developing countries conduct integrated macro and microeconomic modelling framework exercises to evaluate possible trade-offs across multiple policy objectives, to assess alternative MDG financing strategies, and to develop an understanding of counter-cyclical policies to mitigate the adverse impact of the global economic and financial crisis.

Ensuring a sustainable financing strategy

The outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development “The future we want” recognized the need for significant mobilization of resources to promote sustainable development across the three pillars of social, economic and environmental sustainability. For this purpose, Governments agreed to establish an intergovernmental committee of experts. The committee is tasked with proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy. It started its [deliberations](#) at the end of August and will be submitting its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by September 2014. UN DESA established a working group as part of the UNTT, with representatives from across the UN system, to study long-term financing for sustainable development and support the expert committee and the post-2015 development agenda.

Identifying Sustainable Development Goals

Also in response to the Rio+20 outcome document, the Secretary-General created the Technical Support Team (TST) under the umbrella of the UNTT. UN DESA is co-leading the work of the TST who provides technical support to the Open Working Group. This group is preparing a proposed set of

Sustainable Development Goals for consideration of the General Assembly as part of the post 2015 process. UN DESA is co-leading the preparation of issue briefs with participation from UN agencies and entities. The issue briefs touch on all the thematic areas that are being discussed in the Open Working Group and that are leading to the identification of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Engaging multiple stakeholders

In the context of the Open Working Group, UN DESA coordinates engagement of Major Groups of civil society including NGOs, Business and Industry, Local Authorities, Women, etc. as defined in Agenda 21, and other stakeholders with the inter-governmental process to define the SDGs and the post 2015 development agenda. Through an on-going dialogue between the co-chairs of the OWG and these stakeholders, as well as online submissions, UN DESA is committed to ensure that the definition of the post 2015 development agenda is part of an inclusive process with wide participation from all sectors.

Related information

- [The Millennium Development Goals website](#)
- [The Secretary-General report - A life of dignity for all](#)
- [The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013](#)
- [The UN Task Team \(UNTT\)](#)
- [The Open Working Group \(OWG\)](#)
- [The Major groups webpage where any stakeholders can nominate experts to participate in morning briefings](#)

Breaking down barriers for persons with disabilities

Many of the world's one billion persons living with a disability remain excluded from development in areas such as education, employment and healthcare. As a result, they experience higher rates of poverty and unemployment, and lower life-expectancy than the general population. As part of ongoing efforts to break down barriers and to ensure an inclusive society for all, a one-day high-level meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development (HLMD) will be held on 23 September 2013.



The High-level Meeting takes place five years after the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and two years before the 2015 target date for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Meeting is held against the backdrop of ongoing international dialogue towards development of a new post-2015 agenda.

Disability remained invisible

Despite the support of the Convention, disability has remained largely invisible in most mainstream development agenda and processes. Even if the commitment to development includes people with disabilities, a considerable gap remains between the commitment and what happens on the ground. The international community as well as individual governments are committed to achieve development goals for all, but a perspective of disability and concerns of persons with disabilities were too often absent in development frameworks and processes. An example of such exclusion is in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), where persons with disabilities and their concerns, now numbering over a billion, were often invisible in development processes both at global and national levels.

Without taking actions such as allocating resources, developing disability-inclusive policies and programmes, as well as monitoring and evaluating progress, disability will be left out of development. These actions would help mainstreaming disability in development by the international community and governments.

An action-oriented outcome document expected

The High level meeting on Disability and Development, to be convened at the level of heads of States and Governments, is expected to result in a concise, action-oriented outcome document in support of the aims of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. Prior to the convening of the HLMDD on 23 September 2013, an outcome document will be drafted by Member States, taking into full account the input from persons with disabilities and their organizations as well as other relevant stakeholders, for adoption by the High Level Meeting itself.

Regional and other forms of consultations took place recently in Brussels (Belgium), Bahia (Brazil), Bangkok (Thailand) and Tunis (Tunisia), as well as in other countries/ regions with the aim to contribute to the High Level meeting. DESA, in partnership with UNICEF, conducted online global consultations from 8 March to 5 April 2013 in all UN official languages as well as other languages. Representatives of Governments, UN agencies and civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities participated and contributed their perspectives, in the consultations.

Time to translate the commitment into action

Disability-inclusive and participatory approach to such consultations has contributed to the preparation of the outcome document and will make possible the inclusion of disability in the on-going work of the post-2015 development framework.

During the fifth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2012, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Wu Hongbo, highlighted that “It is now time to translate the commitment into action to mainstream disability in development. After all, it is our responsibility as members of the international community and citizens of our own countries to bring about positive changes to more than one billion persons with disabilities and their communities worldwide”.

Since its entry into force in 2008, 131 countries have ratified or acceded to the CRPD, and 155 have signed it. The Optional Protocol to the CRPD has 76 ratifications and 91 signatories.

For more information:

[Results from online consultations are available on the World We Want platform](#)
[More information on the high-level meeting](#)
[Map of CRPD and Optional Protocol Signatures and Ratifications](#)

High-level Political Forum to support sustainable development

Heads of State and Government will now meet every four years to ensure that commitment to sustainable development remains at the highest level. The High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) will hold its inaugural meeting on 24 September. It will aim to advance sustainable development by providing political leadership and guidance and setting a focused, dynamic and action-oriented agenda. The forum will replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).



The HLPF will follow up and review progress in the implementation of the Rio+20 outcome document and sustainable development commitments made at the previous summits and conference. It also provides a new opportunity to ensure that all dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — are brought together in a coherent way. The HLPF will be a new and different way of supporting the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as the sustainable development goals (SDGs) after they are adopted within the post-2015 development agenda.

“The first meetings will very much set the tone for what the forum will look like in the future, says Nikhil Seth, Director of

the Division for Sustainable Development of DESA. We must be bold and conceive a unique platform: a platform which focuses on implementation, a platform which not only reviews but also truly impacts on progress, a platform which rallies actors to not only reflect but also do things together, a platform whose work spans economic, social and environmental dimensions. We need such a platform if we are to rise up to the challenges of the SDGs and the post 2015 development agenda”.

How will the HLPF work?

The new forum will convene Heads of State and Government every four years, under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, to promote the implementation of sustainable development and address new challenges. Their deliberations will result in a negotiated declaration aimed at providing high-level policy guidance and raising the bar for action and results. There will also be an annual eight-day meeting, including three days at the ministerial level, under the auspices of ECOSOC.

“Within the broad guidance given by the GA on the format of the forum, we must create an innovative platform for all countries and the range of sustainable development actors to respond to new challenges, keep the compass on sustainable development commitments and look to the long term”, adds Nikhil Seth.

Direct involvement of Heads of State and Government every four years should ensure that commitment to sustainable development remains at the highest level, bolstered by strategic guidance for integrated and holistic policy-making and implementation.

Starting in 2016, the forum will also include reviews on the implementation of sustainable development by all countries and the UN system. This should promote better accountability and focus efforts toward achieving action on the ground.

The forum will be open to all Member States of the United Nations as well as States members of specialized agencies, notably the Cook Islands, Niue, the Holy See and Palestine.

UN support for the forum

UN DESA acts as the substantive secretariat to the forum, by providing governments with timely analysis, data and other background documentation. Through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA) Plus mechanism, the Department coordinates these inputs from across the UN system, including its various specialized agencies, funds and programmes, regional commissions, convention secretariats and other entities.

DESA’s Division for Sustainable Development is organising two special events on 23 September in the margins of the General Debate of the 68th session of the General Assembly, the outcomes of which will be reported to the inaugural HLPF meeting. One

special event will deal with Sustainable Cities and SDGs, the other will focus on the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) and related voluntary initiatives.

“With the HLPF comes the chance to put in place a different kind of governance”, stresses Nikhil Seth. “A governance that looks to the long term, takes into account not only economic but also social and environmental challenges, engages the range of actors who have a stake in development, and responds to change and new challenges. The forum can instill a new way of thinking and working at the UN”.

Major Groups and other Stakeholder participation

Provisions have also been made for the enhanced participation of the nine Major Groups, building on their participation in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Under the HLPF, specific modalities for future engagement with Major Groups and other stakeholders in sustainable development will be developed as a matter of priority soon after the forum begins its work.

CSD’s last meeting

The HLPF will replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which will hold its last meeting on 20 September 2013. The CSD was created in 1992 to follow up on the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit). Under the CSD, governments convened twenty annual sessions, helping advance sustainable development across the world.

For more information:

[The high-level political forum on sustainable development](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

World leaders gather for UN General Assembly



The sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly will convene at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 17 September. The President of the GA will host a Special Event towards achieving the MDGs on 25 September.

Following the opening on 17 September, the General Assembly will hold the High-level Meeting on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities on Monday, 23 September. This will be followed by the general debate of Heads of State and Government from 24 September to 2 October. During the weeks of the general debate, a series of high-level events will be held.

On Wednesday, 25 September, the President-Elect of the 68th session of the General Assembly, Ambassador John W. Ashe, will host the Special Event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Other high-level meetings include the High-level Political Forum on Tuesday, 24 September, the High-level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament on Thursday, 26 September, and the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development on Thursday, 3, and Friday, 4 October.

For more information: [United Nations General Assembly](#)

Special Event towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals

The Special Event of the President of the General Assembly, which will be convened on Wednesday, 25 September at 9:00 am – 6:30 PM at the Trusteeship Council Chamber as a one-day event, is a critical milestone as we approach the target date 2015 for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It provides an opportunity for Member States to renew their commitments to the Goals, to intensify all efforts for their achievement by 2015, and to chart the way forward. To this end, the Special Event will focus on gaps and weaknesses, and the acceleration of the implementation

of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as looking forward to the post-2015 Development Agenda. The Special Event is expected to conclude with a short outcome document.

Several high-level side events are being organized around the Special Event. Their main objective is to promote the replication and scaling up of approaches which have worked to accelerate MDG implementation. In addition, they will also provide a space for collective thinking on the key elements of a post-2015 development agenda. On September 23, for example, the Secretary-General will host a high-level forum on “MDG Success: Accelerating action and partnering for impact”. The forum will focus on concrete examples of scaling up success and identifying further opportunities. The emphasis will be on the “how” – bringing together examples from partnerships across the spectrum of the MDGs and the Secretary-General’s multi-stakeholder initiatives and movements, such as Every Woman Every Child, Sustainable Energy for All, Global Education First, Zero Hunger Challenge, the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement, and the Call to Action on Sanitation.

For further details on the Special Event, please visit: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/specialevent.shtml> and <http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/67/issues/mdgs/mdgs.shtml>.

For information on related events being organized by Member States, the United Nations system and civil society, please visit: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/proposed-side-events-2013-special-event.pdf>.

Learning from the MDG experience



A side event on “Effectiveness and accountability in the post-2015 development agenda – lessons from the MDG experience” is organized in New York on 25 September.

Building on the lessons learnt from the Millennium Development Goals, the Government of Germany and DESA are advancing this discussion in light of the post-2015 development agenda. Effective monitoring and inclusive accountability mechanisms are essential aspects of development cooperation and the global partnership for development. They help to ensure effectiveness and the sustainability of development results. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have galvanized the world behind a globally shared development agenda and around a set of eight development priorities. As the MDGs are moving towards their end date of 2015, the international community must work towards a global development agenda beyond 2015.

To put the world on a sustainable development path, such an agenda must not only continue to address the priorities of the MDGs but must also address emerging issues, mostly around environmental sustainability.

Effective monitoring and inclusive accountability mechanisms at all levels will be critical for the successful implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. This is a key lesson which the international community has learned from the MDG experience.

Advancing the dialogue on accountability and monitoring

Drawing upon its extensive work on mutual accountability and monitoring, both at the country and international level, the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) is aiming to kick start an in-depth discussion on a post-2015 monitoring and accountability framework. It will do with its DCF High-level Symposium in Berlin, Germany. Set for March 2014, the symposium will analyze and explore potential characteristics of and principles for monitoring and accountability to support the post-2015 development agenda.

Preparing for the Germany High-Level Symposium

In preparation for the symposium, the Government of Germany and UNDESA are organizing a luncheon side event on “Effectiveness and accountability in the post-2015 development agenda- lessons from the MDG experience” under the auspices of ECOSOC’s Development Cooperation Forum. The side event will take place at United Nations Headquarters on 25 September 2013 from 1:15 PM to 2:45 PM. The interactive event will provide an occasion for panelists and participants to begin to identify elements of an effective and inclusive monitoring and accountability framework for the post-2015 development agenda.

For further information:

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

Trends and Analysis

How to formulate empowering policies and strategies



An expert group meeting is convened in New York on 10-11 September in preparation for the 52nd session of the Commission for Social Development. This meeting should provide suggestions on how to advance the empowerment of people.

In its resolution 2012/7, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations decided that the priority theme for the 2013-2014 review and policy cycle of the Commission for Social Development would be “Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all”. The 52nd session of the Commission will take place in February 2014 and should agree on a policy outcome (i.e. a resolution) on this priority theme

The outcomes of the expert group meeting will constitute an important input for the work of the Commission, particularly by providing concrete, evidence-based suggestions for the formulation of strategies that have been shown to advance the empowerment of people. The expert group meeting will also be of use to suggest topics that the Commission, within its mandate, should take up in the years ahead. Taking into account that the international community is in the process of defining its future development agenda, the outcomes of the meeting should inform such process of the implications of empowerment for the design of the agenda.

The expert group meeting aims to facilitate the deliberations of the Commission for Social Development on a policy outcome on the promotion of the empowerment of people by undertaking a comprehensive review of policies and strategies that create an enabling environment for the empowerment of individuals and social groups and that enhance their capacity to effectively participate in all spheres of life, including in decision-making. It will highlight challenges, good practices and lessons learned. It should further put forth concrete, evidence-based recommendations for the formulation of policies at the national, regional and international levels.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs//2013/EmpowermentPolicies/Concept%20Note_EGM%20on%20Empowerment.pdf

A review of the global work on gender statistics

The DESA Statistics Division (UNSD) is organizing the 7th meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) in New York from 12 to 13 September.

The meeting will bring together representatives from national statistical offices, international agencies and Regional Commissions to review global work on gender statistics. The objectives of the meeting are to review the work of the Advisory Group on Emerging Issues, discuss the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators and update the members on capacity building efforts in gender statistics through a continued dialogue on the coordination of gender statistics activities.

For more information:

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

Advancing concepts and methods in energy statistics

The 8th meeting of the Oslo Group will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 24-27 September and will be hosted by the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan.

The meeting will gather experts in energy statistics from countries and international/regional organizations to discuss issues in energy statistics and advance concepts and methods. This meeting of the Oslo Group will focus on the review of the complete draft of the Energy Statistics Compilers Manual (ESCM) which is being prepared to support the implementation of the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics (IRES) and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting for Energy (SEEA-Energy). It will also discuss future directions of the city group.

For more information:

<http://og.ssb.no/ogmeetings/eighthmeeting/>

A cross-regional Group of Friends of Older Persons



The fourth working session of the working group took place from 12-15 August, and saw an increased number of Member States taking part and offering perspectives and positions. Also noteworthy was the level and quality of interventions.

them into concrete actions. The Group of Friends also intends to focus discussions to further the dignity and rights of older persons beyond the annual session of the Working Group by generating dialogue across the UN system including agencies and subsidiary bodies among others.

For more information: <http://social.un.org/ageing-working-group/fourthsession.shtml>

There is some consensus amongst Member States of the shortcomings that exist when it comes to the enjoyment by older persons of their human rights, and broad agreement on the overall analysis of the situation of the human rights of older persons and the urgent need for improvement. Member States hold a range of views on how to address these shortcomings. Some are of the view that there the existing international normative framework provides adequate protection of older persons, but implementation, monitoring and accountability fall short of delivering these rights. Others hold the view that a legally binding instrument which would consolidate and provide clarity on the application of all existing rights to older persons is necessary to collate and is a necessary to achieve their economic and social integration and protect them from abuse and discrimination.

The Fourth Working Session revisited some specific rights such as the right to social protection, the right to health, the right to work as well as various dimensions of age discrimination.

The Session also discussed the regional findings of the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2012) on the promotion and protection of human rights and dignity of older.

An update was provided on three ongoing regional processes: the drafting of a Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Older Persons; the elaboration of a Council of Europe recommendation on the human rights of older persons and; the project of a Pan-American convention on the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons.

For the first time, the Open-ended Working Group on ageing also held an interactive dialogue with representatives of civil society in attendance.

Member States put forward a number of proposals for consideration by, and in support of the work of the Working Group. The formation of a cross-regional Group of Friends of Older Persons was announced during the closing debate. It aims at building on discussions of the Working Group and transforming

Capacity development

Links between environment and energy statistics



The DESA Statistics Division (UNSD) together with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) is organizing a Training Workshop on Environment

and Energy Statistics for Arab Countries from 8 to 12 September in Amman, Jordan.

This workshop, which is envisaged as first in a series of workshops on environment and energy statistics, will review the basic concepts, methods and international recommendations on environment and energy statistics as well as the main interrelationships between the two areas. It will also provide a forum for sharing country experiences and will identify priority areas for the region for the subsequent training workshops.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/meetings/Jordan2013.htm>

Emerging trends in the dissemination of data

A regional workshop on Data Dissemination and Communication will take place in Amman, Jordan, from 9 to 12 September. The Workshop will review emerging trends, innovative approaches and technological tools employed in the dissemination of data.

The Workshop is part of a global series of workshops on data dissemination and communication, organized as part of a United Nations Development Account project. The purpose of the overall project is to provide a forum for sharing national practices and experiences in the dissemination of statistical data and metadata. The Workshop is expected to provide a basis for assessing existing national dissemination strategies as well as technologies used by National Statistical Offices. It will also aid in taking stock of national capacities and challenges for meeting the increasing requirements of users. Furthermore, the Workshop is expected to help identifying good practices and lessons learned in the dissemination and communication of data. The ideas generated by the discussion and the recommendations made by participants

during all workshops will contribute towards the drafting of a technical report and/or the creation of a knowledge base on the UNSD website, dedicated to the topic of effective dissemination of data.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/Dissemination/workshops/Jordan/default.html>

Understanding policy inertia in sustainable development



The UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) organized its first Summer School on Sustainability Transition Policies and Practices, from 22 July to 2 August at the Yonsei University International campus, Republic of Korea.

The Summer School was designed on the backdrop of 25 years of impressive global efforts for transitions towards sustainable development. Such efforts have included the building of sustainable development (SD) knowledge and capacity for policy-makers in governments.

Yet, transitions are still happening much too slowly to address overstretched planetary boundaries and multifaceted social crises. Beyond the technical knowledge and skills of economic, social and environmental sustainability, there remains a debilitating gap in understanding how technical knowledge gets, or not, deployed and scaled-up into national strategies, and implemented through concrete policies.

Studying and overcoming the reasons for policy inertia has therefore become a pressing agenda of its own. The UNOSD Summer School therefore endeavoured to confront this gap by providing the evidence and skills for a more effective and accelerated implementation of sustainability policies through best practices.

Sustainability experts from the Stockholm Environment Institute, the University of Utah, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the United Nations University, the Korean Environment Institute, the Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements, as well as from UN-DESA and UNOSD taught the course.

For more information please visit the [UNOSD website](#) or its [Summer School pages](#).

Publications and Websites

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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In addition to the regular recurrent monthly tables, this issue includes the quarterly and annual 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; World exports by provenance and destination.

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

2010 Energy Balances and Electricity Profiles



The publication provides energy balances for 132 countries for the period 2007-2010 and electricity profiles for 180 countries for the period 2005-2010. The energy balances are snapshots of the annual energy flows in each country showing energy production, trade, transformation and consumption of energy products. They are presented in a common unit – Terajoules. The electricity profiles provide detailed information for each country on the production, trade and consumption of electricity, net installed capacity and thermal power plant input and efficiency.

The publication is bi-lingual (English and French) and will soon be available in printed and electronic (PDF format) versions.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/balance/default.htm>

2010 Energy Statistics Yearbook



The Yearbook is the fifty-fourth issue in a series of annual compilations of internationally comparable statistics summarizing world energy trends. Annual data for 215 countries and areas for the period 2007 to 2010 are presented on production, trade and consumption of energy: solids, liquids, gaseous fuels and electricity.

In addition, per capita consumption series are also provided for all energy products. Graphs are included to illustrate historic trends and/or changes in composition of production and/or consumption of major energy products. Special tables of interest include: international trade tables for coal, crude petroleum and natural gas by partner countries – providing information on direction of trade; selected series of statistics on renewables and wastes; refinery distillation capacity; and selected energy resources.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/yearbook/default.htm>

Outreach material

Sustainable Development in Action – Issue 7, Volume 1

The latest issue features the High-level Political Forum (HLPF). Published by DESA's Division for Sustainable Development, the newsletter aims to highlight the work carried out by Member States, the UN, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing sustainable development and leading the way to the Future We Want.

Read full issue:

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1653>

Enable Newsletter

Prepared by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (SCRPD) within DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development, the July issue features input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and civil society.

Read full issue:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/newsletter/july2013.doc>

DESA NGO News

The August issue is now available online. The 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: <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=109>

Youth Flash Newsletter

July issue features an article on "Malala Day – the Phoenix Rises from the Ashes". The newsletter is published by DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development Focal Point 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, and from youth organizations around the world.

Read full issue at:

<http://undesadspd.org/Youth/YouthFlashNewsletter/2013/July.aspx>

Discussion papers

Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 57

Published by DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division, the August issue highlights the policy initiatives to deal with the slowing growth in emerging economies, the revised US GDP statistics and the drought conditions that is affecting Southern Africa.

Read full issue:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_mb/wesp_mb57.pdf

Websites

Friends of the Chair Group on Broader Measures of Progress



On 25 July the Statistics Division launched a new website for the Statistical Commission Friends of the Chair Group on Broader Measures of Progress (FOC). The Group was established by the United Nations

Statistical Commission at its forty-fourth session (26 February to 1 March 2013) as response to the request of the Rio+20 conference to launch a programme of work on broader measures of progress to complement GDP in order to better inform policy decisions. The new website will be continuously updated with new information and documents as they become available.

To browse: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/broaderprogress/>

Comings and Goings

Comings



Thomas Gass of Switzerland was appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Mr. Gass, who will take up his position on 3 September, brings with him wide-ranging experience in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. Since August 2009, he has served as Head of the Mission of Switzerland to Nepal (Ambassador and Country Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation).

Before his posting to Nepal, Mr. Gass was Head of the Economic and Development Section at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York. He also served as Policy and Programme Officer for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, as Deputy Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Guyana, and as Regional Director for Europe with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute in Rome.

Born in 1963, Mr. Gass holds a PhD in natural sciences from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and an MSc and engineering diploma in agricultural sciences from the same Institute. He is married and father of three adult children.

The following staff members were promoted in August:

Haitian Lu, Principal Programme Officer, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Huanyu Liu, Economic Affairs Officer, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Calendar

September

Training Workshop on Environment and Energy Statistics for Arab Countries

8-12 September, Amman, Jordan.

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/meetings/Jordan2013.htm>

Regional workshop on Data Dissemination and Communication

9-12 September, Amman, Jordan

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/Dissemination/workshops/Jordan/default.html>

7th meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS)

12- 13 September, New York

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

Expert Group Meeting on Policies and Strategies to Promote the Empowerment of People in Achieving Poverty Eradication, Social Integration and Productive and Decent Work for All

10-11 September, New York

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs//2013/EmpowermentPolicies/Concept%20Note_EGM%20on%20Empowerment.pdf

68th session of the General Assembly

17 September, New York

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

High-level Meeting of the GA on the realization of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities

23 September, New York

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1590>

First meeting of the high-level political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly

23 September

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1649>

Disability and Development "The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond"

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/disability.shtml>

23 September, New York

8th meeting of the Oslo Group

24-27 September, Baku, Azerbaijan

<http://og.ssb.no/ogmeetings/eighthmeeting/>

Side event on "Effectiveness and accountability in the post-2015 development agenda – lessons from the MDG experience" under the auspices of ECOSOC's Development Cooperation Forum

25 September, New York

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

October

International Day of Older Persons

1 October

<http://undesadspd.org/Ageing/InternationalDayofOlderPersons.aspx>

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17 October

<http://undesadspd.org/Poverty/InternationalDayfortheEradicationofPoverty/2013.aspx>

Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, 9th session

21-25 October, Geneva

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

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