



United
Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

HIGHLIGHTS

2019 - 2020

Towards
Sustainable
Development
For All

COPYRIGHT:

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Highlights 2019-2020
Published by the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
New York, New York 10017, United States of America

Copyright © 2020 United Nations
All rights reserved

This publication in its entirety may not be reproduced or transmitted
in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy,
recording or any information storage and retrieval system now known
or to be invented, without written permission from the publisher.

All queries on rights and licenses, including subsidiary rights, should be addressed to:

undesa@un.org

Designed and produced by:
Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
United Nations, New York



**United
Nations**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

HIGHLIGHTS

2019-2020

List of Acronyms

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|------------------|---|
| CCA | Common Country Assessment | MIC | Middle-Income Country |
| CDP | Committee for Development Policy | NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer | OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| CARICOM | Caribbean Community | QCPR | Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review |
| COAs | Communities of Ocean Action | SAMOA | SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action |
| COP25 | 25th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change | SDG | Sustainable Development Goal |
| COVID-19 | Coronavirus disease 2019 | SDO | Sustainable Development Outlook |
| DCO | United Nations Development Coordination Office | SIDS | Small Island Developing State(s) |
| ECOSOC | Economic and Social Council | STI | Science, Technology and Innovation |
| EU | European Union | UCLG-CGLU | United Cities and Local Governments |
| FACTI Panel | High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency and Integrity | UN | United Nations |
| FSDR | Financing for Sustainable Development Report | UN DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| GA | General Assembly | UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| GISD | Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance | UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| GSDR | Global Sustainable Development Report | UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| GSGF | Global Statistical Geospatial Framework | UNEN | United Nations Economists Network |
| HEPA | Health and Energy Platform of Action | UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| HLAB | High-level Advisory Board for Social and Economic Development | UNGGIM | United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management |
| HLPF | High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development | UNITAR | United Nations Institute for Training and Research |
| IAEG-SDGs | Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators | UNPFII | United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues |
| IATT | United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs | UNPSF | United Nations Public Service Forum |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology | UNSC | United Nations Statistical Commission |
| IGF | Internet Governance Forum | UNSPF | United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 |
| ILO | International Labour Organization | UNU | United Nations University |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund | UN-Water | Interagency mechanism for coordinating the UN's work on water and sanitation |
| INFF | Integrated national financing framework | VNR | Voluntary National Review |
| ITC | International Trade Centre | WEFM-e | World Economic Forecasting Model |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration | WESP | World Economic Situation and Prospects |
| LDC | Least Developed Country | WTO | World Trade Organization |
| MGoS | HLPF Major Groups and other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism | | |
| MOOC | Massive Online Open Course | | |

UN DESA's Annual Highlights report is a tool to communicate the contributions of the Department to the realization of internationally agreed development goals and shared social, economic and environmental aspirations. This edition covers activities over the period of the 74th Session of the General Assembly (September 2019 – August 2020) and is organized in alignment with the key priority areas of Member States in the political declaration adopted at the SDG Summit in September 2019. Each chapter demonstrates how the Department supported a specific priority throughout the year, through its norm setting, analytical and capacity-building work, as it tasked its resources towards supporting Member States' effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of sustainable development for all.

C O N T E N T S


| | |
|--------------|---|
| Introduction | 4 |
|--------------|---|


| | |
|---|----|
|  Leaving no one behind | 18 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
|  Financing sustainable development | 28 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
|  Enhancing global partnerships | 36 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
|  Investing in data and statistics for the SDGs | 44 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
|  Advancing thought leadership for sustainable development | 54 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
|  Harnessing science, technology and innovation for sustainable development | 64 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
|  Climate action | 70 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
|  Strengthening institutions for the SDGs | 80 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|----|
|  Strengthening the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development | 86 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---------|----|
| Annexes | 96 |
|---------|----|

I N T R O D U C T I O N

UN DESA has continued to push forward action to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for all people everywhere. The work of the Department is guided by the 10 critical action areas to which Member States committed in the political declaration at the SDG Summit in September 2019, and focuses on the entry points most effective for accelerating integrated and cross-sectoral progress. Even as the COVID-19 pandemic shook the world at its core, further stalling progress in some areas of development, and reversing gains in others, UN DESA has remained steadfast, providing the hard-hitting analysis, data, projections, policy guidance and capacity-building Member States need to respond today with tomorrow in mind, and fulfil the promise of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

10 priority action areas of Member States:

- Leaving no one behind
- Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing
- Enhancing national implementation
- Strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions
- Bolstering local action to accelerate implementation
- Reducing disaster risk and building resilience
- Solving challenges through international cooperation and enhancing the global partnership
- Harnessing science, technology and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development
- Investing in data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals
- Strengthening the High-level Political Forum

Photo credit: Mr. HE Long, Shenzhen Special Zone Daily

刘振民
Liu Zhenmin

UN DESA: Responding today for a better tomorrow

As I introduce this second edition of the UN DESA Highlights, the world faces compounded crises. Just as local, national, regional and global leaders were gearing up for accelerated action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals, our attention was turned to battling a deadly coronavirus as it rapidly spread across the globe, attacking our communities at the very social and economic fissures that the SDGs are designed to fill.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been further offsetting efforts to implement the SDGs and it threatens to undo the achievements already made in many areas. Through the pace of its spread, the nature of its symptoms and the responses that have had to be put in place to curb them, COVID-19 has been devastating health systems globally and threatening already achieved health outcomes. It is pushing tens of millions of people back into extreme poverty and hunger and has kept hundreds of millions of students out of schools for prolonged periods. The pandemic has been severely affecting the livelihoods of the global workforce, with economic slowdown fuelling unemployment and underemployment, and it has caused disruptions



in global value chains and the supply of products.

The pandemic is affecting the world's poorest and the most vulnerable people the most, which too often includes older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees, and informal sector workers. Women and children are also bearing the heaviest brunt. So too are the most vulnerable countries, including least-developed and land-locked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in fragile situations.

In responding to this emergency, the Department immediately pivoted our intellectual resources toward understanding and projecting the real and potential socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic and identifying policy recommendations and concrete actions for Member States to consider. In support of the work of the Secretary-General and the broader UN family we released these insights as a series of focused policy briefs, designed to guide policy makers through the tough decisions that they have faced, and continue to tackle, as we manoeuvre amid the impact of the crisis. The twenty-three briefs, released from 1 April 2020 through June of this year, addressed a number of hard-hitting issues, including designing inclusive stimulus packages, preventing a global debt crisis, supporting countries in special situations, protecting the most vulnerable groups of people, and strengthening the role of science and technology. The briefs emphasized the need for an effective and coordinated response to COVID-19 that places the most vulnerable populations at its core.

Under tremendous pressure and with limited resources, our experts worked hard to ensure that their analysis was fit for purpose and accessible to the policy makers who needed it most. They swiftly adjusted working methods, and partnered with academicians, governments and other stakeholders to host webinars and virtual trainings for applying their recommendations on the ground.

Against this rapidly shifting landscape, UN

DESA's engagement with Member States remained firmly anchored in supporting their intergovernmental processes and deliberations. Despite the challenges posed by connectivity and the unprecedented need for virtual negotiations, there were some notable successes, including adoption, by the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum, of the first universally agreed set of United Nations policies to finance COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. A mapping of financing mechanisms was also made available, to aid Member States' efforts to access such resources.

We provided effective and critical substantive support to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies. As the first major meeting of the universal membership to discuss the major threats COVID-19 represents for SDG implementation since the current emergency response measures came into effect, the Forum delivered a strong message that we need a multilateral response to the COVID-19 crisis and that the 2030 Agenda must be our guidepost as we recover better.

While COVID-19 has brought new context and urgency to our work, the underlying impetus of our thought leadership, capacity development and other support to Member States has remained constant.

As the highlights in this volume will attest, we continued to demonstrate UN DESA's commitment and contribution to supporting and strengthening multilateralism, and to

advancing inclusive, people-centred, sustainable development, guided by a commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We entered 2020 with a concrete plan of action, spring boarding from the milestone decisions of Member States at the SDG Summit, High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, and High-level Mid-term Review of Implementation of the SAMOA Pathway, among others.

We strengthened our work to further enhance the synergies between climate action and realizing the SDGs. 2019-2020 saw increased research and analysis on sustainable transport, oceans, energy, water and sanitation, and the launch of related information networks, and data initiatives.

Our increased focus, in UN DESA publications, on identifying and forecasting the trajectory of persistent and emerging social, economic, demographic, political and environmental megatrends, and on tracking and forecasting their impact on sustainable development, proved a valuable asset as the United Nations sought to shape the multilateral response to the social and economic impacts of intersecting crises. And as the world explores options for recovering better - with resilience and forward-looking policies - the Department is supporting mobilization of financing for sustainable development, including through increased attention to the impact of private investment, supporting delivery of the objectives of the GISD Alliance, and forests financing.

Effective partnerships for amplifying impact have become an increased feature of work in UN DESA. The United Nations Economists Network has been a testament to that, facilitating collaboration and joint work among agencies on issues of shared interest. The Network has been a platform for integrated support on economic, financial and social policy issues to the UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinator Offices. Its first collaborative volume will be released later this year.

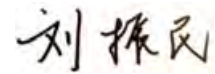
Throughout the 74th session of the General Assembly, the Department has seen the growth of its impact and relevance in related fora and processes in the international development sphere, including the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC, the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, G20, World Economic Forum and World Bank-IMF meetings.

As we enter the period of the 75th Session of the General Assembly, the vision of UN DESA is clear.

We are forging ahead with the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs with a solid plan for integrating our varied expertise to support and guide Member States along five key areas of action: 1) promoting equality and inclusive growth, 2) supporting evidence-based decision making through high-quality data and statistics, 3) strengthening the science-policy interface, 4) working at the synergies of climate action and SDG achievement, and 5) supporting countries to incorporate demographic trends into development policy and planning. Setting the

foundation for this work is an underlying focus on sustainable finance, effective governance and ensuring the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women across all areas, at all levels.

Working with stakeholders across the international community, we will continue to push forward evidence-based policies and build the capacities of Member States for moving the world towards sustainable development for all.



Liu Zhenmin

Under-Secretary-General for

Economic and Social Affairs

September 2020

What does UN DESA do?



Intergovernmental support

By facilitating major global conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, as mandated by UN Member States, UN DESA assists countries as they find common ground, set norms, and take decisive steps to move the world forward.



Analysis

As the think tank of the United Nations, UN DESA, generates, analyses and compiles a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and statistics to inform and advise Member States and other stakeholders as they take stock of trends and policy options to tackle common problems.



Capacity-building

UN DESA aids in translating policy frameworks developed in UN conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, supports Member States in building national capacities.



Major databases

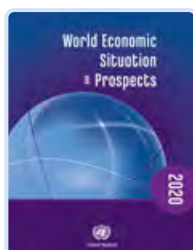
- Ocean Voluntary Commitment Database
- Population Databases
- SDG Acceleration Action Database
- SDG Good Practices Database
- SIDS Partnerships Database
- UN Comtrade International Trade Statistics Database
- UN COVID-19 Data Hub
- UN Data
- UN e-Government Knowledge Database
- UN Global SDG Indicators Database
- UN LDC Data
- UN Public Service Awards Database
- UN SDG Data Hub
- UN System SDG Implementation Database
- Voluntary National Reviews Database



Major publications



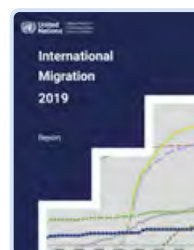
World Social Report



World Economic
Situation and
Prospects



Financing for Sustainable
Development Report



International
Migration Report



State of the World's
Indigenous Peoples



The Sustainable
Development
Goals Report



The World's Women



United Nations
E-Government Survey



World Population
Prospects



World Public
Sector Report



World Youth Report

UN DESA in Numbers



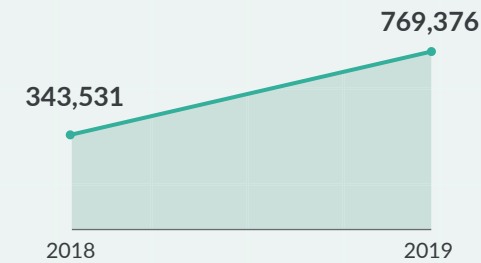
UN DESA staff represent more than **80** countries worldwide, from all regions.

From January to December 2019, UN DESA submitted in total **369** parliamentary documents, including:

- 54 Reports of the Secretary-General
- 33 Notes by the Secretary-General
- 59 Notes by the Secretariat
- 10 Agendas
- 4 Committee Experts Reports
- 2 Summaries by ECOSOC President
- 2 Reports of an intergovernmental group meeting
- 33 New Applications for Consultative Status with ECOSOC
- 5 Quadrennial Reports
- 90 Summaries of technical papers
- 77 NGO Statements

In 2019, UN DESA ran more than **200** capacity-building projects in more than **90** countries across the globe.

Total downloads of Top 5 UN DESA Publications



In 2019, UN DESA's top 5 most popular publications were downloaded a combined **769,376** times, more than doubling total downloads for the top 5 publications in 2018.

5 most downloaded UN DESA publications in 2019



In 2019 UN DESA's overall website visits increased by 16% over 2018. **Traffic to the main UN DESA website increased by 30%**, a testament of the efforts to coordinate outreach at the Departmental level.

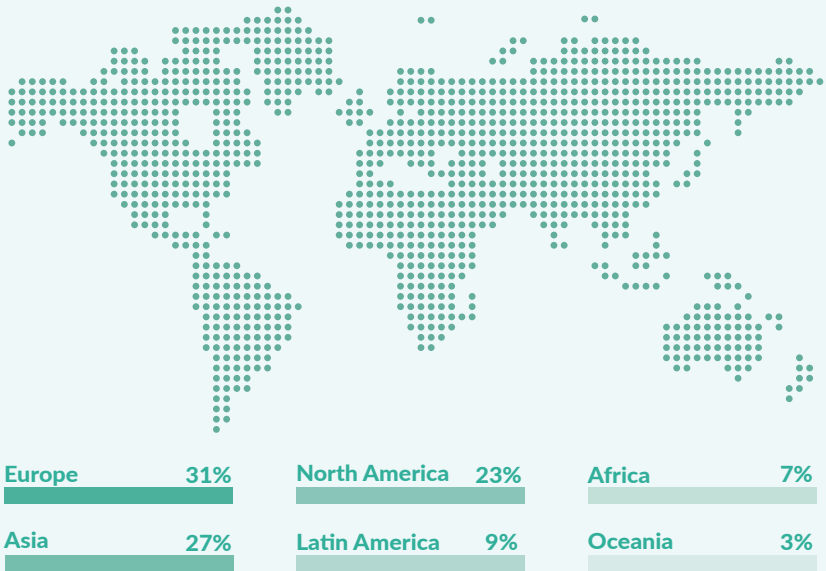
TWITTER

Combined followers across accounts managed by UN DESA: **734,884**
Total average growth in 2019: **3.3%**.

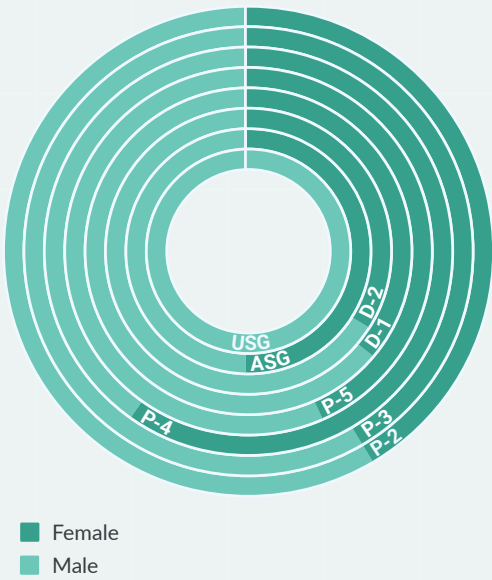
FACEBOOK

Combined followers across accounts managed by UN DESA: **2,088,143**
Total average growth in 2019: **3.3%**.

Share of visits to the UN DESA websites (by region, 2019)



Progress toward gender parity at the Professional level in UN DESA



As of 31 March 2020, UN DESA had achieved its target for gender balance at the ASG and P4 levels. The Department remains committed to the promise of gender parity and women's empowerment within its workforce, operations and substantive approach.

In the wake of COVID-19, UN DESA undertook a range of immediate actions to support and advise the Secretary-General and help Member States to respond to the pandemic and navigate the policy choices ahead. Led by the COVID-19 response task team established in March 2020, the Department's experts have been closely monitoring the situation and the impact of the crisis on economic, social and sustainable development. The findings and related recommendations were shared through analytical reports, policy briefs, webinars, data and information hubs, enabling the international community to make informed decisions.

Supporting the Secretary-General's initiatives in response to COVID-19

UN DESA has actively supported the Secretary-General's initiatives to counter COVID-19, contributing analysis to help policy makers take informed decisions. The Department supported the development of the United Nations framework for the immediate socioeconomic response, which provides practical guidance to Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams. UN DESA also provided direct input to several policy papers and calls to action. The Department has contributed insights, and shared policy recommendations, on various socioeconomic challenges.



Photo Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Policy brief and webinar series on the economic and social impact of COVID-19



UN DESA launched a special policy brief series on the economic and social impact of COVID-19 on 1 April 2020. The 23 thematic briefs, released from April to June 2020, highlighted a number of critical issues – including designing inclusive stimulus packages; preventing a global debt crisis; supporting countries in special situations; protecting the most vulnerable groups of people; strengthening the role of science, technology and institutions for an effective response; and working together to recover better and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The series was made available as a compilation volume **Responding to COVID-19 and Recovering Better**.

Looking ahead, the Department continues to provide updated analyses, policy recommendations and practical tools to support countries in recovering better from the pandemic and advancing the Decade of Action for sustainable development.

Online dialogue: launch of the compilation of the High-level Advisory Board for Economic and Social Development (HLAB)

UN DESA convened 14 world renowned experts for a high-level panel event **Recover Better: Economic and Social Challenges and Opportunities** on 22 July 2020. The event launched a compilation of essays by HLAB members. The Volume reflects a wide range of development trends and issues of critical importance to the achievement of the SDGs and the recovery from COVID-19.



COVID-19 response databases

UN DESA established the UN COVID-19 Data Hub and a COVID-19 resources portal for national statistical offices. This rapid response to the need for accurate, real-time data has been a welcome assistance to Member States, helping to guide informed decision-making amid the global pandemic.



COVID-19 Data



Healthcare Resources



Economy



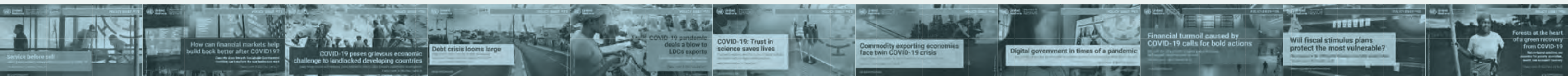
Population

Sustainable Development Outlook 2020

UN DESA released a special in-depth analysis focused on presenting scenarios for policy makers to shape action for achieving the SDGs in the wake of COVID-19.

The recommendations of the report revolve around three key messages:

1. The setbacks caused by COVID-19 need not be permanent.
2. Our recovery from the COVID-19 crisis must direct investment towards realization of the SDGs.
3. While the lockdowns and other measures taken during the crisis negatively impacted economies and livelihoods, many planet-related SDGs have benefited, a vivid revelation that the current ways of achieving prosperity conflict with the health of the planet.



Supporting development for all through intergovernmental processes

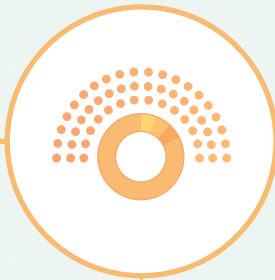


General Assembly

- Plenary
- Economic and Financial Committee
(Second Committee)
- Social, Humanitarian
and Cultural Committee
(Third Committee)



High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development



Economic and Social Council



Commissions

- Commission for
Social Development
- Commission on Population
and Development
- Statistical Commission
- United Nations
Forum on Forests



Committees and Advisory Bodies

- Committee of Experts
on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
- Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
- Committee of Experts on Public Administration
- Committee for Development Policy
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial
Information Management
- United Nations Group of Experts
on Geographical Names



Forums

- Development Cooperation Forum
- Financing for Development Forum
- Internet Governance Forum
- Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science,
Technology and Innovation for the SDGs
- Partnership Forum
- World Data Forum
- Youth Forum



UN Collaborative Mechanisms

- Collaborative Partnership on Forests
- Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs
- High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination
and Capacity-building for the 2030 Agenda
- Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
- Inter-agency Consultative Group on SIDS
- Inter-agency Support Group for the Convention
on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development
- Inter-agency Task Team
for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism
- UN-Energy
- UN-Water
- UN Inter-agency Support Group
on Indigenous Peoples' Issues
- United Nations Inter-agency Network
on Youth Development
- United Nations Global Working Group (GWG)
on Big Data for Official Statistics

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

- Photo Credit: UN DESA Forest Photo Contest/Riccardo-Gangale

In 2019-2020, UN DESA maintained its firm focus on inclusion of the most vulnerable, giving particular attention to youth, indigenous peoples, older persons and persons with disabilities. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women remained a constant guide. With attention to countries in special situations, including SIDS and LDCs, we identified emerging trends and effective policy options for eradicating poverty; addressing inequalities; fighting discrimination; strengthening social protection; and providing opportunities for all, before, during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

UN DESA...

- Highlighted the 25 years of progress of implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development.
- Brought critical attention to the complex problem of homelessness, its impact on development and policy options to address it.
- Continued to strengthen and raise the profile of research and data to accelerate global actions toward a world without poverty.
- Assessed the potential of youth social entrepreneurship to support youth employment and development, in the 2020 World Youth Report.
- Drew attention to the disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on older persons, indigenous peoples, youth and countries in special situations.
- Issued its first Policy and Plan of Action for Disability Inclusion and established a network of focal points on disability.
- Established, maintained, and provided targeted trainings to support capacity-building in LDCs.
- Shone a spotlight on the economic and financing obstacles faced by SIDS.

Leaving no one behind

UN DESA is a leading voice for promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities and eradicating poverty. Throughout the year, UN DESA used its convening power and analytical capacity to ensure that the global dialogue included the voices of all peoples, everywhere. The Department also supported the development of national actions to leave no one behind even as interlinked global crises stifled fiscal and policy space.



World Summit for Social Development 1995. - Photo Credit: UN Photo/Milton Grant

Celebrating 25 years of championing social inclusion

The World Summit in 1995 was a critical turning point towards people-centred, inclusive and integrated approaches to policymaking. The vision of the Summit is reflected in the core principle of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first. In commemoration of the 25th anniversary, UN DESA launched complementary online campaigns to draw

attention to the progress made and encourage action for greater and more sustainable inclusion.

UN DESA's [Social Milestones Project](#) showcases 169 social development milestones, with links to relevant United Nations documents and diverse multimedia sources. Since its February launch, the Project has enhanced the accessibility of the repository of knowledge on social development. In addition, UN DESA's yearlong [#EveryoneIncluded](#) campaign, has aimed to inspire and

motivate people around the world to join an ongoing multifaceted dialogue on social development and its role in achieving sustainable development. The campaign reminds the international community about the importance of placing people at the centre of development by ensuring full participation of all.

Reaching the furthest behind first

The work of UN DESA continued to address the issues critical to human resilience. In February 2020, the Report of the Secretary-General on *Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness* helped guide deliberations in the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development. The report informed a milestone resolution, the first on homelessness adopted at the UN. The resolution recognizes homelessness as a complex problem, affecting people of different ages and with

diverse backgrounds in both developed and developing countries. It underscores the importance of taking a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address multiple inter-related structural causes of homelessness through integrated responses, cutting across fiscal, economic, labour, housing, health, social protection, and urban development policies.

Protecting and mobilizing youth for sustainable development

The World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda, launched by UN DESA in July 2020, assesses the potential of youth social entrepreneurship to support youth employment and development while helping accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It examines challenges faced by young social entrepreneurs and explores how innovative



Ellen Chilemba, young social entrepreneur and founder of Tiwale. - Photo Credit: Tiwale



Participants at the International Day of Older Persons 2019. - Photo Credit: UN DESA /Amine Lamrabat

technologies can be used to help youth succeed. The report offers policy guidance for developing enabling, responsive and sustainable national ecosystems for young social entrepreneurs.

UN DESA analysis on the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic also drew attention to the need for targeted action toward youth. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the disruptions the COVID-19 pandemic has caused, and many are now at risk of being left behind in education, economic opportunities, and health and well-being during a crucial stage of their life. At the same time, young innovators are already responding to the pandemic through projects with social impact.

Reminding the world that people aged 60+ count

UN DESA continued to support the efforts of the General Assembly's open-ended working group on ageing, providing analysis on older persons' right to work and access to the labour market. The Department also helped to shape language for the development of a possible international standard on the protection of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building as well as to social protection and social security (including social protection floors).

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women

UN DESA's research and analysis continued to mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women, producing gender-sensitive recommendations addressing the important nuances that too often leave the world's women at a disadvantage. Several of the Department's activities focused specifically on the gender dimension of sustainable development, such as the symposium on "Mainstreaming gender in Water Resources Management, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policies in the Caribbean Region", held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2019. The Symposium discussed the draft CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy and introduced language to be included in the Strategy. CARICOM is currently finalizing the strategy taking into account the suggested text and language. Seventy per cent of the participants of the Symposium were female.

The Department also continued its coordination of the Global Gender Statistics Programme, working to strengthen coherence among existing initiatives on gender statistics, and improve national statistical and technical capacity for the production, dissemination and



Ms. Silvia Museiya (Yiaku / Kenya), panellist at the 2019 commemoration of the International Day of Indigenous Peoples – Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Manuel Elias

use of gender relevant data. During 2019, UN DESA further increased knowledge and understanding of the gender dimensions of demographic phenomena through datasets, data visualizations and reports. For example, the International Migrant Stock 2019 dataset shows gendered patterns of international migration: Female migrants outnumber male migrants in the North, while male migrants outnumber female migrants in the global South.

The Department expanded its World Economic Forecasting Model (WEFM-e) to incorporate gender dimensions in assessing the development impacts of regional initiatives on female employment. The new WEFM-e generated various scenarios and results, showing possible impacts of key gender-related issues such as female job creation, poverty reduction and access to public service (education, health, etc.). The model-based analyses and related policy recommendations – reflected in various publications of the Department – enable Member States to fine-tune development plans and strategies for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A rights-based approach to indigenous issues

With the postponement of the 2020 annual session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), UN DESA arranged for Forum members to hold virtual meetings with stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, United Nations indigenous mechanisms and indigenous peoples organizations from various regions, to enable the consultations that would normally have taken place during the Forum session. The aim was to identify possible policy options where the UNPFII members might provide support and identify concrete actions to advance implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the country level.

Noting the real and potential disparate impact of the pandemic on indigenous communities, UN DESA also established a repository of information for indigenous peoples, related to COVID-19. The repository includes actions being taken by all stakeholders, online news articles, examples of best practices, indigenous-led public service announcements in numerous indigenous languages, statements from key indigenous and UN organizations, as well as guidelines and recommendations for response and



Participant during the commemoration of the International Day of Indigenous Peoples 2019 – Photo Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elias



Participants pose for a photo at the closing of the high-level event of the General Assembly on the conclusion of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, 17 December 2019 – Photo Credit: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

recovery sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples. UN DESA published a policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples in May 2020, within the COVID-19 policy brief series.

Moving disability-inclusive development forward

In December 2019, the Doha International Conference on Disability and Development, with UN DESA's support, brought together persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, experts, academics, policymakers, governments and UN entities, to promote the mainstreaming of disability inclusion in the development of national strategies, policies and action plans in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Doha Declaration, which outlined recommendations for policy development about human rights and sustainable development in the context of disability.

UN DESA, in 2020, issued its first internal policy and plan of action for disability inclusion, in line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and established

a network of focal points on disability to drive implementation.

Building country capacity for forwarding social inclusion

With 2019 as the first year of implementation of the system-wide plan of action for the eradication of poverty, the Department monitored and analysed global social and economic trends and emerging issues that have a bearing on poverty eradication, inequality, jobs and social inclusion, particularly among vulnerable social groups, to help inform government policy. Together with partners, UN DESA supported more than 75 countries in building integrated, evidence-based, inclusive, and well-funded national strategies and plans to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

UN DESA also worked to extend social protection coverage to more individuals in middle- and low-income countries through its technical cooperation work. For example, the Department's ongoing project, Achieving SDGs and ending poverty through Universal Social

"On Display NYC": an installation by Heidi Latsky Dance during the 2019 commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Photo Credit: UN DESA /Amine Lamrabat





Training Workshop on Cooperative Healthcare, Istanbul, 21-23 May 2019 - UN DESA and Istanbul Aydin University - Photo Credit: AFRIKAM Centre of the Istanbul Aydin University

Protection, aims to assist Cambodia and Pakistan in improving their social protection systems. In 2019, Cambodia proposed a more comprehensive social security system, which is currently with Parliament for approval. UN DESA trained civil servants in the country on governance and management of their social protection system.

Supporting graduating LDCs

Through its support to the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), UN DESA is in a unique position to help countries to analyse and implement policies that ensure countries graduate smoothly from the LDC category. At its Plenary session in February 2020, the CDP updated the technical LDC criteria and discussed country-specific support for ensuring smooth transitions and maintaining momentum towards sustainable development. The CDP further focused on implications of the COVID-19 crisis, highlighting the need to put the SDGs first and build equal, green, and resilient societies and economies.

In 2019-20, the Department provided targeted trainings on various capacity-building tools for LDCs, including the LDC graduation support platform, gradjet.org, the LDC-specific support measures portal, new assistance measures for LDCs, as well as macroeconomic and climate-related policy models. UN DESA continued to deliver the support to LDCs in the COVID-19 crisis, adopting all available measures - modifying implementation methods using virtual meetings, augmenting project objectives to minimize negative impacts of economic shocks caused by COVID -19 or exploring additional funding sources. COVID-19 also led to an increase in activities in the ePing trade notification system, developed



« ... This worked very well and was undertaken on record time, from all ends, with much appreciation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and me. It will no doubt prove useful in the work ahead on the LDC graduation. I used this as an example(...)of excellent collaboration across the UNDS ... the CDP Secretariat at UN DESA rocks!»

~ Resident Coordinator of Lao PDR, Ms. Sara Sekkenes, commenting on support provided in preparation for LDC graduation.



Jason Mamoia speaks at High-level Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway - Photo Credit: UN Photo/Laura Jarriel

by UN DESA together with WTO and ITC. Already in 2019, Uganda, as one of UN DESA's pilot countries in providing ePing support, became the top notifier in the system.

Addressing the unique needs of small island developing States

In September 2019, Member States held a High-level Midterm Review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the dedicated 10-year programme of action adopted in 2014 to promote international assistance to address the unique set of challenges that small island developing States face. The midterm review saw Member States adopt a political declaration reaffirming their solidarity with SIDS, which remain a special case for sustainable development, and calling for more innovative partnerships and financing.

Guided by this outcome, UN DESA built on its work with and for SIDS to address their unique needs. New multi-stakeholder partnerships for SIDS were announced on the margins of the event and registered on two platforms maintained by UN DESA: the SIDS Partnership database and the SDG Acceleration Actions platform. The Department's 2019 edition of **The Cowrie**, a newsletter on SIDS, shone a spotlight on the economic and financing obstacles faced by SIDS, and the need for international cooperation to ensure sustainable financing for small island nations. This work became even more poignant in the wake of the pandemic, as SIDS, particularly those in the middle-income bracket, sought innovative ways to finance the safety and protection of their inhabitants and slow the spread of COVID-19.

FINANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The fallout from COVID-19 has made financing for sustainable development more difficult, undermining Member States' ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN DESA has helped navigate this extremely difficult period through timely policy advice, rapid provision of virtual intergovernmental support, and strengthening remote capacity-building initiatives.

UN DESA...

- Supported the first quadrennial General Assembly Dialogue on Financing for Development.
- Advanced concrete commitments to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and strengthen efforts for sustainable finance to support the achievement of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.
- Facilitated stronger G20 commitment to financing sustainable development and amplified the United Nations' messages to recover better in the G20.
- Led preparation of the UN's most authoritative analytical report on financing for sustainable development, in collaboration with more than 60 international organizations.
- Helped Member States to implement integrated national financing frameworks, as tools for immediate policy response and long-term planning, including in response to COVID-19.
- Facilitated the work of the Development Cooperation Forum.
- Supported international cooperation in tax matters and provided capacity support for domestic resource mobilization, and financing at subnational level.
- Coordinated the establishment of a high-level panel on international financial accountability, transparency, and integrity.
- Supported the High-Level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond.
- Engaged the private sector to mobilize resources and align business operations with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, supported investors to recover better.

Secretary-General Addresses High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development
– Photo Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Financing sustainable development

At the start of the Decade of Action, global challenges have multiplied. The economic and financial shocks associated with COVID-19 have plunged the world into recession. This has made financing for sustainable development more difficult, endangering the achievement of the SDGs.



Bill Gates at the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, September 2019. - Photo Credit: IISD Reporting Services

Supporting Member States to advance sustainable finance

In September 2019, UN DESA supported the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development where six urgent actions were highlighted for strengthening sustainable finance: (i) address vast financing gaps for sustainable development; (ii) align financing sources and instruments with the SDGs, including through the implementation of integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs); (iii) tackle illicit financial flows; (iv) achieve debt sustainability

against rising climate and structural vulnerabilities; (v) strengthen domestic tax systems and international tax cooperation; as well as (vi) underline the essential role of Official Development Assistance.

Reflecting its action-oriented focus, the Dialogue featured announcements of more than 20 new initiatives and commitments by governments and stakeholders, including innovative financial instruments and new partnerships for SDG financing.

Helping Member States access policies and financing to fight COVID-19

UN DESA supported the ECOSOC President (Norway) to swiftly adapt the modalities of the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum to the new circumstances, spearheading an innovative way of conducting negotiations and intergovernmental meetings within the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic. ECOSOC convened two virtual meetings of the Forum on 23 April and 2 June, to address the immediate needs and longer-term fragilities exposed by the pandemic. These meetings helped Member States to gain better understanding of the concrete policy and financing options to tackle the global crisis and recover better. The outcome document of the Forum represents the first set of universally agreed policy guidance on financing COVID-19 response and recovery. The document was also the first intergovernmental outcome negotiated by virtual means in the history of ECOSOC.

Providing policy advice to address the financing challenges caused by COVID-19

UN DESA's thought leadership on development financing helped to shape the global discourse, including within the G20, International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The Department advanced strong policy responses to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable groups of countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS).

The Department led the preparation and analytical work for the **2020 Financing for Sustainable Development Report** (FSDR), the main substantive input to the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum. The publication is a product of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, convened by UN DESA, which comprises over 60 international organizations, including the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World

Bank. Launched in April 2020, the 2020 FSDR provided immediate actions and medium and long-term policy solutions to respond to the financing challenges brought on by COVID-19.

UN DESA also made substantive contributions to the UN Secretary-General's report on *Debt and COVID-19: A Global Response in Solidarity*, providing policy advice on addressing sovereign debt. The Department also analysed the impact of COVID-19 on the financial sector, providing policy recommendations on how the international community can support countries most in need, and promoting the opportunity for sustainable development investing.

UN DESA's analytical work provided the foundation for three of six work streams (global liquidity and financial stability, debt vulnerability and private sector creditors engagement)¹ set up to advance the High-Level Event on Financing for Development, hosted by the Secretary-General and the Prime Ministers of Canada and Jamaica to discuss financing for development in the era of COVID-19 and beyond. Member States will lead the efforts to identify the policy options to move forward on these key issues, with support from the UN development system and UN DESA, and in partnership with international organizations, financial institutions, think tanks, thought leaders and civil society.

Strengthening G20 commitment and action to support financing for development and recover better from COVID-19

UN DESA convenes the UN G20 Working Group, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to bring strategic system-wide UN inputs to the work of the G20. UN DESA strengthened collaboration with the G20 Presidency in 2020 (Saudi Arabia) to advocate for a stronger G20 focus

¹ The other work streams were external finance for inclusive growth, illicit financial flows and recovering better for sustainability.



G20 Leaders Virtual Summit, March 2020 – Photo Credit: UN Photo/Eric Schneider

on financing for development. For the first time, the G20 developed a Multi-year Programme of Action on Financing for Sustainable Development. The Multi-year Programme is expected to be endorsed by the G20 Summit in November 2020. The Department also actively engaged in the preparation of the G20 Extraordinary Summit on COVID-19, supporting the Secretary-General's advocacy for the alignment of policies and relief resources with the 2030 Agenda.

Promoting private investment to support the Sustainable Development Goals

UN DESA supported the Secretary-General in launching the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance, a group of 30 global business leaders, brought together to provide decisive leadership in mobilizing resources for and aligning business operations with sustainable development. With UN DESA's support, the Alliance is taking steps to increase the impact of private investment and facilitate the disclosure by corporations of meaningful metrics to inform investor decision-making. The Alliance has filled a critical gap in the finance ecosystem by developing a common definition of Sustainable Development Investing. The definition is key

to ensure the credibility of such investing and mitigate the risk of SDG-washing.

In light of the socioeconomic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the GISD Alliance is also considering how to reorient investment for sustainable development both during the immediate response and in the recovery phase. To support this work, UN DESA has produced analysis on how investors could help recover better after the COVID-19 crisis.

Helping Member States to implement integrated national financing frameworks

UN DESA prepared practical modules to help Member States implement integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs), including in the context of recovering better from COVID-19. The first module, on the INFF inception phase, provided guidance to UN Country Teams in over 100 countries that submitted proposals to the UN Joint SDG Fund under the theme, *SDG Financing*, including to pioneer INFFs. INFFs are a tool to help countries strengthen planning processes, ensure more risk-informed financing strategies and overcome existing impediments to financing sustainable development at the national level. An INFF lays out the full range of financing sources – domestic public

resources, aid and development cooperation, and domestic and international private finance – and allows countries to develop a strategy to increase investment, manage risks and shocks and achieve sustainable development priorities, as identified in a country's national sustainable development strategy.

Advancing risk-informed and climate-smart development cooperation

As substantive secretariat to the Development Cooperation Forum, UN DESA supported research, analysis and policy dialogue in support of more effective development cooperation in the COVID-19 period. UN DESA worked with UN DCO to roll out the biennial DCF Survey, which monitors, reviews and documents the evidence on the state of play of development cooperation on the ground in responding countries. Survey findings reflected trends in development cooperation immediately

preceding the onset of COVID-19, complemented by in-depth interviews with selected countries on the early impact of the pandemic. Analysis of Survey data informed the 2020 DCF Survey Study and provided practical guidance to Member States on advancing risk-informed development cooperation in the Decade of Action for the SDGs. UN DESA also worked closely with the Government of Indonesia in preparing analytical and related work focused on the key role of development cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, in climate action and disaster risk reduction.

Strengthening tax cooperation

Throughout the year, UN DESA strengthened its support to the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, helping to advance the role of tax cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It supported the Committee



Inaugural Meeting of the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance, October 2019 - Photo Credit: UN Photo/Mark Garten



LOOKING AHEAD

Taxation of the digitalized economy

UN DESA will hold a first in a series of UN workshops on taxation of the digitalized economy, in the fall of 2020, which will provide developing country participants with an opportunity to discuss and share experiences, as well as feed their views into the ongoing international dialogue, on policy and administrative options to effectively tax the digitalized economy.

in its technical work in multi-stakeholder subcommittee meetings and production of draft chapters, building towards production of the Committee's signature products as well as new ones, all with emphasis on the needs of developing countries. UN DESA assisted the Committee in advancing progress on updates of the widely used **UN Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries**, the **Manual on Transfer Pricing**, and the **Handbook on Taxation of the Extractives Industries by Developing Countries**. It also advanced new work on the **Manual of Mutual Agreement Procedure**, a handbook on carbon taxation, and guidelines on the tax treatment of government-to-government aid projects.

Building local and regional capacity for municipal asset management

Municipal assets, such as equipment and machinery, public land, buildings and infrastructure facilities provide essential public services and play a critical role in the implementation of the SDGs. UN DESA and UNCDF delivered three country-level workshops in Nepal, Bangladesh and

Local and central government officials on joint field mission in Gulu, Uganda to assess progress in municipal asset management

– Photo Credit: UN DESA /Linda Newton



Uganda, as part of their joint Development Account project on municipal asset management. The workshops resulted in tangible commitments, including the implementation of Asset Management Action Plans (AMAPs) at the local level and the design of new asset management policy guidelines at the national level. UN DESA and UNCDF are also implementing new online training modules on municipal asset management to help local governments identify strategic intervention that mitigate the adverse social and economic impact of the pandemic. Specific focus is on improving the service level of critical assets like hospitals, water and sanitation and solid waste management, as well as on retrofitting public facilities to increase the capacity of local healthcare, provide shelter and facilitate business activities.

Promoting financial accountability, transparency, and integrity

UN DESA hosts the independent Secretariat of the High-level Panel on International Financial Accountability, Transparency, and Integrity (FACTI Panel) launched by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, in March 2020. The independent Secretariat developed an overview of existing frameworks related to financial accountability, transparency, and integrity, as well as analysis to help Member States gain clarity on Financial Integrity issues. Through the spring and summer, UN DESA supported the Panel to consult with various stakeholders, including Member State delegations, civil society, international institutions, experts, academia, and the private sectors. The information gained was used to help the panel prioritize its work, develop its understanding of the gaps and vulnerabilities in the current frameworks, and begin thinking about recommendations. The Panel will continue its work, producing an interim report in September 2020 and a final report in February 2021.



IN FOCUS

Delivering capacity support to mobilize domestic resources

Building on the policy and practical guidance produced by the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, UN DESA delivered global and regional workshops related to domestic resource mobilization and taxation. In 2019-2020, workshops were held in a number of developing countries including Senegal, Kenya, Ecuador Indonesia Peru and Colombia.

The Department also expanded its portfolio of online courses on tax matters to include French versions of both the UN Primer on Tax Treaties and the UN Primer on Transfer Pricing, in addition to the existing versions of both courses in English and Spanish.

ENHANCING GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are critical to making the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs a reality. In 2019-2020, UN DESA continued to support the engagement of different stakeholders in the implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and to foster multi-stakeholder partnerships.

UN DESA...

- Organized annual high-profile global forums and events to mobilize stakeholders including the private sector, civil society, academia, philanthropies, and local and regional governments to report and share about their implementation of the SDGs.
- Supported the process of granting 700 NGOs consultative status with the UN ECOSOC in 2019.
- Launched a new 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator capacity-building project, working with partners to build the skills of governments, UN system and other stakeholders to forge strong partnerships in support of the SDGs.
- Continued to train government officials and other stakeholders on how to engage stakeholders in implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level.
- Developed the innovative open source tool, **LinkedSDGs**, to help harness data generated by different stakeholders in the monitoring of the SDGs.

Deputy Secretary-General Visits Papua New Guinea
- Photo Credit: UN Photo/Andrew Hau

Enhancing global partnerships

The achievement of the 2030 Agenda will require an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration among all levels of government, civil society, businesses, foundations, academia, and others, and finding new ways of working. Through its normative, analytical and capacity-building work, UN DESA continues to engage diverse stakeholders at all levels around the follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to provide platforms – both in person and virtual - to discuss and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the SDGs.



Representatives of the Caribbean Philanthropic Alliance, a regional partnership for SDG implementation, announce their initiative in the SDG Media Zone on the margin of the UN General Assembly on 27 September 2019. – Photo Credit: UNDGC / David McCreery

Facilitating stakeholder engagement around the SDGs

As part of its efforts to mobilize the private sector, UN DESA partnered with the International Chamber of Commerce and the UN Global Compact to co-organize several high-profile events to rally CEOs and other business leaders around the 2030 Agenda. Among

them was the 2019 edition of the SDG Business Forum, held on 25 September, in connection with the 2019 SDG Summit, which provided a high-level platform to support business action and partnerships to achieve the SDGs and to announce innovative business solutions to accelerate sustainable development. UN DESA also organized the Chief Sustainability Officers for the SDGs



During the SDG Business Forum in September 2019, the organization Parley for the Oceans and the President of Maldives announced the Future Island Nation programme to bring solutions towards the achievement of multiple SDGs in the country - Photo Credit: Parley for the Oceans



Participant at the SDG Business Forum 2019 – Photo Credit: UN Global Compact/Chae Kihn for J.S. Photo



SDG Advocate Paul Polman, Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce, the B Team and Vice-Chair of the UN Global Compact, delivers a passionate speech about the need for businesses to deliver the promises of the SDGs, at the SDG Business Forum on 25 September 2019. – Photo Credit: UN Global Compact Photo/ Chae Kihn for J.S. Photo



UN DESA Assistant Secretary-General Maria Francesca Spatolisano (centre) consults with UN DESA staff member, Lotta Tahtinen, in preparation for the opening of the Local and Regional Governments' Forum on 24 September 2019. Photo Credit: UCLG-CGLU/Ege Okal for Joel Sheakoski Photography

virtual event, in collaboration with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, during the 2020 HLPF session. The event served to facilitate dialogue with business practitioners around navigating business risks and opportunities in a post-COVID world to recover better within the framework of SDGs.

Supporting the role of local governments in implementing the SDGs

In recognition of the critical role of local governments in implementing the SDGs, UN DESA co-organized the Forum for Local and Regional Governments in connection with both the 2019 SDG Summit and the 2020 HLPF session, in July. Held in partnership with UN-Habitat, Local 2030 and United Cities and Local Governments, the events brought together hundreds of local and regional leaders and other participants to highlight their experiences with implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. UN DESA also organized a Civil Society SDG

Forum in parallel with the 2019 SDG Summit. The Forum was co-facilitated by the civil society constituencies of the HLPF Major Groups and other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism (MGoS). The Forum allowed civil society and UN Member States, international organizations, and other related constituencies to discuss the possible responses to the challenges exposed by the first four years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also outlined key strategies to move the Agenda forward.

Bringing civil society to the table

Throughout the year, UN DESA's outreach to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) facilitated their greater engagement and participation in the work of the UN. A record number of 860 applications for consultative status with ECOSOC was submitted in 2019, representing a 72 per cent increase from 2015. In 2019-2020, the UN NGO Committee recommended that over 700 NGOs be

2010 - 2019 NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS FOR CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH ECOSOC



granted consultative status. UN DESA further increased its support to the Committee on NGOs, by accelerating the processing of documentation, and strengthened its outreach to the over 5,000 NGOs currently in consultative status, through online webinars aimed at providing guidance to NGOs on their engagement with the UN.

UN DESA also continued to facilitate the active participation of NGOs in intergovernmental debates related to sustainable development, including over 1,500 NGOs in the 2019 HLPF session, in July. NGOs submitted 130 written statements on the theme *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality* and at least 40 organizations that attended the session delivered oral statements. As of 30 April 2020, the Department had received a total of 187 written submissions from NGOs (over 40 per cent increase compared to last year) for the 2020 ECOSOC High-level Segment on the theme of, *Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*.

In addition, UN DESA facilitated the participation of NGOs and other stakeholders in other high-level meetings and conferences, notably, the Second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, the

2019 SDG Summit, and the preparatory process for the 2020 UN Ocean Conference.

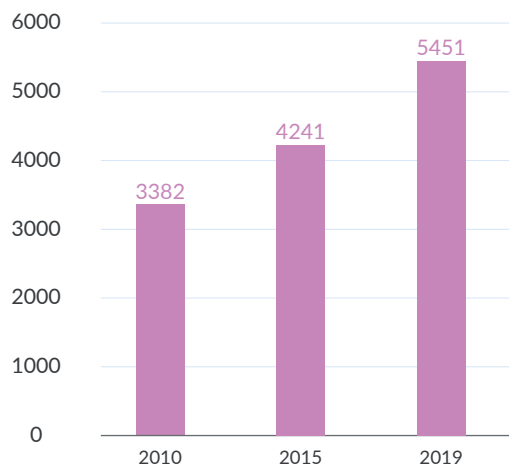
Mobilizing through the pandemic

In response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, UN DESA convened multiple virtual briefings and webinars for stakeholders, including on policy briefs prepared by the Department on the pandemic and its socioeconomic implications, as well as COVID-19 response and recovery in the framework of the 2030 Agenda through partnerships. It continued to mobilize key stakeholder constituencies, including youth, local and regional governments, and the private sector, around the preparations for the upcoming UN Ocean Conference and UN Sustainable Transport Conference through dedicated online webinars.

Strengthening capacity for effective partnerships

In 2019, UN DESA launched a new capacity-building project, 2030 Partnership Accelerator, in partnership with UN Office for Partnerships, UN Development Coordination Office, UN Global Compact and The Partnering Initiative to foster effective multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the 2030 Agenda and country-driven partnership platforms in support of SDG implementation, and to build partnership skills and competencies of all relevant stakeholders, including through national partnership workshops. UN DESA held the first national workshop of the 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2019, bringing together 40 development professionals from government, various UN entities, the private sector, academia, and civil society committed to the implementation of the SDGs in Kenya. Several Partnership Accelerator national workshops are currently in the planning phases with the UN Resident Coordinators in Samoa, Maldives, Thailand, Mexico, and Sri Lanka. UN DESA also worked with the UN Development Coordination Office and the Resident Coordinator Offices in Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Serbia, and Uzbekistan to strengthen the

NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS IN CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH ECOSOC



multi-stakeholder dimension of national development planning and SDG mainstreaming in these countries.

UN DESA also partnered with UNITAR to launch a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on strengthening stakeholder engagement for the implementation and review of the 2030 Agenda. Over 500 participants from governments and other sectors enrolled in the two editions of the course. Participants of the first edition reported a 100 per cent usefulness of the content and 86 per cent relevance for their work. In addition, the content of the course was adapted into a **Practical Guide on Stakeholder Engagement and the 2030 Agenda** which is available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#).

Developing online tools and knowledge products on partnerships and stakeholder engagement

UN DESA continued to prepare publications and analyses related to multi-stakeholder participation in 2030 Agenda implementation and partnerships, including a report on multi-stakeholder engagement in the implementation, follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda, as reflected in Voluntary National Review (VNR) Reports (2016-2019); and a new **SDG Partnerships Guidebook**.

It also supported several online tools to collect and disseminate detailed information about SDG-related actions and initiatives. UN DESA's [Partnerships for SDGs](#)

online platform includes over 5,000 partnerships and voluntary commitments from all stakeholders. It also features an online [SDG Good Practices](#) database with over 500 inspiring breakthroughs and success stories that can be replicated and scaled up. It also houses the [SDG Acceleration Actions](#) database launched in connection with the 2019 SDG Summit with over 150 new initiatives by governments and other stakeholders to drive impactful SDG action. The included database of new voluntary ocean-related commitments emanating from the 2017 UN Ocean Conference continued to see new commitments in 2019 and early 2020. The Department also continued to support the ongoing work of the nine Communities of Ocean Action that were established to follow-up on these commitments, including analysing their impact.

In collaboration with the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, UN DESA developed an innovative online tool [LinkedSDGs](#), which provides a common framework and guidelines to improve the visibility, interoperability and usability of supplementary sources of data on sustainable development, including by different stakeholders, to complement the work of national statistical offices. LinkedSDGs provides all stakeholders with open source tools to make SDG data interoperable for easier data integration, analysis and monitoring.





INVESTING IN DATA AND STATISTICS FOR THE SDGs

Svalbard Satellite Station (SvalSat), Ny Ålesund, Norway
- Photo Credit: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

At the SDG Summit in September 2019, the Secretary-General launched a Decade of Action, calling on all sectors of society to dramatically increase the pace and scale of global, local, and individual implementation efforts. These efforts require high-quality, comparable and disaggregated data to be successful.

UN DESA...

- Followed up on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration through its participation in the United Nations Network on Migration and the International Forum on Migration Statistics.
- Played an instrumental role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by launching a global online survey to monitor the impact of the coronavirus crisis on statistical agencies, as well as to identify new data needs.
- Produced the 2020 Sustainable Development Goals Report, in partnership with the UN system, highlighting progress and gaps in global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the on-going impact of COVID-19 on efforts to achieve the goals.
- Provided capacity-building support to countries to strengthen their systems to respond to the SDG data needs, enhance coordination of their national statistical systems, and improve users' engagement and data dissemination and communication.
- Identified solutions to address the need for more timely, disaggregated data by working with countries and building multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Investing in data and statistics for the SDGs

Now more than ever, high-quality, trustworthy data from strong national statistical systems are needed to inform evidence-based decision-making and measure the progress towards achieving sustainable development. The current pandemic has brought the importance of timely, trustworthy data and statistics to the forefront, and UN DESA has stepped up to support countries in their response. Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to support countries in every corner of the world to bolster their statistical capacities.



Supporting quality data and statistics for monitoring the SDGs

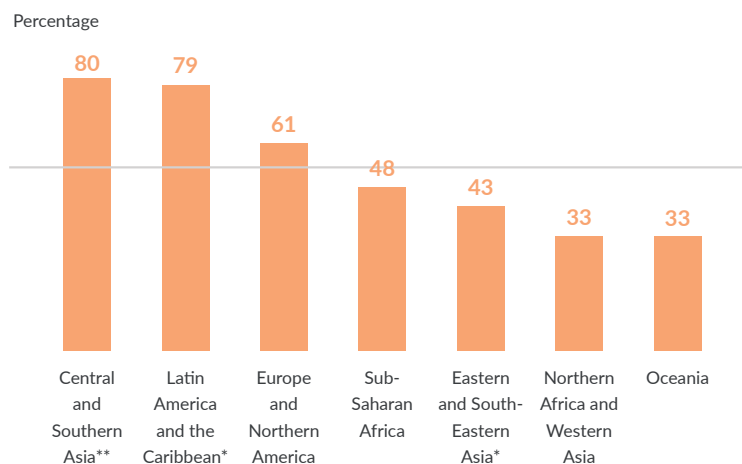
UN DESA is the custodian and central coordinator of the global SDG indicator framework and monitoring process. Data from UN DESA underpin the calculation of almost one-third of the indicators approved for use in the global monitoring of the SDGs. The Department also supports the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators which developed the global SDG indicator framework, the essential element in monitoring progress towards the SDGs. In March 2020, at the 51st Session of the Statistical Commission, Member States adopted a revised indicator framework, which gives a further boost to the SDG monitoring efforts, helping to ensure that no one is left behind. The centre piece of the SDG indicator framework and monitoring process is the annual publication of the **Sustainable Development Goals Report** and **SDG Progress Chart**. Prepared by UN DESA, in collaboration with over 200 experts from around 40 agencies, funds and programmes, the 2020 report underscores the urgency to accelerate efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UN DESA also works to build and strengthen national capacities to estimate and analyse population levels and trends and other demographic indicators, for use in formulating and implementing national policies and programmes related to population and development. In June 2019, the Department published the latest revision of the biennial **World Population Prospects**, with estimates and projections of demographic

trends for 235 countries and areas of the world. The **World Population Prospects - Highlights** report offers a roadmap indicating where to target action and interventions for sustainable development, emphasizing that many of the fastest growing populations are in the poorest countries, where population growth brings additional challenges in the effort to eradicate poverty, achieve greater equality, combat hunger and malnutrition and strengthen the coverage and quality of health and education systems to ensure that no one is left behind.

UN DESA also developed the methodology for global monitoring of SDG indicator 10.7.2, which assesses country-level migration policies, and released the data on the indicator in late 2019. That year, 54 per cent of countries with available data reported having a wide range of policy measures to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.

PERCENTAGE OF GOVERNMENTS REPORTING POLICIES THAT MEET OR FULLY MEET THE CRITERIA FOR SDG INDICATOR 10.7.2 BY REGION, 2019



Source: United Nations and International Organization for Migration (2019). SDG indicator 10.7.2: Global and regional aggregates.

Available at: www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/theme/sdg/index_10_7_2.asp.

COVID-19 rapid response and data hubs

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, further heightened the need for timely and accurate real-time data for guiding decision making amidst a global emergency. UN DESA launched a global network of UN COVID-19 Data Hubs and a COVID-19 resources portal for national statistical offices. This rapid response has been of welcome



“The data provided by the [UN DESA] Population Division, starting with the World Population Prospects, are now the de facto standard for measures of world population and fertility and mortality rates. These data are indispensable for those working hard to monitor the SDG indicators.”

~Statement from Japan at the Commission for Population and Development 2019



IN FOCUS

UN DESA's **World Fertility and Family Planning 2020: Highlights**, analyses the data sets used for monitoring progress on SDG indicator 3.7.1. It presents trends in contraceptive use and fertility, as well as insights into the relationship between contraceptive use and fertility at the global, regional and national levels for women of reproductive age. The data indicates that there is an inverse relationship between contraceptive use and the fertility level, which can be observed in cross-national data for both 1990 and 2020.

assistance to Member States. UN DESA is supporting national statistical offices, in collaboration with partners from the private sector and civil society, in joining a federated network of national COVID-19 data hubs. The initiative enables the sharing and use of high-quality, geo-referenced data from multiple sources to monitor the spread of COVID-19, helping to inform policies to mitigate the pandemic and lessen the impact of the disease on people's lives.

In addition, UN DESA is hosting a collaborative website for the global statistical community to share guidance, actions, tools, and best practices to ensure the operational continuity of data programmes by national statistical offices. The [hub](#) also helps to address issues of open and timely access to critical data needed by governments and all sectors of society to respond to the global COVID-19 crisis.

The Department also worked with the World Bank's Development Data Group and, in coordination with the five UN regional commissions, launched a global online survey to monitor the nature, scale, and scope of the impact of the coronavirus crisis on statistical agencies, as well as to identify new data needs. The survey was designed to inform the global statistical community on how to better respond to the immediate needs of countries facing the most urgent challenges and plan a coordinated effort to navigate through the crisis and its impact over the next few months. The key findings include:

- The COVID-19 pandemic is worsening global data inequalities.
- The global statistical community and donors must urgently provide technical assistance and financial resources to the national statistical offices most in need of support.
- The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the digital revolution.

Monitoring the economic measures for sustainable development

UN DESA, working in partnership with countries and international agencies, is supporting the development of new economic measures for sustainable development. This research in new economic measures is part of the revision of international macroeconomic, classifications and related statistical standards by 2025, under the governance of the Statistical Commission. The Department is drafting guidance notes on the role of multinational enterprises in the global value chain and accounts for the digital economy, distribution of income, consumption and wealth, environment, education, health, labour, and unpaid household work. Furthermore, research has been initiated on the broader measurement framework for the System of National Accounts (SNA), which integrates these new accounts for the purpose of providing statistical guidance on the broader measures of progress related to human and natural capital in addition to physical capital.

Providing data and evidence for safe, orderly, and regular migration

In addition to its work on migration-related SDG indicators, UN DESA is part of an eight-member Executive Committee charged with making decisions on behalf of the United Nations Network on Migration, which seeks to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to Member States in their follow-up of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration adopted in 2018. The UN Migration Network contributed to the Secretary-General's policy brief on COVID-19 and people on the move, which argued that migrants, especially those in precarious situations, are hard hit by the pandemic due to border closures, falling remittances and rising xenophobia, racism and stigmatization. In particular, UN DESA is leading the revision of recommendations on statistics of international migration including statistical concepts, definitions and methods to support countries'

efforts to respond to new migration data requirements for the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration.

UN DESA also collaborated with IOM and OECD in organizing the second International Forum on Migration Statistics, held in Cairo, Egypt, in January 2020. More than 700 participants from 99 countries made the Forum the largest event on migration statistics and migration data ever. The Forum sought to mobilize expertise from a wide range of disciplines, including statistics, economics, demography, sociology, geospatial science, and information technology, to improve the collection and analysis of migration data worldwide.

Partnering with Member States to develop national statistical capacities

UN DESA works together with international and national organizations to strengthen data and statistical capacity of countries to meet the data demand for the implementation of the SDGs. This work is guided by intergovernmental agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To support this work, UN DESA also produced handbooks and guidelines on methodological issues, organized regional and in-country workshops, and conducted field missions.

Led by UN DESA, the Development Account 10th Tranche on Statistics and Data brings together 10 entities from across the UN Secretariat to share their technical capacities and strengths and to support developing countries in building their capacity to accurately and reliably monitor their progress towards achieving the sustainable development goals for evidence-based policymaking. By the end of 2019, the Programme had already delivered more than 460 specific outputs targeting 130 developing countries in all regions of the world. Implementing agencies are the five UN Regional Commissions, UN-Habitat, UNCTAD, UN Environment, UNODC and UN DESA. Additional development partners

include the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF and the European Union.

UN DESA has also been working to support countries in Africa and Asia to improve the availability and level of disaggregation of data on national SDG indicators, and to establish national SDG data and metadata platforms for their dissemination. This project has also supported improved cooperation and coordination in the production and use of SDG data and statistics for policy and decision-making at the national level and improved international comparability and dissemination of nationally produced SDG indicator data. Most of the project countries have standardized their SDG data and shared them with UN DESA, using the global SDMX standard. Most have in place SDG user engagement strategies and have started implementing activities, and around half have already published their national SDG platforms.

Ensuring that everyone counts

In 2020, UN DESA statistical capacity development activities have also had a special focus on assessing and supporting the implementation of the 2020 Round of the World Population and Housing Census Programme, as the world approaches the mid-point of the round of censuses that started in 2015 and will run until 2024. This assessment has become even more critical in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively impacted the capacity of many countries to conduct a population and housing census, or otherwise produce small area census statistics, at least once in the period 2015-2024.

Providing methodological guidance

To support Member States in producing internationally comparable, high-quality data and statistics for sustainable development, UN DESA also provide methodological guidance for the development and implementation of internationally agreed statistical standards, methods, classifications and definitions.



Caribbean Thematic Conference (25 – 27 November 2019, Christ Church, Barbados) Photo Credit: Barbados Statistical Services



Asian Thematic Conference (12-14 February, Manila, Philippines) Photo Credit: The Philippines Statistics Authority



Participants in an SDG metadata workshop in Uganda. Photo Credit: UN DESA



Ms. Nazira Kerimalieva of the National Statistical System in Kyrgyzstan shares her views during a user engagement workshop Photo Credit: UN DESA

UN DESA released the **United Nations National Quality Assurance Frameworks Manual for Official Statistics** and developed a self-assessment checklist, both of which formed the basis of multiple regional workshops to support and bolster quality assurance activities in many countries and regions. The Manual addresses especially the quality assurance for new data sources and for SDG indicator data and statistics and contains the international recommendations for quality assurance for official statistics.

Endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2020, UN DESA developed a conceptual framework to modernize time-use surveys, including a Minimum Harmonized Instrument for the collection of time-use data, which provides methodological guidance on the collection of time-use data to inform and monitor policies on unpaid work, non-market production, well-being and gender equality. The Instrument provides countries with an option to collect time-use data at a lower cost with increased frequency.

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) adopted the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF) to address the need for a globally consistent mechanism for enabling the integration of statistical and geospatial information. The Statistical Commission endorsed the framework in its 2020 session. The first global framework to be adopted by both intergovernmental bodies on statistics and geospatial information, the GSGF provides guidance on how to integrate data from both statistical and geospatial communities.


Driving data innovation

UN DESA is collaborating with local, national and global partners from intergovernmental organizations, academia, civil society and the private sector, in order to leverage

innovative sources, technologies and methods for production and dissemination of better, more timely and disaggregated data for sustainable development. These efforts, focused on mainstreaming of data innovations into official statistical production processes, are helping countries leverage the full potential of geospatial information, big data and other non-traditional data sources, in order to improve the timeliness, coverage, and quality of SDG data through collaboration, partnerships and capacity development.

The UN Global Platform, a cloud-based collaborative environment on data innovation for the global statistical community, enables the sharing of new global data solutions sources, methods and technology. In 2020, during the pandemic, satellite imagery and machine learning were used on this platform to develop estimation methods for crop statistics in Senegal, while training the Senegalese staff at the same time; and state-of-the-art .Stat Suite technology was implemented for cloud-based hosting and dissemination of Cambodia's national statistics. UN DESA established Memorandums of Understanding with regional hubs of the UN Global Platform in China, Rwanda, and the United Arab Emirates, which will provide training opportunities and help accelerate data innovation at the regional level.

UN DESA also worked with partners to launch the Data4Now initiative, in September 2019. Data4Now aims to make innovative methods and data solutions easily accessible to countries to support progress towards the SDGs, including for monitoring progress. It mobilizes and establishes partnerships between country statistical systems and the private sector, international organizations, and donors. Through multi-stakeholder partnerships the initiative aims to mainstream innovations in data production and analysis easily accessible to support progress towards the SDGs.



ADVANCING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Over the course of the year, UN DESA continued to advance the global discourse on sustainable development, reacting swiftly to the unprecedented situation the world faces due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UN DESA...

- Drove a multi-year process to prepare the first quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report, launched in September 2019.
- Provided a comprehensive assessment of the macroeconomic consequences of emerging trends, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Produced high-quality publications with hard hitting findings and recommendations for advancing social and economic development.
- Launched a dedicated series of policy briefs and webinars and published a Sustainable Development Outlook on the impacts of COVID-19 and policy options for recovering better.
- Supported leading development experts of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs and the UN Committee for Development Policy in providing innovative policy advice to the UN system.

Advancing thought leadership for sustainable development

In a period marred by a global pandemic and its broad social and economic impacts, UN DESA continued to guide the narrative, using timely, principled and authoritative information to highlight solutions and solidarity, and offer sound avenues for response and recovery. UN DESA continued to set the tone of the global conversation on social and economic issues through its cutting-edge analytical products, policy advice and capacity development.



IN FOCUS

WESP Mid-Year Update

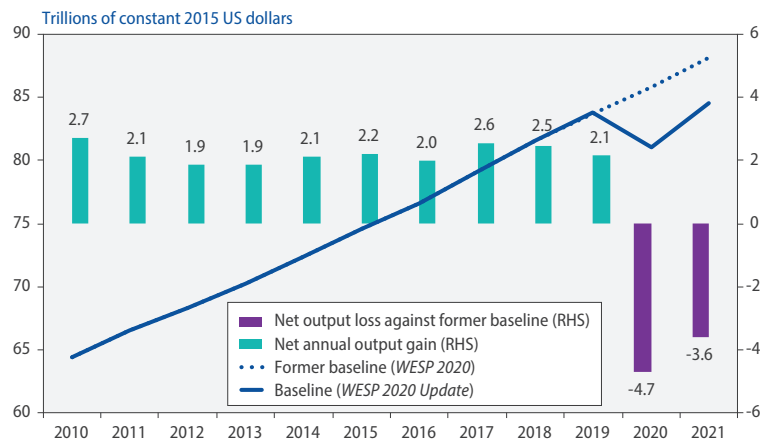
The mid-year update of the WESP report saw major media coverage:

- 2,000 articles
- 1,100 social media posts with a cumulative potential reach of over 123 million
- Close to 6,000 engagements on social media.

Bringing the future into focus

UN DESA's work on tracking and forecasting development trends received heightened attention in 2020. The **World Economic Situation and Prospects** (WESP) played a critical role in informing the global dialogue on economic development, including in the context of the World Economic Forum. The WESP mid-year update presented a comprehensive assessment of the macroeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for the world economy as well as its implications for sustainable development in general. It found that the pandemic has unleashed a health and economic crisis unprecedented in scope and magnitude, with global growth projected to contract by -3.2% in 2020.

WORLD GROSS PRODUCT, LEVEL AND ANNUAL CHANGES, 2010–2021



The world economy is expected to lose nearly \$8.5 trillion in output in 2020 and 2021, wiping out much of the output gains of the previous five years. The report also underscores the imperative for countries to recover better, aligning their pandemic response with the objectives and priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. As of early June, the WESP 2020 and its mid-year update had together registered 26,058 downloads from UN DESA sites. The report and its mid-year update were mentioned around 3,000 times by the global media, including the Associated Press, Reuters, EFE, The New York Times, The Washington Post, France24, RT, Xinhua and NDTV.

The first in a new series, the **World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World** also helped inform global dialogue on persistent challenges posed by inequality and other social divides. The report, released in January 2020 was taken up by over 40 prestigious media outlets around the world, as it revealed the deep divides that persist within and across countries despite an era of extraordinary economic growth and widespread improvements in living standards.

The report found that powerful economic, social and environmental forces, including climate change, technological innovation, urbanization and international migration, are affecting inequality trends, and recommended that countries redouble their efforts to achieve SDG 10 on reducing inequality. It sends a clear message that the future course of these complex challenges is not set. They can be harnessed for a more equitable and sustainable world, or they can be left to further divide us. The report received global media attention and sparked an intense debate on inequality in diverse circles – from an in-depth economy column in the Washington Post to the opening of a movie critique in Forbes.

Helping Member States recover better: Addressing COVID-19 response and sustainable recovery

In its immediate response to the COVID-19 crisis, UN DESA undertook research and analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. Published as a series of policy briefs, UN DESA drew on its analysis to provide policy recommendations to address the crisis and steer towards a sustainable recovery. Since the launch of the series on 1 April 2020, the Department published 23 concise and focused briefs, covering a wide range of both sectoral and cross-cutting sustainable development issues,



"It gave me the interrelatedness of the social and the economic, how a social problem of COVID-19 has gotten itself interwoven with the other facts of human society. The economic effects of this pandemic are worldwide and therefore one needs to look at it with a wider perspective, broadened view."

(University student from Zimbabwe commenting on UN DESA webinar)



“My role as Senior Programs [Officer] involves designing and providing technical and managerial support to a portfolio of projects in country and within the region. So, the learning was very helpful designing the country-level COVID-19 contingency plan.” (Civil society organization member from Uganda commenting on UN DESA webinar)

often with a focus on the most vulnerable countries and populations. Jointly, they provided timely analyses of the challenges posed by the unprecedented crisis as well as policy guidance to ensure that sustainable development goals remains in reach during the post-crisis decade. UN DESA's new COVID-19 portal quickly became one of the Department's most visited web pages, with 17,896 visits in the second quarter. The featured policy briefs were downloaded a combined 237,729 times from 1 April through 30 June 2020.

To strengthen its outreach to a wider audience and further inform the policy briefs' key findings and recommendations in responding to the pandemic, UN DESA launched on 9 April 2020 its first webinar on the economic, social and financial impact of COVID-19, as part of the **UN DESA Webinar Series**. The session was attended by close to 9,000 viewers from over 160 countries, with an estimated social media reach of over 34,000 people. The Department continued to inform and engage with the participants through its virtual platform on other urgent issues, including strengthening science and technology, addressing inequalities, harnessing climate and SDG synergies, and integrating the 2030 Agenda into response and recovery plans. A total of 16 webinars so far have been viewed almost 65,000 times.

As part of its efforts to help Member States respond to the COVID-19 pandemic UN DESA also brought together the analytical insights provided by the esteemed members of the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB) and published the HLAB's edited volume in July 2020. Convened by the Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA, the Advisory Board is a group of former Heads of State, senior Government officials, a Nobel Laureate and other eminent experts on economic and social policies. The publication, "Recover Better: Economic and Social Challenges and Opportunities," is the outcome of the two-year term of the HLAB and provides important inputs to inform and advise the UN on critical social and economic issues. It discusses a wide set of development issues that are central to the work of UN DESA and the broader UN system, covering global economic development, inclusive growth, economic structure evolution, climate change, frontier technologies, financing for sustainable development, and multilateralism, among others. Nearly 800 people registered for the 22 July WebEx event, representing at least 75 countries from Africa, Asia, Australia, the Caribbean, Europe, North America and South America. In its first week, the video of the event was seen by about 2,000 users on UN WebTV, and an additional 1,400 on YouTube, 2,300 on Facebook and more than 10,000 on Twitter. Separately, the video reached almost 22,000 of UN DESA's Facebook followers, earning good engagement with 326 reactions.

UN DESA's work also supported the plenary session of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) in February 2020. In its contribution to the HLPF Ministerial Declaration and in a dedicated document, the CDP focused on implications of the COVID-19 crisis, highlighting the need to put the SDGs first and foremost to build equal, green and resilient societies and economies. It made concrete proposals for how multilateral responses could address the health crisis, stem the economic impacts and accelerate achievement of the SDGs, and called for an inclusive process to reform multilateral rules and institutions.

Strengthening the science-policy interface

UN DESA drove a multi-year process to prepare the first quadrennial **Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)**, one of the two reports mandated to inform the follow-up and review process of the 2030



Agenda. A Secretary-General-appointed group of 15 independent scientists authored the Report, supported by a task team of UN-system entities led by UN DESA and including UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO and the World Bank. UN DESA provided research and drafting support, including managing the external peer review. An online call for inputs garnered more than 300 contributions from across the world. The report launched in September 2019.

The report identifies six entry points where specific actions aimed to mitigate trade-offs and catalyse synergies can bring about the transformative change needed to reach the SDGs. The report quickly gained strong online presence, with #GSDR generating more than 12.5 million impressions on Twitter on its launch day. The six 'entry points' presented in the report informed the politically

negotiated outcome document from the SDG Summit and its call for a 'decade of action and delivery'. Since the launch, UN DESA has continued, with the support of partners, to amplify the messages of the Report both on and offline. These messages continue to inform SDG implementation and review processes, including through dedicated sessions in the HLPF programme for 2020.

UN DESA has continued to support the important work of the ECOSOC High-level Segment, in its focus on future trends and scenarios. To support the discussions in the 2020 Segment UN DESA prepared a report on Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. UN DESA's report on Long-term future trends and scenarios-impacts in the economic, social and environmental

A panel of independent scientists authored the GSDR, with support from a UN DESA-led UN-System Task Team. – Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Eskinder Debebe



areas on the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals further served to inform the Segment's deliberations on the future of the SDGs following the COVID-19 crisis. UN DESA's **Sustainable Development Outlook** (SDO) further helped to inform Member States deliberations. In July 2020 the SDO addressed the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the sustainable development agenda and on the prospects for achieving the 17 SDGs. The 2020 edition of the report offered a forward-looking, scenario-based analysis of policy options for responding to the crisis, and presented their likely outcomes, supporting Member State efforts to recover better.

Support to the UN development system reform

In 2020, UN DESA continued to support Member States to forge ahead with efforts to reposition the UN development system (UNDS) and provide strategic direction on operational activities for development, an even more pressing topic in light of COVID-19. The Department surveyed Programme Country Governments, Resident Coordinators, Operation Management Teams and UN Agency Headquarters. An analysis of the robust evidence collected was presented to Member States in the annual Secretary-General's report on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR). The report provides a comprehensive update on progress in implementing Member States' policy guidance on the QCPR, currently set out in the 2016 GA resolution on the QCPR and 2018 GA resolution on repositioning the UNDS. A detailed funding analysis and a monitoring framework with over 165 indicators accompany the report.

The Department supported the Vice-President of ECOSOC in organizing the ECOSOC's Operational Activities Segment, where the Secretary-General presented his report on the QCPR to the membership. This year's Segment was particularly critical as it paved the way for finalising the remaining mandates of the repositioning efforts, on the review of regional assets and multi-country offices, and the upcoming 2020 GA resolution on the QCPR. In addition, UN DESA is helping delegates to prepare for the 2020 GA resolution on the QCPR through a training series hosted in collaboration with the Government of Switzerland and UNITAR.

Exploring options for inclusive economies

Throughout the year, UN DESA has convened regular meetings of the United Nations Economists Network (UNEN), with participation from the



IN FOCUS

Survey on operational activities for development

- Over 30,000 datapoints
- 117 Programme Country Governments
- 116 Resident Coordinators
- 116 Operational Management Teams
- 30 Agency Headquarters.
- 81% of LDCs (38 out of 47), 88% of LLDCs (28 out of 32) and 71% of SIDS (27 out of 38) responded to the survey of Programme Country Governments.



"This survey is helpful, it strengthens the partnership between government and UN agencies, and it allows them to evaluate their activities and improve on their mistakes."

~ Programme Country Government
Survey respondent

five UN Regional Economic Commissions, UNDP, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, ILO, FAO, UNU and others. The Network has two objectives: to facilitate the collaboration and joint work among agencies on issues of shared interest and relevance to the sustainable development agenda; and to provide a network of support on economic, financial and social policy issues to the UN Country Teams and the Resident Coordinator Offices. To advance on these objectives, the UNEN prepared a joint report for the 75th anniversary of the UN. The report examines how efforts must be reinforced and redirected to ensure that we achieve the full measure of the Sustainable Development Agenda and set the stage for an inclusive, sustainable and equitable future during the next 75 years. It does so through a focus on five megatrends that are shaping our reality: climate change; demographic developments,

particularly the “ageing” of populations; the emergence of digital technologies as the major feature of the Fourth Industrial Revolution; urbanization; and inequalities. The report includes a brief analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the megatrends. The executive summary identifies a range of policies and interventions that could be effective in shifting the evolution of the megatrends and establishing the principles that should guide the choice of policies in countries. The UNEN is also discussing how best to leverage existing and new networks of experts to assist the UN Country Teams and to directly support in-country activities.

Providing support to the new resident coordinator system and the new generation of United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs)

UN DESA identified the Common Country Assessments

Capture of QCPR UNITAR Training Session in 2020 – Photo Credit: UN DESA



(CCAs) as a key entry point to contribute to the UNCTs' support to national governments in the implementation of their sustainable development plans. The engagement in the preparation of the CCAs will ensure that UN DESA's support is aligned with the priorities of governments and work programmes of the resident coordinators. Accordingly, the support to the new generation of CCAs has become a priority for the whole department. The Department started providing analysis on regional economic situation, national macroeconomic and structural transformation, debt management and fiscal issues, in six pilot countries, with

a view to expanding it to more countries in the coming years. UN DESA also led an inter-agency team to prepare a thought piece on economic transformation. The objective is to equip the resident coordinators and UN country teams with sufficient capacities to elaborate their own analysis and advise governments on relevant economic issues. The Department has built on the analytical tools and products already at its disposal, including its economic forecasting model and the CDP framework for expanding productive capacities in LDCs, to develop country specific policy guidance.

HARNESsing SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In 2019-2020, UN DESA continued its leadership in harnessing science, technology and innovation for sustainable development and governance.

UN DESA...

- Coordinated across more than forty UN system entities for joint analysis and capacity building around science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI for the SDGs).
- Mobilized record participation at the Internet Governance Forum for community-shaped messages and best practice dissemination around issues such as cybersecurity and digital inclusion.
- Analysed the implications of COVID-19 for science-policy advisory systems and showcased technology solutions to the pandemic.
- Focused the biennial United Nations E-Government Survey on local governments and on use of digital instruments by national governments to respond to the pandemic.
- Strengthened multi-faceted and multi-stakeholder analysis and dissemination of impacts of emerging/frontier technologies on sustainable development.

Secretary-General Opens Internet Governance Forum
- Photo Credit: UN Photo/Tobias Hofsäss

Harnessing science, technology and innovation for sustainable development

UN DESA plays a global leadership role in advancing cooperation at the science-policy-society interface, and in multi-stakeholder engagement on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs, areas of work established through the Rio+20 conference and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This on-going engagement across multiple entities, disciplines and stakeholders, aimed at enhancing trust and capacity in STI, is proving particularly valuable during the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic.

Mobilizing multi-stakeholder collaboration on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs

UN DESA, together with UNCTAD, brings together 44 entities across the UN system to advance STI for SDGs through the United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (IATT). The Task Team prepares regularly updated briefs on the impact of emerging technologies on the SDGs, including ethical and normative issues, and provides guidance to countries for developing STI roadmaps for the SDGs.

While the annual multi-stakeholder STI Forum was deferred due to COVID-19, webinars, virtual expert dialogues and surveys have engaged various stakeholders from across the world. In 2020 an innovation challenge competition attracted several hundred applicants with winners featured in an online exhibition. Developed in partnership with the Global Innovation Exchange, the challenge featured innovations that emphasize concrete action and transformative results, particularly through one or more of the six entry points for transformation identified in the **Global Sustainable Development Report**. In addition, an expert dialogue in February 2020 highlighted new areas for science-policy-society collaboration such as norms for open science, fighting misinformation, building

public trust and ensuring universal access to global public goods such as vaccines.

In response to the urgent need for policy and good practices for addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN DESA leveraged its analytical capacity to produce a policy brief on the science-policy-society interface in COVID-19 response. A weekly blog series, *Dispatches from the field*, featuring UN DESA-affiliated scientists and experts, further showcased technology-based strategies for combatting COVID-19. Webinars and virtual expert dialogues continued to mobilize stakeholders to identify collaborative STI solutions for the SDGs. Key recommendations and commitments developed through these initiatives and consultations were presented at the 2020 High-level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2020 and other high-level UN conferences.

Supporting global cooperation on internet governance

More than 3,500 in-person and 3,000 online delegates came together at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF), hosted by the Government of Germany in Berlin, in November 2019. Participants included a record number of national parliamentarians



UN Secretary-General and German Chancellor at the IGF 2019 Opening Ceremony. - Photo Credit: UN Photo/Tobias Hofsäss

and delegates from the Global South. Convened under the theme, *One World. One Net. One Vision*, the IGF provided a multi-stakeholder platform for exchanging good practices and discussing issues around digital policy. The event saw the UN Secretary-General and the German Chancellor both call for the Internet to be used as a global commons, while respecting human rights and guaranteeing inclusion. The meeting resulted in community-shaped messages on cybersecurity, data governance and digital Inclusion, as well as output documents outlining best practices on cybersecurity, gender and access, local content, big data, Internet of Things and artificial intelligence. As Secretariat of the IGF, UN DESA has begun preparations for the 15th annual IGF meeting to be held in 2020. Inputs are being received for each of its four thematic tracks: data, environment, inclusion and trust. The Forum will explore practices to foster participation of vulnerable groups, including women and youth.

Assessing e-government for sustainable development

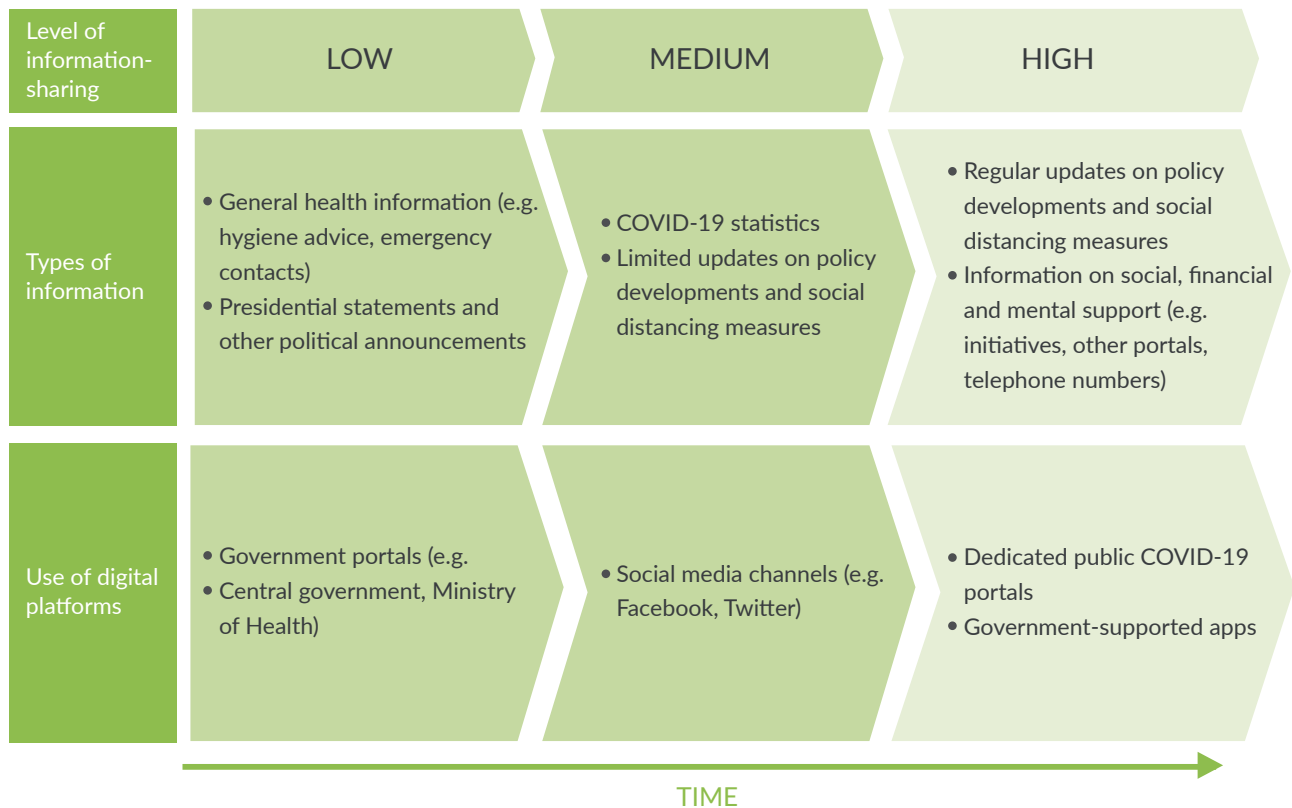
The biennial **United Nations E-Government Survey** presents a systematic data-driven assessment of digitalization in transforming the public sector by enhancing its efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, inclusiveness, trustworthiness and supporting people's participation and engagement. By collecting primary survey data and studying broad patterns of e-government around the world, the Survey comparatively ranks the e-government development status of the 193 United Nations Member States. The 2020 edition of the Survey analyses the increasingly central role of e-government in connection to the everyday lives of people, focusing particularly on local governments' services, e-participation and the generation and use of data in e-government. It examines digital government trends globally and regionally, and with respect to capacity development and digital transformation.



An Addendum provides a timely analysis of the digital responses of countries to the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, governments increased their level of information-sharing as the pandemic progressed in their countries, including through using more social media channels to report on COVID-19 statistics, national policy updates and information on where people can receive social, financial or mental health support.

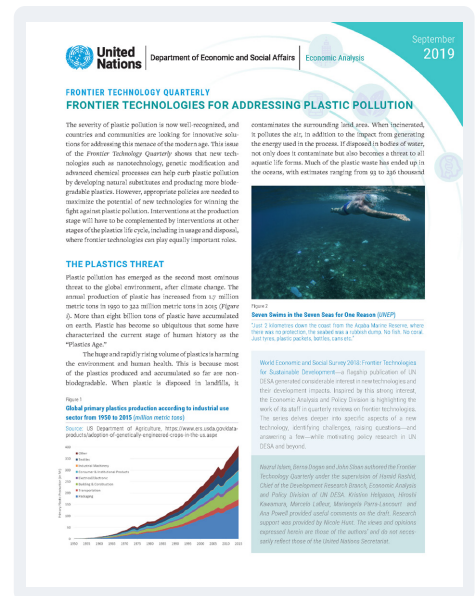
Capacity-building activities have built on the findings of the E-Government Survey. For example, the Development Account project on “Evidence-based e-government policies for advancing governmental service delivery and accountability in support of the Sustainable Development Goals” was implemented in LDCs to enable governments to grow and leverage their e-government capacity. The project supported initiatives such as Bangladesh’s Access to Information (a2i) initiative, and Ethiopia’s reform of its ICT Ministry into the Ministry of Innovation and Technology.

INCREASING E-GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SHARING DURING COVID-19



Reviewing frontier technologies

UN DESA's quarterly review of frontier technologies examines the implications of frontier technologies for sustainable development. The quarterly review has covered a rich range of topics, including exploring how technologies such as nanotechnology and genetic modification can help deal with plastic pollution, and how the rapidly expanding sharing economy shows little signs of delivering fair and equitable welfare gains. These reviews stimulate broader discussions to help guide effective, evidence-based policymaking, and inform contributions to other workstreams and interagency efforts across the UN system, including the **2020 Financing for Sustainable Development Report** and the UN Economists' Network (UNEN) 75th Anniversary Report on megatrends.



CLIMATE ACTION

The COVID-19 pandemic represents the biggest shock faced by the world in decades. Yet, over the long term, climate change portends even more devastating impacts. UN DESA continues to advocate for urgent efforts for sustainable development that go hand-in-hand with climate action in a way that leaves no one behind.

UN DESA...

- Showcased the important and intricate links between climate action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the SDG Pavilion during COP 25.
- Supported the development of a new 10-year vision for the revitalized UN-Energy in support of the SDG Decade of Action and the Paris Agreement.
- Helped countries to develop their capacity in monitoring progress towards sustainable forest management and in mobilizing forest financing.
- Continued to lead the support to UN Member States in the implementation of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028.
- Continued coordinating and collaborating with the nine thematic multi-stakeholder Communities of Ocean Action (COAs).

*Daffodils starting to grow with Spring arriving
– Photo Credit: UN Photo/Mark Garten*

Climate action

2020 was meant to be a landmark year for climate action and the SDGs. While ushering in a decade of ambitious action to deliver the SDGs by 2030, governments were also preparing to enhance their climate ambitions through updated nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the deepening of inequities it has left in its wake, have heightened the urgency of effectively mitigating the climate crisis. The 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement can serve as a compass to help policy makers meet urgent needs while aligning short-term solutions to medium and long-term climate and sustainable development objectives. UN DESA is moving the needle forward for harnessing synergies across development and climate action.



USG Liu Zhenmin delivers remarks at an event at UN DESA's SDG Pavilion at COP25 in Madrid. - Photo Credit: UN DESA/Isabel Raya

Harnessing climate and SDGs synergies

UN DESA showcased the interlinkages between climate action and sustainable development at the 25th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25), held in Madrid, Spain, in December 2019. At its SDG Pavilion, the

Department featured more than 50 events, over 200 panellists and close to 1,000 participants.

Among the events were a series of capacity building workshops on water and energy interlinkages at COP25, organized together with Itaipu Binacional, a global leader in hydropower generation. The workshops featured case



Participants listen and participate in sessions at UN DESA's SDG Pavilion at COP 25 in Madrid. - Photo Credit: UN DESA/Isabel Raya.



UN DESA team at COP25 – Photo Credit: UN DESA/Division for Sustainable Development Goals

studies illustrating how specific actions, projects and programmes around hydropower are moving the SDGs and climate action forward on multiple dimensions.

In follow-up to the launch of the Health and Energy Platform of Action (HEPA), at the Climate Action Summit in September 2019, UN DESA, together with HEPA partners, WHO, the UNDP and the World Bank, organized a high-level event at the SDG Pavilion at COP25. Outcomes of the event highlighted the need for political and financial commitments, enhanced multi-sectoral actions, increased attention to the climate opportunities from clean cooking, as well as the importance of making available affordable clean cooking that meets the needs of billions of

households around the world. HEPA aims to help countries strengthen operation between the health and energy sectors.

As global priorities quickly shifted toward curbing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and shaping an effective recovery, UN DESA, in collaboration with UNFCCC, hosted a three-part virtual conference, Harnessing Climate & SDGs Synergies to Recover Better and Stronger from the COVID-19 Pandemic, in May and June 2020. Hundreds of experts and practitioners joined to learn how countries and stakeholders are advancing synergetic implementation of climate action and SDGs in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Supporting clean energy transitions with universal energy access

UN DESA supported intergovernmental processes in the areas of energy to support UN General Assembly committees, the HLPF and the implementation of the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All 2014-2024. As the Secretariat of UN-Energy, UN DESA supported the development of a new 10-year vision for the revitalized UN-Energy in support of the SDG Decade of Action and the Paris Agreement, by providing interagency coordination and support to its Co-Chairs, Achim Steiner, the Administrator of UNDP and Damilola Ogunbiyi, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All. The Department has also begun the preparations for the High-Level Dialogue on Energy to

be held in 2021, with the Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA serving as the Dialogue Secretary-General and the UN-Energy Co-Chairs acting as the Dialogue Co-Chairs.

Convened by UN DESA, the more than 40-member multi-stakeholder SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group delivered a series of policy briefs on Accelerating SDG 7 achievement in the time of COVID-19 to inform intergovernmental discussions on universal access and clean energy transitions. UN DESA also co-developed the **Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report 2020**. Prepared in partnership with other global custodians for SDG7 indicators, the report presents comprehensive coverage and in-depth analysis of over 180 countries of their progress toward universal energy access and clean energy solutions.

Energy Transition: Leaving No One Behind – Taking Action, Climate Action Summit 2019 – Photo Credit: UN DESA/Predrag Vasic





Baby Birds in Nest – Photo Credit: UN DESA Forest Photo Competition/ Prasetyo Nurramdhan

Promoting global sustainable transport

The UN Sustainable Transport Conference, originally scheduled for 5-7 May 2020 in Beijing, was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. UN DESA, led by its Under-Secretary-General as the Conference Secretary-General, continued to mobilize all stakeholders and strengthen thought leadership to promote sustainable transport, including through inter-agency report analyses, webinars and discussions in related fora.

Promoting forests' contributions to global sustainable development

UN DESA continues to lead global efforts in support of the international forest policy dialogue, helping countries to develop their capacity in monitoring progress towards

sustainable forest management and in mobilizing forest financing. The Department's work on forests directly supports the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 and the UN Forest Instrument and is guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global agreements.

The Department campaigned on the International Day of Forests (21 March), by promoting the importance of forests and biodiversity as its central theme. The campaign hashtag #IntlForestDay was featured in over 17,000 tweets by 11,000 contributors during the International Day, with 163 million timeline deliveries, and over 82 million accounts reached, according to estimates.

UN DESA coordinated a system-wide vision among 15



Forest cover in India – Photo Credit: UN DESA /Mita Sen

international forest-related organizations and conventions on advancing coherent implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests. In January 2020, heads and principals of fifteen members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests agreed on the Strategic Vision Towards 2030, with specific objective and strategic priorities to implement UNSPF, its Global Forest Goals, and as well as other major forest-related commitments by 2030. Specific steps were also taken to operationalize the first phase of the clearing house of the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network to provide information on the opportunities for financing sustainable forest management, facilitate access to related data and information, and to assess the progress towards target 15.b of SDG15, which calls for financing and incentivizing sustainable forest management, and

supporting developing countries in implementation.

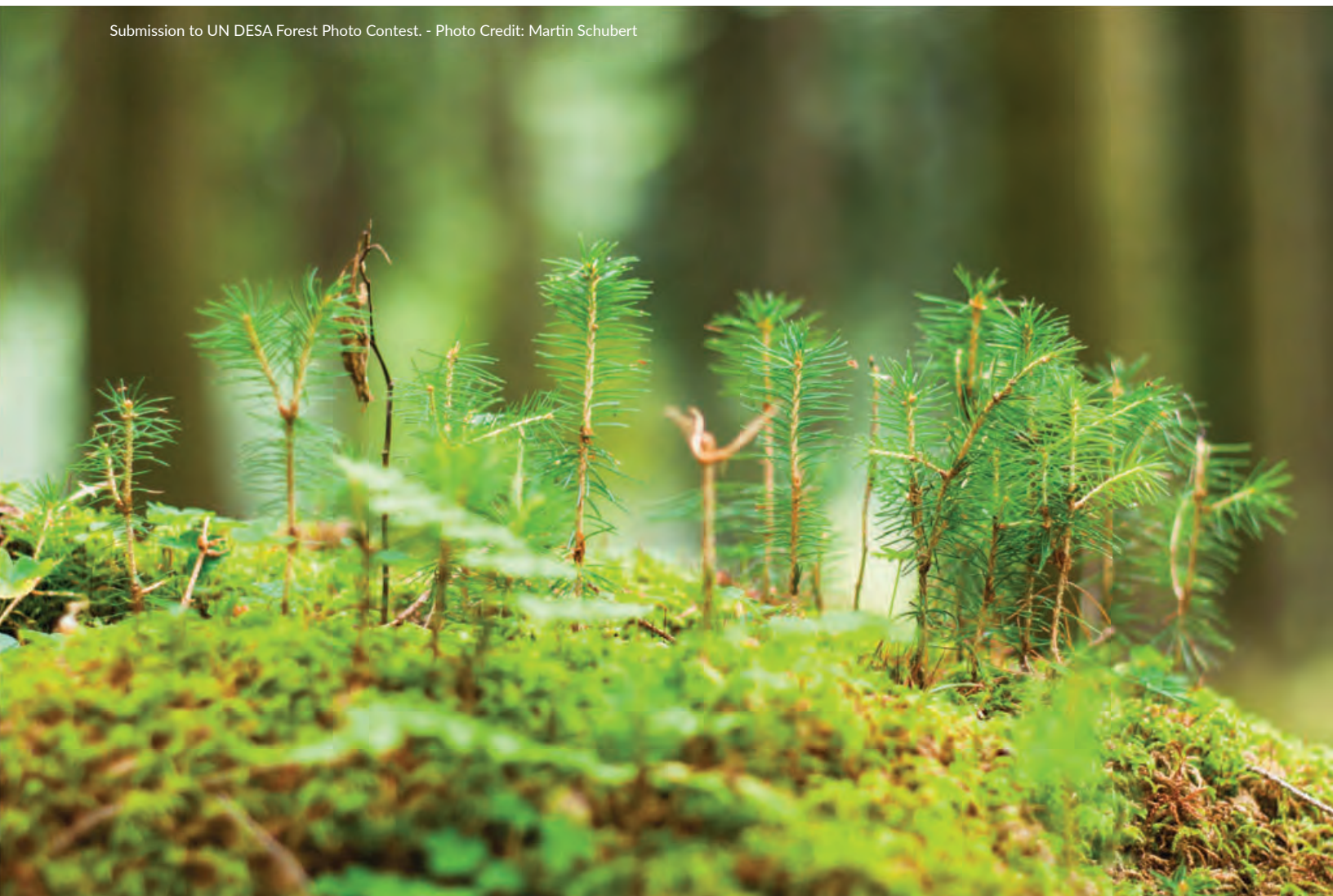
In June 2020, the 15th session of the UN Forum on Forests successfully adopted an omnibus resolution that charted the way forward in some of the key areas of Forum's work, including national reporting, means of implementation, capacity development, and thematic priorities for the upcoming biennium. UN DESA provided effective support to the three-month long intensive consultative process, which included three rounds of written inputs and numerous virtual consultations.

Protecting our ocean

UN DESA has been coordinating and collaborating with the nine thematic multi-stakeholder Communities of Ocean Action (COAs) to follow-up on the implementation



Atlantic Coast of Barbados. - Photo Credit: UN DESA/Astrid Hurley



Submission to UN DESA Forest Photo Contest. - Photo Credit: Martin Schubert

of the voluntary commitments made at the 2017 UN Ocean Conference and to mobilize new voluntary commitments for the upcoming UN Ocean Conference. A variety of actors has so far made 1,600 pledges of ocean action and the list is still growing. The Department has organized workshops and webinars for the COAs to share best practices and experiences provide partnership opportunities and to catalyse additional pledges for ocean action. The quarterly Ocean Action Newsletter produced by the Department further promotes the work of the COAs and provides updates about the upcoming UN Ocean Conference and ocean news from around the UN system.

To showcase the intricate and symbiotic link between ocean and climate change, UN DESA has also been supporting the Governments of Kenya and Portugal to organize for the UN Ocean Conference and its preparatory meetings. Although the Conference has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department, in collaboration with related UN entities, continued to inform the UN senior leadership in addressing climate change and its impacts on the ocean as one of the most significant

challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDG 14. UN DESA also offered steadfast support throughout the year to the efforts of the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Peter Thomson.

Promoting water for sustainable development

UN DESA is leading the support to UN Member States in the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028. The Department highlighted the important link between climate change and water by co-hosting several events, including at the margins of the General Assembly High-level Event on Climate Change, the HLPF, and the high-level week of the 74th General Assembly. UN DESA is also coordinating the preparation towards the 2023 UN Conference on the Water Action Decade, together with UN-Water, the Government of Portugal and the Government of Tajikistan. In collaboration with UN-Water, UN DESA has also supported the development of the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework to elevate water and sanitation issues within the UN System, as part of the Decade of Action launched by the UN Secretary-General.

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONS FOR SDGs

16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



Strong public institutions are critical for achieving the SDGs and ensuring that no one is left behind. UN DESA continues to raise awareness of SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions while also helping countries build the capacity of their public institutions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve the goals.

UN DESA...

- Raised awareness of SDG 16 and of its critical importance for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Built governance capacities of public institutions through over 100 capacity-development activities, including a Webinar Series on “Leveraging Public Governance and Spearheading Innovative Solutions to Address COVID-19” in various regions of the world.
- Paid homage to public servants and the lifesaving work that they have undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic during the United Nations Public Service Day event.
- Supported Member States in addressing governance issues relating to COVID-19.
- Brought together 23 world renowned experts to examine how to promote effective governance and institutional reform to accelerate delivery of the SDGs with particular reference to the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery at the 19th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.

*Scene at UN Headquarters During 74th Session of General Assembly
- Photo Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elias*

Strengthening institutions for SDGs

UN DESA is working to strengthen the capacities of public institutions and public servants to deliver good quality public services to everyone. Never has the need for effective and accountable institutions, inclusive public service delivery and the critical role of public servants been more evident than during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Participants in the 19th Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration – Photo Credit: UN DESA/Mimi Wang

Supporting implementation of SDG 16

At the 19th Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on 13-28 May 2020, experts considered ways to promote effective governance and institutional reform to accelerate the delivery of the SDGs. The context of the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery was a key focus. The Committee put forward key messages and recommendations for accelerating progress and moving onto transformative pathways for realizing the

Decade of Action through promoting effective governance and institutional reform. The Committee noted that the 11 Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, adopted by ECOSOC, had been put to the test in the pandemic and proven useful. It also underscored the ability of governments to take steps in response to the pandemic, underlining their renewed commitment to achieve the SDGs by the year 2030. The Committee further stressed the importance of strengthening the

capacity of State institutions and re-establishing credible governance and public administration institutions in countries affected by conflict. It also stressed the important role of sub-national and local governments in delivering the SDGs and drew attention to the negative impact of unbalanced budgeting on delivery of the SDGs.

The Department further updated its **Compendium of National Institutional Arrangements for the Implementation of the SDGs**, documenting institutional arrangements for the 47 countries that presented Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF on sustainable development in 2019.

Building capacity for effective governance

In 2019, UN DESA facilitated more than 100 capacity building activities, training a total of 10,677 government officials, in the areas of transformational leadership and equipping public servants with the capacities to implement the SDGs; governance and institutions; innovation for public service delivery; digital government, and public accountability in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America. Participants from 161 countries took part in these events. UN DESA undertook its activities in close collaboration with regional commissions, resident coordinators, schools of public administration and relevant regional organizations working in the field of governance and institutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical role of responsive and effective institutions and public service delivery and the critical role of public servants. To rapidly address some needs of the Member States, UN DESA launched a capacity development webinar series on leveraging public governance and innovative solutions to address COVID-19. The first webinar, held in May 2020, welcomed more than 400 participants from 82 countries via WebEx and garnered over 3,800 views on Facebook Live, reaching 12,500 Facebook users. One of the outcomes of the webinar series will be a governance checklist of actionable measures for addressing COVID-19 through effective governance.

The Department's COVID-19 policy brief series also addressed issues of digital governance, the importance of transparency, accountability and participation at the national level in response to COVID-19, the role of public servants in the crisis, and the critical need for an effective state-people relationship for managing a nation-wide crisis.



IN FOCUS



Just days after the release of the UN DESA Covid-19 Policy Brief on Digital Governance, the University of Buenos Aires used its analysis and recommendations to organize a webinar with the city of Buenos Aires, the Council of the Judiciary of the City of Buenos Aires and the Office of the Public Prosecutor. More than 200 civil servants and judges attended the webinar.

Training the trainers

The Department delivered capacity-development support to 57 institutes and schools of public administration from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia and Latin America through the Global initiative on Building Capacities of Public Servants for SDGs Implementation. This contributed to equipping public servants with knowledge to implement the SDGs.

UN DESA is also developing a Curriculum on Governance for Implementing the SDGs. The curriculum focuses on providing public servants with knowledge and skills related to the 2030 Agenda and helps them respond to the needs of transforming institutions and public service delivery. It is being co-created with schools of public administration from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East.

Strengthening and supporting supreme audit institutions

UN DESA continued to support the work of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) worldwide to audit the

implementation of the SDGs. The Department contributed to the development of an SDG audit model by the Development Initiative of the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (IDI). The model (ISAM) was issued in March 2020. More than 40 SAIs from several regions will use ISAM to examine government efforts in building strong and resilient national public health systems (SDG target 3.D). The model will also be used by 14 SAIs to audit sustainable public procurement practices in Latin America (SDG target 12.1), as well as by SAIs in the Pacific to audit implementation of target 5.2 on violence against women.

Building knowledge networks for strengthening public institutions

In 2020, the UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN) website was revamped to allow for easier information sharing and coordination of its work. UNPAN is a global network that connects international, regional, sub-regional and national institutions and experts working on governance and effective, inclusive and accountable public institutions for sustainable development.

Participants at the Symposium on "Strengthening Capacities of Public Institutions for Transformational Leadership, Innovation and Inclusion to Realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 in East Africa" – Photo Credit: Kenya School of Government



UN DESA's UN Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) continued to strengthen its role as a knowledge hub and platform for policy dialogue among Member States to exchange innovative practices in strengthening public administration for achieving the 2030 Agenda. UNPOG was active in organizing webinars, study visits and workshops aimed at advancing implementation of the SDGs. It conducted 70 activities with participation of over 6,100 people from more than 130 countries in 2019, including organization of the Regional Symposium on Leveraging Public Governance to Accelerate the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals—Transformation, Innovation and Inclusion, in November.

Celebrating public servants during a pandemic

Since 2003, UN DESA has been rewarding innovation and excellence in public service with the United Nations Public Service Awards, conferred at the annual United Nations Public Service Forum (UNPSF). The UNPSF offers an opportunity for public servants from different countries to come together and share challenges and strategies for better delivery of public services. The Forum took place for the first time in a virtual format on the UN Public Service Day, 23 June 2020. This event celebrated the critical role of public services and public servants during a pandemic. It paid homage to public servants and the lifesaving work they have undertaken during the pandemic. It also examined the approaches countries have taken, while looking at what measures they are undertaking to better mitigate such challenges going forward, including through enhancing public service provision in health care, social welfare provision and education, and the role of technology and e-government.

IN FOCUS



UN Public Service Day, paying tribute to frontline public servants, resulted in 1,200 media mentions, 16,000 social media posts, and close to 60,000 engagements.



STRENGTHENING THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Every year since 2015, countries come together in New York to evaluate their efforts to achieve the SDGs. UN DESA has been supporting them in this critical task, not only by leading the preparations and conduct of the annual United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), but also by constantly exploring innovative ways of improving the meeting and its usefulness for countries.

UN DESA...

- Provided subject-matter expertise, policy recommendations and other substantive support to a successful SDG Summit in 2019 and the 2020 HLPF
- Led the preparations for the HLPF thematic reviews on SDG implementation
- Supported Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and organized VNR preparatory workshops and webinars
- Conducted 17 VNR Labs for experience sharing and reflection on the VNR process
- Organized special events, side events and exhibitions on the margins of the HLPF

Global Climate Action
United Nations Climate Change

*Climate Activist Greta Thunberg Arrives in New York by Sailboat
- Photo Credit: UN Photo/Mark Garte*

Strengthening the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development



IN FOCUS



10 priority action areas for achieving the SDGs:

- a. Leaving no one behind
- b. Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing
- c. Enhancing national implementation
- d. Strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions
- e. Bolstering local action to accelerate implementation
- f. Reducing disaster risk and building resilience
- g. Solving challenges through international cooperation and enhancing the global partnership
- h. Harnessing science, technology and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development
- i. Investing in data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals
- j. Strengthening the High-level Political Forum

Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

On 24 and 25 September 2019, Heads of State and Government gathered at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to review overall progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDG Summit 2019 – the first meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the General Assembly - was the first UN summit on the SDGs since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015.

The Summit adopted the political declaration, *Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*, which included 10 priority action areas for accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and realizing the SDGs. World leaders expressed concern that the world was not on track for realizing the SDGs by 2030. They called for a decade of action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 and announced actions they are taking to advance the agenda.

As Secretariat to the HLPF and co-chair, with UNDP, of the HLPF interagency task team, UN DESA made significant contributions to the success of the Summit. The Department supported preparation of the 2019 edition of the **Global Sustainable Development Report** (GSDR), prepared by a group of independent scientists, which helped inform Member State dialogues. A special edition of the **Report of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress 2019** was also prepared, proposing cross-cutting actions to accelerate progress towards the SDGs, several of which inspired the Summit's declaration.

Ensuring an effective and forward-looking HLPF

The annual meeting of the HLPF, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, was held in a virtual format from 7 to 16



Authors of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019 speak during the SDG Summit in September 2019. – Photo Credit: UN Photo/Kim Haughton

July 2020, including a three-day ministerial meeting of the forum from 14 to 16 July 2020. Discussions focused on the theme *Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*. The meeting attracted more than 125,000 live online viewers on UN WebTV.

The 2020 HLPF examined closely the impacts of COVID-19 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. It provided an opportunity to mobilize global cooperation, solidarity and actions for a sustainable recovery from the pandemic. The discussions emphasized the need to respond to the socioeconomic impacts of

COVID-19 within the framework of the 2030 Agenda, so that the world preserves the gains made on the SDGs, builds back better and gets back on track for the decade of action and delivery for realizing the SDGs. UN DESA's analysis in the **Sustainable Development Goals Report** and **Sustainable Development Outlook** informed deliberations.

As in the past years, UN DESA also led the preparations for the HLPF thematic reviews. Adapting in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, the Department carried out virtual consultations to answer a set of targeted questions for each of the thematic sessions included in the HLPF programme. The consultations explored the common theme, *Building back better after COVID-19 and acting where we will have the greatest impact on the SDGs*. Issues



addressed included: Protecting and advancing human well-being and ending poverty (SDGs 1,3, 4, 6, 16, 17); Ending hunger and achieving food security (SDGs 2, 3, 17); Protecting the planet and building resilience (SDGs 12, 13, 14, 15, 17); Sustaining efforts to ensure access to sustainable energy (SDGs 7, 12, 13, 17); Responding to the economic shock, relaunching growth and sharing economic benefits and addressing developing countries' financing challenges (SDGs 5, 7, 8, 10, 17); and Bolstering local action to control the pandemic and accelerate implementation (SDGs 9, 11, 17).

The consultations were each co-convened with other UN

entities and engaged experts from across more than 40 entities within the UN system, as well as from academia, civil society and other relevant institutions, more than 180 in total.

UN DESA also prepared background papers based on the consultations, which took stock of SDG progress, assessed the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and strategies for recovery within the context of the respective themes, and reflected on policies, actions and means of implementation to drive the needed transformation in the Decade of Action. These outcomes help to inform Member States' discussions and actions on SDG implementation.

Special Events co-led by UN DESA during HLPF 2020



UN DESA's support to the HLPF also included the organization of a number of high-profile special events, engaging hundreds of practitioners from key sectors of society around SDG implementation. These events were undertaken together with UN system partners and other entities.

UN DESA also moved the VNR Labs online in 2020. The 17 Labs attracted hundreds of participants, allowing for detailed discussion and interaction on lessons learned on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs at the national level. Participants also discussed challenges and good practices in reporting, and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in ways that support a sustainable recovery and SDG achievement and the Decade of Action.

The HLPF communications strategy, designed jointly by UN DESA and the UN Department of Global

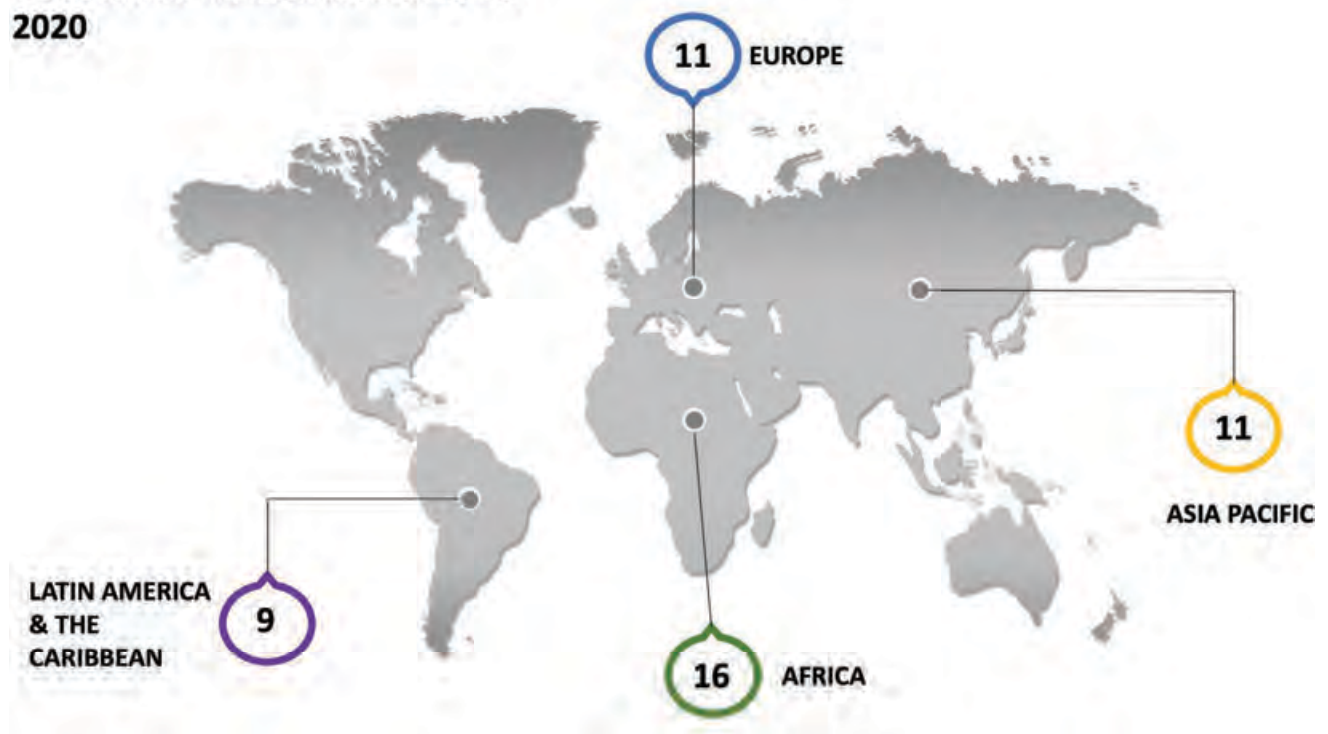
Communications, resulted in a heightened media interest and a lively online conversation. More than 3,200 articles were published by news outlets worldwide, including in such prestigious titles as El País, Al Jazeera, La Repubblica, RIA Novosti, People's Daily, NDTV, La Nación, EFE and Nature.

Supporting VNR preparation

In 2020, UN DESA continued to provide support to countries presenting their Voluntary National Reviews of the 2030 Agenda. 47 countries presented their national voluntary reviews to the HLPF, including 26 first time presenters.

To support the 2020 VNR countries in their preparations, UN DESA organized three global VNR preparatory workshops and webinars. The First Global Workshop, organized with the support of the Government of Norway,

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS 2020





“Very useful workshop – it has provided an opportunity to appreciate the VNR process and the critical issues that we need to look out for...

~ Participant from the First Global Workshop for 2020 VNR Countries

Resource material prepared by UN DESA to support VNR countries:

- Handbook for VNR countries
- Secretary-General's Voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the HLPF
- Q&A for VNR countries
- Database of all VNRs: UN DESA maintains a database of all VNRs so far including a separate page for each VNR country (searchable by year or keywords) and a webcast of presentations

was held in November 2019 in Oslo. The second and third global workshops were held virtually as webinars in March and June 2020 respectively and convened participants from the VNR countries, Regional Commissions and Resident Coordinator Offices. Approximately 80 participants from the 2020 VNR countries joined each of the webinars.

The workshops and webinars focused on peer-learning and facilitated an exchange of views amongst 2020 VNR countries on progress and challenges encountered in conducting their VNRs, and on transformative actions, policies and strategies. UN DESA and representatives from the Regional Commissions served as resource persons, providing clarifications on the expectations and process for the VNRs and assisted the VNR countries in identifying the necessary steps, policies and institutions for national implementation of the SDGs.


In collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions, UN DESA also organized regional VNR preparatory workshops, aimed at strengthening peer-learning from a regional exchange of experience and lessons learned among the VNR countries.

UN DESA provided direct support to countries in the preparation and finalization of the VNR reports. The Department also partnered with the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) and the UN Resident Coordinator Offices in VNR countries, in order to extend further technical and substantive support, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UN DESA also continues to work together with the VNR Task Group of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) Coordination Mechanism to facilitate the dialogue between MGoS and the VNR countries in the VNR preparatory process. This has occurred through the organization of webinars and the coordination of the inputs and contributions by MGoS to the HLPF.


“5 x 10” – **five** key themes with three cross cutting areas to achieve sustainable development in the next **ten** years

For the Decade of Action, UN DESA is mobilizing to overcome COVID-19 and other global crises, and preparing for future challenges to help Member States realize the 2030 Agenda.




1 Equality and inclusive growth

Draw on the Department’s convening power and analytical capacity to ensure that the global dialogue focuses on human well-being, inclusive economic growth, and considers the voices of all peoples, everywhere.




2 Data

Support countries in every corner of the world to bolster their national statistical capacities and evidence-based decision-making.




3 Science and Technology

Help countries to steer developments in science, technology and innovation to serve sustainable development, and analyze the impacts of frontier technologies on the way we work, produce and co-exist.



4 Climate Action


Advocate urgent efforts for sustainable development that go hand-in-hand with driving climate action and supporting a healthy planet.





5 Demographic Change

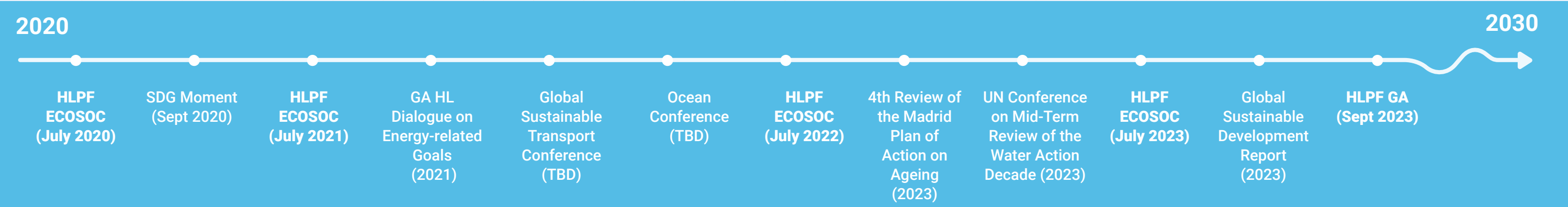
Support countries to incorporate demographic trends into development policies and planning, including population growth, changes in age structure, migration, and urbanization.

3 key cross cutting areas:

**Gender**
Promote the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women across all areas, at all levels.

**Financing**
Support Member States close the financing gap for sustainable development, by mobilizing and aligning financing from all sources.

**Effective Governance and Strong Institutions**
Strengthen public institutions’ capacities to deliver essential services and measures that require effective action, in collaboration with all stakeholders.



ANNEXES



Mr. Liu Zhenmin

Under-Secretary-General

Mr. Liu Zhenmin was appointed as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs effective 26 July 2017. In his position, Mr. Liu guides UN Secretariat support for the follow-up processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also oversees the substantive services to many intergovernmental processes, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the annual meetings of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, including its Development Cooperation Forum, and the work of the subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC.

In addition to intergovernmental processes, Mr. Liu oversees UN DESA's policy analysis and capacity-development work. He also serves as the Convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and advises the United Nations Secretary-General on all development-related issues, including climate change, internet governance, and financing for development. In addition, the Secretary-General has designated Mr. Liu to lead preparations for a number of forthcoming development-focused global conferences, including the Ocean Conference, the Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, and the High-Level Dialogue on Energy.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Liu had been the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of China since 2013. Among his various diplomatic assignments, he served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Other International Organizations in Switzerland, from 2011 to 2013.

Mr. Liu brings to the position more than 30 years of experience in the diplomatic service, with a strong focus on bilateral, regional and global issues. For 10 years, he was deeply involved in climate change negotiations including the conclusion of the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. During his tenure as USG, he has consistently advocated for strengthening multilateral approaches to sustainable development issues.

Mr. Liu holds a Master of Laws from the Law School of Peking University.



Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano

Assistant Secretary-General

Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, effective 20 December 2018.

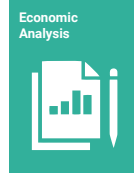
Ms. Spatolisano has 33 years of experience in public service including extensive senior leadership in multilateral affairs. Prior to her appointment she was responsible for international organizations and development dialogue with other donors in the European Commission's Directorate General for Development Cooperation. In that capacity, she ensured the European Union's presence and developed its positions on development policy in a number of international forums, including the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Group of Seven and the Group of Twenty, where she represented the bloc in its Development Working Group.

Ms. Spatolisano served as the European Union Ambassador to OECD, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Monaco and Andorra.

She was also a member of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations, serving as the Head of its Economic and Trade Section. She covered all issues related to trade, development and environmental policies in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) and in the Economic and Social Council, also serving as the European Commission representative to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

Prior to that role she served in the Washington Delegation of the European Commission and was the representative of the European Commission to the Trade and Development Committee of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Ms. Spatolisano holds a Doctorate in Law (cum laude) from Florence University. She went on to research and teach at the Florence University Law School for seven years.



Mr. Elliott C. Harris

Assistant Secretary-General

Chief Economist

Officer-in-Charge, Economic Analysis and Policy Division

Mr. Elliott Harris was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development and Chief Economist, effective 2 April 2018.

Mr. Harris brings over 25 years of international experience in the fields of international economics and development policy analysis, coupled with knowledge of the United Nations system, multilateral and inter-agency coordination processes. He has extensive experience in the design of macroeconomic policies and their application as a central instrument for the reduction of poverty and for resilient and sustained economic development. His work in the field of economics also focuses on the macroeconomic linkages with global social and environmental policies.

Prior to his appointment, Mr. Harris served as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) from 2015. He joined UNEP's Senior Management Team in 2013 as Director of the New York Office and Secretary to the Environment Management Group.

Prior to joining UNEP, Mr. Harris began his career in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1988, where he worked in the African Department and the Fiscal Affairs Department. In 2002 he became an Adviser in the Policy Development and Review Department and was appointed in 2008 as Special Representative to the United Nations, in addition to serving as Assistant Director of the Strategy and Policy Review Department.

Mr. Harris holds a Bachelor of Science degree in German and political science and an advanced degree in economics. He was awarded an Advanced Studies Certificate in international economics and policy research from the Institute of World Economics in Kiel, Germany.



Ms. Marion Barthélemy

Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support and
Coordination for Sustainable Development

Prior to her current appointment, Ms. Barthélemy was Director of the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government from 2016 to 2018. From 2012 to 2016, she served as Chief of the Intergovernmental Support Branch in the Division for Sustainable Development. In this capacity, she was part of the team supporting the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda.

From 2007 to 2012, she served as Chief of the Development Cooperation Policy Branch in the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development where she supported the Development Cooperation Forum and the General Assembly's review of UN system country-level activities (QCPR).

From 2000 to 2005, she served in the Office of two Under-Secretary-Generals for Economic and Social Affairs, supported the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and served as Special Assistant to the UN Deputy Secretary-General.

At the beginning of her career, she worked as an economist in the Division for the Advancement of Women in UN DESA and later in the UN Drug Control Programme, working with the Secretary of the International Narcotics Board. She joined the UN in 1987 through the National Competitive Exam for economists and studied in the Paris Institute of Political Studies in Paris, with a focus on macroeconomic and social policies.



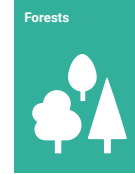
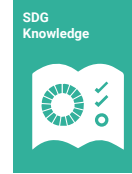
Ms. Daniela Bas

Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development

Ms. Daniela Bas specializes in international politics, human rights and social development. Prior to her current appointment, she served as Senior Consultant on human rights for the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She advised the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on anti-discrimination issues.

Ms. Bas has worked for close to 10 years for the UN as a Professional Officer in social development and human rights. She served as Special Adviser on Fundamental Rights for the former Vice President of the European Commission; and as the Italian representative designated by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers on the topic "Tourism for All" to the European Commission.

Ms. Bas is a Board Member of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and of the Committee to Promote non-Armed and non-Violent Civil Defence of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. She graduated in Political Science in 1985, with a major in International Politics and wrote her dissertation on The elimination of architectural barriers and the employment of people with physical disabilities. She has also worked as a journalist and broadcaster for Italian Radio and TV.



Mr. Alexander Trepelkov

Officer-in-Charge, Division for Sustainable Development Goals
Officer-in-Charge, Secretariat of the UN Forum on Forests

Mr. Alexander Trepelkov leads the work of the global secretariat for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on providing substantive support, integrated policy analysis, building multi-stakeholder partnerships and capacity-development in the thematic areas such as natural resources, water, energy, climate, ocean, transport, science and technology, as well as special concerns of small island developing States (SIDS). He is also in charge of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat as the focal point for intergovernmental support, policy analysis and capacity development on all issues related to sustainable forest management and forest financing.

In 2010-2018, Mr. Trepelkov was Director of the Financing for Development Office, with primary responsibility for substantive support, promoting policy coherence and multi-stakeholder engagement at all levels in public and private resource mobilization, international development cooperation and trade, debt sustainability and international financial system for development. His previous work in UN DESA was in the areas of macro- and micro-economic and social policy analysis and public administration and finance. Prior to joining the UN Secretariat in 1989, Mr. Trepelkov was employed for 12 years in the Russian diplomatic service. He holds a PhD in International Economics from MGIMO-University in Moscow and has authored several publications.



Mr. Stefan Schweinfest

Director, Statistics Division

Mr. Schweinfest joined the Statistics Division in 1989 and has served as the substantive secretary of two intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) since 2002, and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UNGIM) since 2011.

Mr. Schweinfest supported the work of the Statistical Commission and its Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) to develop the global indicator framework to monitor progress towards the SDGs. Under his leadership, the Statistics Division works on implementing this framework and ensuring countries receive capacity-building support to monitor progress towards the SDGs.

He played a key role in the negotiations leading to the 2011 ECOSOC resolution to establish UNGIM and has actively involved himself with global geospatial information management since, including the negotiations leading to a second ECOSOC resolution in 2016 that strengthens and broadens the mandate of this Committee of Experts.

He studied Mathematical Economics at the Universities of Wuerzburg and Bonn in Germany. He holds a Diplome D'Etudes Approfondies (Masters equivalent) from the University of Paris in these fields. He also conducted postgraduate research at the London School of Economics.



Mr. John Wilmoth

Director, Population Division

Prior to his appointment as the Director of the Population Division, Mr. Wilmoth served as Professor in the Department of Demography of the University of California at Berkeley. He also served in the Population Division as Chief of the Mortality Section from 2005 to 2007.

Mr. Wilmoth oversees the Department's support to the Commission on Population and Development and to intergovernmental discussions on international migration, including for the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Under his leadership, the Population Division continues to upgrade its production of internationally comparable population data, which are essential inputs to the global monitoring of progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Wilmoth served as a consultant to the World Health Organization and the World Bank from 2009 to 2012, leading the development of new global estimates of maternal mortality. He is a member of the Population Association of America and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. He also serves on the editorial boards of some leading demographic journals including *Demographic Research* and the *European Journal of Population*.

Mr. Wilmoth is the author or co-author of more than 50 scientific papers examining various aspects of population dynamics and population issues, including the causes of the historical decline of human mortality, prospects for future trends in life expectancy, the impact of population ageing on public pension and healthcare systems, popular perceptions of population growth and its consequences, and methodologies for estimating and projecting demographic trends.



Mr. Juwang Zhu

Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government

Mr. Juwang Zhu leads the Division in promoting inclusive, effective, accountable institutions that are well equipped to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 16.

Prior to his current role, Mr. Zhu served as Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA from 2008 to 2013. In that capacity he advised the Under-Secretary-General on policy and management issues and coordinated the Department's substantive advice to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on development issues and on the restructuring of UN DESA's capacity-building programme.

Mr. Zhu was Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and assisted in coordinating support for the Conference. He also contributed to the Departmental support for Rio+20 follow-up. As Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals from 2016 to 2019, Mr. Zhu coordinated the Secretariat support for the HLPF, the UN Ocean Conference, and the Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

Mr. Zhu graduated from the Shanghai International Studies University in 1982 and did post-graduate studies in Beijing Foreign Studies University. He has an MSC in financial economics from University of London and an MA in international relations from Webster University.



Mr. Navid Hanif

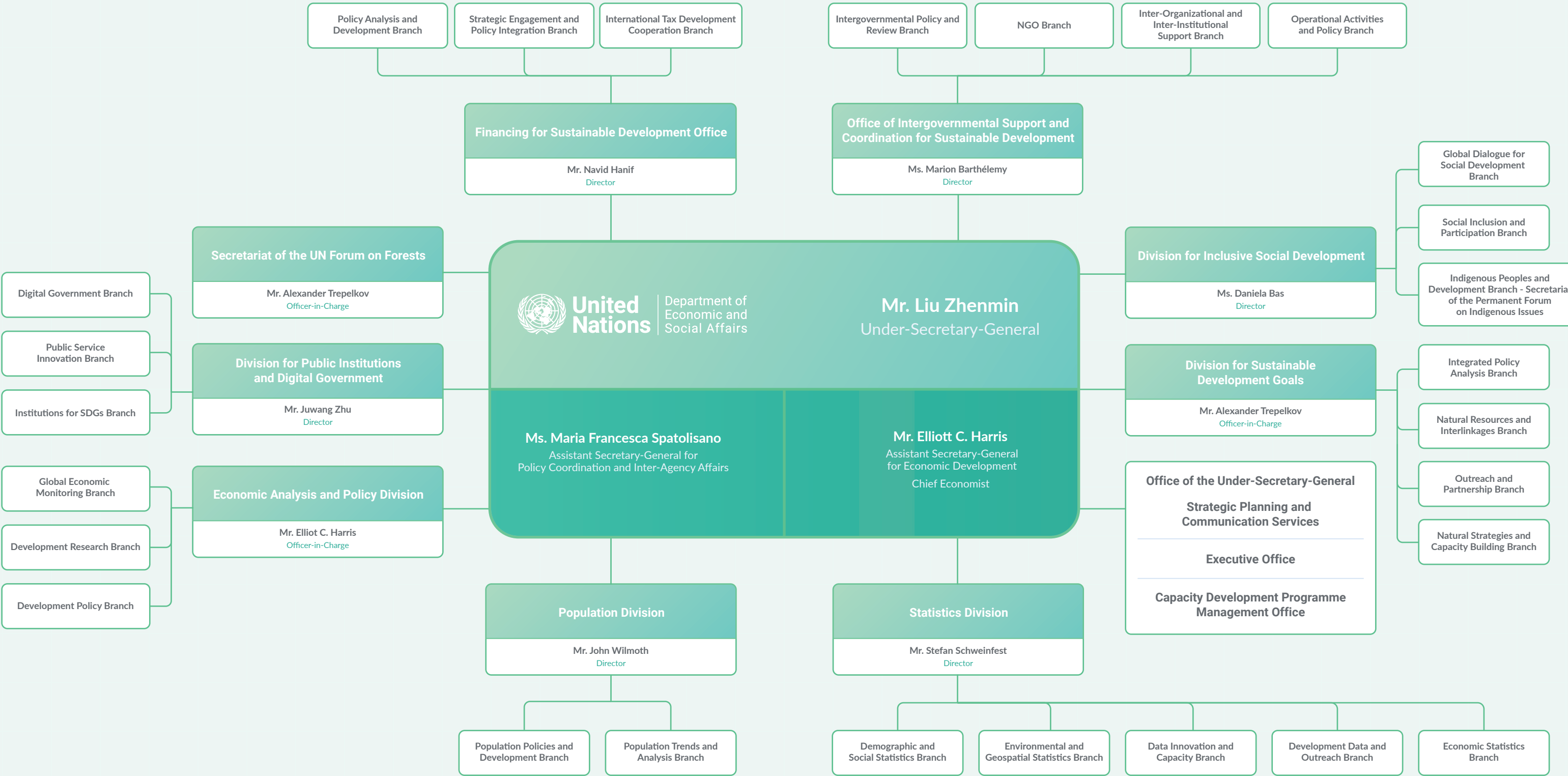
Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Office

Mr. Navid Hanif joined UN DESA in 2001; until 2003, he was Senior Policy Adviser in the Division for Sustainable Development and member of the team for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

He later joined the office of the Under-Secretary General for UN DESA and focused on departmental initiatives in various policy areas. He worked as the Chief of Policy Coordination Branch in the office for Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) support from 2004 to 2009. In 2005, he was sent on a special one-year assignment to work as a Principal Officer in the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General. He worked there as a member of the team for the 2005 World Summit. In 2010, he was appointed as Head of the newly established UN DESA Strategic Planning Unit. Most recently, Mr. Hanif served as Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, from 2012 to 2018.

Mr. Hanif holds a Master's in International Political Economy, from Columbia University, New York and a Master's in English Literature from Government College, Lahore.

UN DESA Organigramme



Key moments and milestones of the 74th General Assembly

| | |
|--|--|
| ECOSOC Functional Commission (Intergovernmental) [Supported by UN DESA] | ECOSOC Advisory Bodies (Experts) [Supported by UN DESA] |
| High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting | Publication/Dataset Launch |

| | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 |
|----------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| September 2019 | | Global Sustainable Development Report (11 Sep) | Opening of the 74th session of the General Assembly (17 Sep) | UN Climate Action Summit (23 Sep) SDG Summit (24-25 Sep) High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development (26 Sep) SAMOA Pathway High-Level Midterm Review (27 Sep) | |
| October | Opening of the 74th session of the Third Committee (1 Oct) International Day of Older Persons (1 Oct) | Opening of the 74th session of the Second Committee (7 Oct) | Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (15-18 Oct) International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 Oct) | The World Cities Day (31 Oct) | |
| November | | | | Internet Governance Forum (25-29 Nov) | |
| December | International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 Dec) | | International Migrants Day and launch of International Migration Report (18 Dec) | | |
| January 2020 | | | World Economic Situation and Prospects (16 Jan) | World Social Report (21 Jan) | Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (20-29 Jan; 7 Feb) |
| February | Commission for Social Development (10-19 Feb) | | World Day of Social Justice (20 Feb) | | Committee for Development Policy (24-27 Feb) |
| March | Statistical Commission (3-6 Mar) | | International Day of Forests (21 Mar) World Down Syndrome Day (21 Mar) | World Water Day (22 Mar) | Commission on Population and Development 2020 |
| April | ECOSOC Youth Forum (Deferred to 2021) ECOSOC Partnership Forum (Deferred to 2021 session) Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (Postponed) | Committee of Experts on Public Administration (13-28 Apr) Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (April 9) | | | |
| May | ECOSOC special meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (Deferred until 2021) UN Sustainable Transport Conference (Postponed) | Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (Deferred to the 2021 session of ECOSOC) Development Cooperation Forum (Deferred to the 2021 session of ECOSOC) | Committee of Experts on Public Administration (13-28 May) World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2020 (13 May) International Day of Families (15 May) | ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment (19-22, 27 May) High-level Meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum (Postponed) | Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (resumed – Postponed) |
| June | ECOSOC Management Segment (3 Jun) UN Ocean Conference (Postponed) | World Oceans Day (8 Jun) ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (9-11 Jun) Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Postponed) | World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (15 Jun) International Day of Family Remittances (16 Jun) | Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (22-26 Jun) UN Public Service Day (23 Jun) | 15th Session of UN Forum on Forests Omnibus resolution adopted (30 June) |
| July | International Day of Cooperatives (4 Jul) World Youth Report (2 Jul) The Sustainable Development Report (7 Jul) Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart 2020 Global SDG Indicators Database (updated quarterly) | High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (under the auspices of ECOSOC) (7-13 Jul) ECOSOC Integration Segment (6 Jul) UN E-Government Survey (10 Jul) World Population Day (11 Jul) | ECOSOC High-level Segment (14-17 Jul) including three-day Ministerial Segment of HLPF (14-16 Jul) World Youth Skills Day (15 Jul) SIDS Partnership Dialogue | ECOSOC Management Meetings (21 Jul) | |
| August | | International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 Aug) | International Youth Day (12 Aug) | United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (26-27 Aug & 4 Sep) | |

Key moments and milestones of the 75th General Assembly

| Month | Key moments and milestones |
|----------------|--|
| September 2020 | 15 Opening of the 75th session of the General Assembly |
| | 18 SDG Moment |
| | 21 (tbd) UN Economists Network report (Shaping the Trends of our Time) |
| | 21 Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the UN |
| | 22 First day of high-level General Debate |
| | 29 Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond: summit-level meeting during the General Assembly |
| | 30 United Nations Summit on Biodiversity |
| | (tbd) SDG Gender Snapshot |
| October | 1 International Day for Older Persons |
| | 1 Oct - 20 Nov Opening of the 75th session of the Third Committee |
| | 5 Oct - 25 Nov Opening of the 75th session of the Second Committee |
| | 15 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty |
| | 18-21 UN World Data Forum |
| | 20 World Statistics Day |
| | 20 Oct- 6 Nov Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters |
| | 31 The World Cities Day |
| | (tbd) Second Committee item on Operational Activities for Development |
| November | (tbd) World's Women |
| | 2-6 Internet Governance Forum |
| November | (tbd) 2020 UN Pledging Conference |
| December | 3 International Day for Persons with Disabilities |
| | 18 International Migrants Day |
| | (tbd) Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| | (tbd) Megatrends report: Global Population Growth and Sustainable Development |
| January 2021 | 18-27 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations |
| | 21 (tbd) World Economic Situation and Prospects |
| February | 20 World Day of Social Justice |
| | 22-26 (tbd) Committee for Development Policy |
| | (tbd) World Social Report 2021 |
| | (tbd) Commission for Social Development |
| March | 2-5 Statistical Commission |
| | 21 International Day of Forests |
| | 21 World Down Syndrome Day |
| | 22 World Water Day |

| | |
|---|---|
| ECOSOC Functional Commission (Intergovernmental) [Supported by UN DESA] | ECOSOC Advisory Bodies (Experts) [Supported by UN DESA] |
| High-Level Intergovernmental Meeting | Publication/Dataset Launch |

| | |
|--------|---|
| April | 12-15 Forum on Financing for Development follow-up |
| | 12-16 Committee of Experts on Public Administration |
| | 19-23 Commission on Population and Development |
| | 19-30 Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues |
| | 26-28, 30 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters |
| | 29 ECOSOC special meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters |
| | 26-30 UN Forum on Forests |
| | |
| May | 3 ECOSOC Partnership Forum |
| | 4-5 Multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals |
| | 6-7 Development Cooperation Forum (deferred from 2020 session) |
| | 13 (tbd) World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2021 |
| | 15 International Day of Families |
| | 18-20 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment |
| June | 4 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (resumed) |
| | 8 World Oceans Day |
| | 8-9 ECOSOC Management segment |
| | 15 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day |
| | 16 International Day of Family Remittances |
| | 23 UN Public Service Day |
| | 23 United Nations Public Service Forum / Award |
| | 23 World Public Sector Report |
| | 22-24 (tbd) ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment |
| | (tbd) Handbook on the Least Developed Country Category, 4th edition |
| | (tbd) UN Global Forum on Economic Statistics for Sustainable Development (working title) |
| July | 2 ECOSOC Integration segment |
| | 4 International Day of Cooperatives |
| | 6-12 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (under the auspices of ECOSOC) |
| | 11 World Population Day |
| | 12 (tbd) Sustainable Development Outlook |
| | 13-16 High-level Segment of ECOSOC including the three-day Ministerial Segment of HLPF |
| | 15 World Youth Skills Day |
| | 21-22 ECOSOC Management Segment (continued) |
| | (tbd) Sustainable Development Report and Global SDG Indicator Database |
| August | (tbd) Sustainable Development Progress Chart |
| | 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples |
| | 12 International Youth Day |
| | (tbd) UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management |

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UN.ORG/DESA

FACEBOOK.COM/JOINUNDESA

TWITTER.COM/UNDESA

YOUTUBE.COM/UNITEDNATIONSDESA



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs