



## Four years into the 2030 Agenda, the world is getting ready to assess efforts to achieve the SDGs

It is that time of the year again, when the world is gearing up for the largest annual gathering to evaluate global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Quality education, decent work, equality, a livable climate, justice and partnerships – these are the goals under review this year and 47 countries are ready to take the stage to present their efforts. ECOSOC President Inga Rhonda King stressed that the “2019 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) is a milestone as it finishes the first four-year cycle since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda”. Expected to gather more than a thousand participants from around the globe, this year’s HLPF on Sustainable Development will take place at UN Headquarters in New York on 9-18 July 2019.

“The HLPF is at the heart of the follow up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the global level,” said UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin at a recent expert meeting organized by the European Commission. “It needs to track progress towards the SDGs, understand trends in implementation and key challenges, and promote acceleration of implementation.”

### Realizing the promise of the SDGs

In the 17 SDGs the global community has made a promise to the world and to future generations, to end poverty and hunger, boost access to health, education and jobs, while protecting our planet from environmental degradation.

And although we can see that people now are living better lives than ever before, it is also becoming evident that the international community needs to step up efforts and make advancements on the goals much faster and at a greater scale.

Like in previous years, several of the goals will be more closely examined to see where we're making progress and where gaps need to be filled. This year, the turn has come for goals 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reducing inequalities), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships) to be reviewed.

## 47 countries to take the stage

The annual SDG forum, this year taking place under the theme “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality,” presents a unique opportunity to showcase progress and action at the local and country-levels, and how these efforts can make a greater impact globally.

For the fourth consecutive year, countries are now getting ready to present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), sharing their work, experiences and lessons learned in making the goals a reality on the ground, benefitting people and planet.

47 countries will be taking the stage this year to share their efforts with the international community. This brings to a total over 140 nations that have presented at the HLPF since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015.

## Actions for the SDGs to inspire more action

While countries will be presenting their plans and activities to achieve the goals by 2030, there is a wealth of examples of initiatives and projects being carried around the world out to make the SDGs a reality. Last year, UN DESA made a call for input on inspiring breakthroughs and success stories that illustrate SDG realization, which can also be replicated and scaled up. And the results are in with over 400 projects logged and listed in the SDG good practices database.

In the lead up to the HLPF July event and the high-level week in September, UN DESA is aiming to highlight these inspiring initiatives – one project at a time – on the main DESA website. So far, readers can learn about sustainable farming in Turkey in Turkey; the European Union going circular; student SDG training that brings broader benefits to Brazilian communities; and efforts to beat air pollution for a safe and healthy journey to school in India.

In addition, a new registry for SDG Acceleration Actions has been opened to collect and register voluntary initiatives and actions by countries and other actors to contribute to the urgent realization of the goals. Our UN DESA expert answers questions on the registry [here](#).

## Latest SDG data, live stage and special events

During the 8-day event in July, UN Headquarters will be vibrant with different activities. On the opening day of the HLPF on 9 July, the international community can expect to gain insights and learn what the latest SDGs data tell us about the situation around the world. The 2019 SDG Progress Report will then be launched at the noon press briefing.

In addition to plenary sessions and engaging panels and interviews in the SDG Media Zone on 9 and 10 July, close to 150 side events are also being organized. Higher education, philanthropy, local action and the SDGs on the big screen – these are just some of topics in focus for the many special events happening during the forum, putting additional spotlight on the goals from different angles.

“The HLPF has proved to be an integral part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda,” Mr. Liu said. “The positive feedback from countries and stakeholders on its impact is testament to its success.”

This year's forum will also be special, as it will set the stage for the the high-level week of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly, featuring many major events including the SDG Summit on 24-25 September 2019, arranged under the auspices of the General Assembly. ECOSOC President Ambassador King has stressed that the two 2019 HLPFs will live up to the mandate of the forum as the central platform for following up and reviewing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. "We have it in our hands to use those opportunities and the whole high-level week to put the world on track to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda".

For more information:

2019 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 9-18 July 2019

SDG Media Zone, 9-10 July 2019

Follow the events live via UN Web TV

SDG Summit, 24-25 September 2019

2019 UNGA high-level week

## HIGHLIGHTS



## SDG Progress Reports 2019: Are we on track to achieve the global goals?

The year 2019 will close the first cycle of the 2030 Agenda implementation. In July, the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) will have reviewed global progress on the last remaining set of SDGs and 142 countries will have presented their Voluntary National Reviews. Two SDG progress reports will try to shed light on

the progress the world is making to achieve the SDGs and highlight the areas that need our most urgent attention.

Both reports show that despite progress in a number of areas over the past four years, on some of the Goals, progress has been slow or even reversed. The most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most and the global response has not been ambitious enough.

For instance, extreme poverty has reached the lowest point since its tracking began. And yet, at the current pace, we are still not on track to end poverty by 2030. Similarly, many countries are taking actions to protect our environment, but the health of our earth is still deteriorating at an alarming rate.

*The Report of the Secretary General: The Special Edition of the Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report*, is an official document mainly intended to inform the HLPF on progress towards the SDGs. Going beyond the usual data-driven analysis of progress, the special edition addresses the global response to the 2030 Agenda and the gaps and challenges encountered over the first cycle of its implementation. It also describes efforts necessary to accelerate SDG action. It highlights cross-cutting actions to advance progress on all the Goals and targets and help the ones who are falling behind.

The report was prepared by UN DESA, in cooperation with the UN system Task Team on HLPF, co-chaired by UN DESA and the United Nations Development Programme.

*The Sustainable Development Report 2019* tells the stories of SDG progress with charts, infographics and maps, and presents an in-depth analysis of selected indicators. This report is prepared by UN DESA's Statistics Division with inputs from more than 50 international and regional organizations. In addition to the global trends, this report also highlights regional progress and analyses.

**Both reports** are based on the global indicator framework developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and present those indicators for which sufficient data are available.

*The Sustainable Development Report 2019* will be launched on 9 July 2019—the opening day of the HLPF. The Secretary-General's report is already available to Member States as they prepare for their deliberations at the HLPF. The two reports are accompanied by a comprehensive Statistical Annex and the Global SDG Indicator Database with country and regional data. The reports will also be presented in an interactive platform on the [Sustainable Development Goal indicators website](#).

## HIGHLIGHTS



### Global goals projected on the film screen

Storytelling can go a long way in capturing people's imagination, and what's more, inspire the kind of action that lasts. Showcasing stories that illustrate people and organizations working to build a better world and realize the Sustainable Development Goals is at the heart of the [SDGs in Action Film Festival](#). The event, to be held outdoors on the North Lawn of UN Headquarters on the evening of 11 July, is the culmination of a global contest asking for

short film submissions showing action on the 17 global goals.

Nearly 1,000 films were submitted during an open call this spring, and six winning filmmakers from Brazil, Italy, Kenya, the Philippines, Portugal, and Trinidad and Tobago will present their short films to the public on the sidelines of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

In addition to the SDGs in Action Film Festival, this year's special events organized by UN DESA include a wide array of events meant to include more voices in the UN's conversations about how to inspire accelerated action for the SDGs. They include:

- **The Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI):** How can higher education institutions better integrate the SDGs into their sustainability strategies, research, teaching, pedagogy and campus practices? This event will bring together these institutions and a wide array of UN partners seeking to showcase the best examples and generate new ideas for engaging youth in the SDGs through the academic world. **(10 July)**
- **Philanthropy & the SDGs:** Philanthropic organizations are playing a growing role in supporting sustainable development, and this first-ever event provides them with a dedicated space at the margins of the HLPF to discuss how to use their resources effectively. Representatives will discuss current models of philanthropic engagement to implement the SDGs and identify opportunities to scale up philanthropic leadership and transformational action to further accelerate SDG action. **(16 July)**
- **Lead, Transform, Succeed: Chief Sustainability Officers for SDGs:** UN DESA and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development will again bring together Chief Sustainability Officers and sustainable business leaders to explore practical solutions around how we can bring about the transformation of some of the world's key economic systems to realize the ambitions of the SDG agenda. The event will allow experts to dive into the challenges in integrating the SDGs into business strategy and underline groundbreaking examples of collaboration for achieving impact at scale. **(17 July)**
- **Local 2030: Local Action for Global Commitments:** The UN-wide Local2030 network is facilitating a two-day event focused on inspiring local-level SDG financing and highlighting local implementation of the goals. The event will convene and connect experts from the public, private and non-governmental sectors, local leaders, and representatives from multiple UN agencies. **(16-17 July)**
- **SDG Learning, Training and Practice Capacity-building Workshops:** This series of 10 courses, co-organized UN DESA and UNITAR, features speakers and experts from academia and other sectors on crucial topics related to the implementation of the SDGs, for instance "Designing and managing SDG partnerships for greatest impact." **(9-15 July)**

All of these events will seek to put the world on a better path towards achieving the SDGs by 2030, through increased dialogues, networking and partnerships.

The 2019 winning films in each category will be posted on the [SDGs in Action Film Festival website](#) on 11 July. Find out more about all of DESA's special events during HLPF [here](#).



## Can't come to the HLPF? Join it through the SDG Media Zone!

Every July, a very special event takes place at the UN Headquarters in New York. The annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is where hundreds of policymakers, youth activists, NGO representatives and scientists come together to review our common progress on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thanks to modern technology, you do not need to be here in person to join in on the action.

From 9 to 10 July, you will be able to tune in and join the conversation at the **SDG Media Zone**, which will host government, civil society and private sector leaders as well as experts, celebrities and other change-makers committed to the global good. It will feature live programming, interactive exhibits and interview opportunities.

The space will showcase major UN initiatives that inspire people to do their part to care for the planet such as the award-winning **UN Act Now climate action campaign** that recommends everyday actions to reduce our carbon footprints – like traveling more sustainably, saving energy or eating less meat. Others include the World Health Organization's **Walk the Talk** movement which encourages people to make healthy life choices and celebrate the importance of moving for health.

It will host experts and initiatives from partners such as Sony Picture Entertainment, National Geographic, the New York City Mayor's Office and the Global Compact's community of responsible businesses, as well as performances by choir singers, spoken word poets and storytellers.

### **Where to watch it?**

It's all right here: <https://www.un.org/sdgmediazone/>

You can also catch it on [webtv.un.org](http://webtv.un.org)

### **When to tune in?**

Live programming, including panel discussions, interviews, Ted-style Talks and presentations will take place between **12:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. EDT**

### **How to get involved?**

Join the conversation and help us spread the word by posting your comments, questions, feedback and contributions using the hashtag **#SDGLive!**



## Register your SDG Acceleration Action now!

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 has mobilized global and local action toward a sustainable future for all of the world's people and the environment. But it's clear that far more is needed to achieve the Goals. The upcoming SDG Summit, to be held 24-25 September at UN Headquarters, provides an opportunity to ramp up international

commitment to the 2030 Agenda, showcase areas of global progress, and raise awareness on the importance of the SDGs globally. It is also looking to leverage progress in key areas to kick-start an acceleration process.

The Summit calls on all countries and actors to pledge new SDG Acceleration Actions for SDG implementation and will help build partnerships to further achievement at all levels. We spoke with Lotta Tahtinen, Chief of the Outreach and Partnerships Branch in UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development Goals, who told us about the new registry.

### Can you tell us about these SDG Acceleration Actions?

"The Summit will be the first UN summit on the SDGs since their adoption in September 2015, and we're asking all stakeholders, including Member States, local authorities, the private sector, foundations, young people, academic institutions and philanthropic organizations, to make a strong, specific commitment to amplify their work towards the goals. These *SDG Acceleration Actions* are initiatives voluntarily undertaken by countries and other actors and will be registered on an online database managed by UN DESA. We want to see many, many actions registered on behalf of all 17 SDGs."

### Who can submit an Action?

"Anyone! This inclusive platform provides a space for governments, businesses and all stakeholders to register acceleration actions. These commitments can reflect a new policy or programme, new investments or an increase in support for specific SDGs and/or communities."

### Sounds good! How can a person or organization register one?

"Go to the registry website, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/register/?source=90>, and fill out all the fields in as much detail as possible. UN DESA will be reviewing all submissions and publishing them in the lead up to the Summit."

### What's the criteria for selecting Acceleration Actions?

"SDG Acceleration Actions should facilitate and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, reflecting the interlinkages between goals. They should build on existing efforts, for instance, scaling up a successful initiative or pushing it into a new

growth phase, and include the means of implementation such as finance, technology or capacity-building.

Another thing that's really important to us is that Acceleration Actions follow the SMART Criteria, meaning the commitment is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-Based, with Time-based deliverables. And of course, they should reflect the principles of the UN Charter and 2030 Agenda."

Is there any follow-up once the Action is registered?

"Definitely. UN DESA regularly prepares synthesis reports on the implementation of partnership commitments, which could include these acceleration actions, which can be used to identify good practices as well as identify gaps. The SDG Acceleration Actions registry also provides for a reporting and monitoring function to help ensure that acceleration actions are properly followed-up. UN DESA and the Department of Global Communications will collaborate on advertising selected initiatives in the lead up, during and after the SDG Summit to show the world all these great projects really impacting local communities in a positive way."

For more information, or to register your SDG Acceleration Action, visit this site [here](#).

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



## Latest global population trends revealed

The world's population is expected to increase by 2 billion persons in the next 30 years, from 7.7 billion currently to 9.7 billion in 2050, according to the World Population Prospects 2019, which was published by UN DESA's Population Division on 17 June 2019. The report, providing a comprehensive overview of global demographic patterns and prospects, concluded that the world's

population could reach its peak around the end of the current century, at a level of nearly 11 billion.

*The World Population Prospects 2019 (WPP 2019)* includes demographic estimates (1950 to current) and projections (current to 2100) for 235 countries or areas. WPP 2019 is accompanied by the 50-page report *World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights*, a data booklet and ten key findings. Some of the key findings of the newly released report include:

- The world's population is projected to grow from 7.7 billion in 2019 to 8.5 billion (+10%) in 2030, to 9.7 billion (+26%) in 2050 and further to 10.9 (42%) billion in 2100.
- While the population continues to grow at the global level, the rate of growth has been slowing since the 1970s and could be zero around the end of the 21st.
- The fastest growing populations are found in the Least Developed Countries, where population growth brings additional challenges in efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Although differences in life expectancy across regions have diminished over the past decades, life expectancy at birth in sub-Saharan Africa still lags 11.5 years behind the global average.
- The world's population will experience unprecedented ageing in the coming decades with 16 per cent of the world's population aged 65 or over by 2050, up from 9 per cent today.
- The ratio of persons at working ages to those aged 65 years or over is falling with 48 countries expected to have potential support ratios below two by 2050, impacting the labour force and funding of pension systems and social protection.



*World Population Prospects*, one of the most downloaded products of UN DESA, is used in more than one-third of the indicators of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The release of WPP 2019 is the twenty-sixth edition of this dataset, produced by the Population Division every two years since 1951.

Following the release in New York, the Population Division organized launch activities with research centers located in Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, the United States among other locations.

For more information: [World Population Prospects 2019](#)

## How accelerating action today can create a ripple effect for the future



**By Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations**

There is an old riddle about a single water lily growing in a pond. Each day, the number of lily pads doubles, so that by the second day, there are two, by the third day, there are four, and so on until, on the 30th day, the pond is completely overgrown. Can you guess on which day the lilies cover half of the pond?

The correct answer – on the 29th day – is far from intuitive. As late as the day before it becomes entirely coated with lilies, the pond is still half-empty, tricking our common sense into believing that change is moving very slow. But what do flowers in ponds have to do with the Sustainable Development Goals? It is all about change, the kind we can see and measure today and the kind that will only bear fruit in the future.

This month, the world will come together for the annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the HLPF, a truly unique event by today's standards, where policymakers from around the world, activists, local governments, youth, businesses and everyone with a stake in the SDGs take a collective look at how we are doing on achieving the Goals and where we can improve.

For the last four years, UN DESA has been leading these efforts and tracking the world's progress on the SDGs. Despite encouraging success stories on eradicating poverty, fighting deadly diseases and reducing child mortality, the world is still off track on many critical targets, with hunger on the rise, biodiversity loss and climate change going into a tailspin and gender inequalities stubbornly persisting.

But these sobering statistics only tell one side of the story. Underneath the raw data, is an entire ecosystem of SDG action, gaining momentum each day to, eventually, become unstoppable, just like those lilies in the pond. From country governments to small town officials and from big international organizations to local NGOs and schools, the global movement to bring prosperity to all on a healthy planet is well on its way, even if official statistics do not reveal its entire extent.

For example, at this month's HLPF, 47 countries will step in front of their peers to present their progress on the SDGs, bringing the total number of countries that have conducted their Voluntary National Reviews to 142. In their reports, countries have shared best practices, challenges and lessons learned from implementing national plans, strategies or roadmaps to achieve the Goals, and creating new institutions with an SDG focus.

And governments are far from being the only ones taking action. UN DESA's database of good practices for the SDGs has collected over 600 examples of inspiring projects from every corner of the world. From a university in Brazil that improves the surrounding community to a small village in Turkey switching to organic farming, to the European Commission's circular economy strategy, SDG action is sprouting new shoots at every level.

Even with all this vigorous activity we still have not reached the kind of lily-like exponential growth we need to transform our world and to leave no one behind. But science tells us that both the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris climate targets are still within our reach if we drastically accelerate our actions. This year is a crucial opportunity to do just that.

This September, world leaders gather in New York for a week of five summits, including the SDG Summit and the Climate Action Summit. If countries follow the call of Secretary-General António Guterres to come prepared with ambitious plans, their acceleration actions could trigger further commitments, stronger partnerships and faster action, snowballing into an unstoppable movement towards sustainable development.

Humanity set out on the ambitious 2030 Agenda and the Paris climate accord knowing that they were committing an entire generation to sustained action. We will not change the world in one day or during one week of summits. But if we sow the right seeds of change and work hard over the next 10 years to help them flourish, then by 2030, everyone will rip the rewards.

## UN DESA honours eleven UN Public Service Award winners



Eleven years stand between now and when the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are set to expire in 2030. Innovating for the SDGs has become a buzz phrase now with state and non-state actors looking for ways to accelerate the realization of the targets through new frontier technology or simply, improving public policy.

And while this global effort to make a difference in this world, through eradication of poverty to the imminent effects of climate change, achieving the 17 SDGs is not a race. No country is the tortoise or the hare. It is a group effort that calls on different backgrounds and silos to build bridges and communication. UN DESA's Division of Public Institutions and Digital Government (DPIDG) has a front row view of how governments are addressing the SDGs and issues in their nations through the United Nations Public Service Awards.

The awards – the international recognition of excellence in public service – are granted every year by UN DESA on June 23 or the UN Public Service Day. Institutions from around the world are acknowledged for their creative achievements that lead to more effective and responsive public administrations. Since 2003, UN DESA has received over 3,000 nominations from around the globe in areas from health to education to accountability and to gender equality.

This year, there were eleven winners from eleven institutions around the world in five categories: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Kenya, Indonesia, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Thailand. Get inspired by their [winning public service initiatives](#) in five categories:

### **1. Delivering inclusive and equitable services to leave no one behind**

#### *Kenya- Water Sector Trust Fund*

In Kenya, Up-Scaling Basic Sanitation for Urban poor ensures safe and sustainable emptying, transport and treatment of toilet sludge through the construction of the decentralized treatment facilities.

#### *Brazil- Prefeitura do Jabotão dos Guararapes*

The Waste Collection Program: Enhancing a Cooperative Network for Productive and Social Inclusion Program in Brazil promotes social inclusion by training and providing waste collectors with decent work and a sustainable source of income.

#### *Australia- Agriculture Victoria*

In Australia, the Victorian Rabbit Action Network implements response mechanisms and future interventions to manage an invasive species.

### **2. Ensuring integrated approaches in public sector institutions**

#### *Indonesia- Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana*

In Indonesia, PetaBencana.id is a platform for underfunded communities to participate in reducing flood risk and assisting in relief efforts.

#### *Argentina- Laboratorio de Hemoderivados de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba*

In Argentina, The Social, Synergistic and Sustainable Business Model transforms plasma into safe and affordable medicines and enables people to treat their illnesses with donated medicines.

#### *Portugal- High Commission for Migration*

CNAIM in Portugal implemented a one-stop shop for public administration services for migrants.

### **3. Developing effective and responsible public institutions**

#### *Thailand- Nong Ta Tam Subdistrict Administrative Organization*

In Thailand, the Self-reliant Solar Energy Community initiative increases environmental sustainability by providing low-cost solar energy to the whole village.

#### **4. Promoting digital transformation in public sector institutions**

*Costa Rica- Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social*

In Costa Rica, the Implementation of the Single Digital Health Record in Primary Care provides a digital platform for caregivers to access patients' medical records, optimize resources and reduce the duplication of diagnostic tests.

#### **5. Promoting gender-sensitive public services to achieve the SDGs**

*Republic of Korea- Seoul Metropolitan Government*

In Korea, the Public Sanitary Pads Support Policy for Menstrual Health Equity increased the accessibility of menstrual care and information.

*Austria- Public Employment Service Austria, AMS in partnership with ABZ\*<sup>Austria</sup>*

Competence Checks for the Vocational Integration for Refugee Women, ABZ\*<sup>Kompetenzcheck</sup> assists refugee women to expand their network and become financially independent in Austria.

*Chile- ChileCompra*

In Chile, the Promotion of Women Lead Companies through the Public Market helps small enterprises owned by women to participate in the opportunities offered by the public market place and improves public procurement processes of hiring women nationwide.

The Awards were presented to the winners at the United Nations Public Service Awards Ceremony in Baku, Azerbaijan on 24 June during the United Nations Public Service Forum.

For more information: [UN Public Service Forum, Day and Awards](#)

## SDG 17 in numbers



Enhanced international cooperation is needed to ensure that countries have the means to achieve the SDGs. Progress is being made on some of the targets of SDG 17. For example, personal remittances and the proportion of the global population with Internet access are at an all-time high. Yet, there are challenges in achieving other targets, with official development assistance (ODA) declining and trade tensions persisting.



The net ODA flows totaled \$149 billion in 2018, down 2.7 per cent in real terms from 2017, with a declining share going to the most vulnerable countries and population groups—aid to Africa fell by 4 per cent and humanitarian aid fell by 8 per cent.

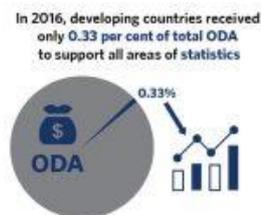
Total ODA for capacity building and national planning stood at \$33.5 billion in 2017—\$13.0 billion combined went to assist the public administration, energy and the financial sectors.

At the end of 2018, more than half of the world's population (3.9 billion people) used the Internet. However, only 45 per cent of people in developing countries and only 20 per cent of people in LDCs were online, compared to over 80 per cent in developed countries.

Decreasing tariffs applied worldwide provide wider access to goods and contribute to a more open trading system. In 2017, trade weighted tariffs decreased to an average of 2.2 per cent worldwide but large differences at the regional level that still remain, reflecting global economic imbalances. The highest average tariff rates in 2017 were applied across African regions. The year 2018 cast doubt over the future of a sound multilateral trading system under WTO, with significant trade tensions among large economies.

In 2019, annual remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries are projected to reach \$550 billion, making these flows larger than both foreign direct investment and ODA.

In 2016, countries only received \$623 million to support all areas of statistics, amounting to just 0.33 per cent of total ODA. In order for developing countries to meet the statistical capacity related targets by 2030, current donor support to data and statistics will need to double.



From 2008 to 2017, 89 per cent of countries or areas around the world conducted at least one population and housing census.

For more information: Sustainable Development Goal 17

## Top economic experts call for a policy reboot to revive the economy and achieve the SDGs



In June, UN DESA invited 70 of the finest economic minds from over 30 countries to the town of Glen Cove where, over three days, they put their heads together, analysing the state of the global economy and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and proposing recommendations for the way forward. The picture of the global situation they painted was not a pretty one.

Unresolved trade tensions are visibly impacting trade in many developing economies and threatening to unravel global and regional production networks. The uncertainty about international policy is showing no signs of abating and financial markets remain vulnerable to sudden shifts in sentiments.

Predictably, these tougher economic conditions are translating into less financial resources for sustainable development. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) recently reported that global foreign direct investment (FDI) contracted for the third consecutive year in 2018, as investor confidence was undermined by trade tensions and geopolitical uncertainties. The OECD also revealed that official development assistance (ODA) in 2018 fell by 2.7 per cent compared to 2017. The share of ODA that went to those most in need – least-developed and African countries – also declined.

Climate change is only exacerbating the bleak growth outlook for many of the least developed and small island developing States. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events has not only damaged vital infrastructure in their economies but has also caused large-scale displacements. The efforts to shift the global economy

towards a sustainable way of producing and consuming remain woefully inadequate to the scale of the challenge.

Gathered in Glen Cove as part of a UN DESA Expert Group Meeting on the World Economy with the Project LINK network, the experts stressed that many of the challenges for sustainable development are global by nature and require closer policy cooperation between countries – something that has lately been in short supply.

As rising global headwinds threaten to undo decades of development gains, there is an urgent need to strengthen global partnerships and cooperation to make visible progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

In her keynote speech, Cristina Duarte, former Minister in the Government of Cabo Verde and member of UN DESA's High-Level Advisory Board, highlighted the daunting barriers to development progress in Africa, particularly in the challenging global environment. In large parts of the continent, poverty rates remain extremely high, low-productivity agriculture continues to dominate employment, and overdependence on commodities prevails.

Ms. Duarte warned that without drastic measures it is unlikely that Africa would achieve the SDGs by 2030. She called for a reboot of policymaking in the continent, particularly to strengthen the quality of institutions, enhance development finance, and enable African countries to exercise ownership over their immense natural resource wealth.

Organized by the Economic Analysis and Policy Division of UN DESA, the meeting gathered experts from several UN agencies, major international organizations, central banks, academia, and research institutions. UN Chief Economist and Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development at UN DESA, Elliott Harris, chaired the meeting.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

8 July	International Day of Cooperatives
8 July, New York	ECOSOC Integration Segment
9-18 July, New York	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under the auspices of ECOSOC
19 July, New York	ECOSOC High-level Segment
23-24 July, New York	ECOSOC Management Segment

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