



BUILDING RESILIENCE AND PREPAREDNESS...

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...because our shared vision of tomorrow, requires action today

2020 and 2021 heralded unprecedented challenges. The spread of the COVID-19 virus unleashed a vicious cycle of health, social, and economic shocks in every country, as very few were prepared to cope with the direct and indirect effects of a global pandemic. But the pandemic also helped decision-makers to see what we need to do better today, to build better, fairer communities for tomorrow. UN DESA's analytical capacity was directed to help countries understand how to build greater resilience in the short run, while keeping an eye on implications for supporting people and the planet in the long-term.

UN DESA...

- Provided evidence-based analysis of the sustainable development challenges and opportunities facing the world.
- Addressed the impact of COVID-19 on development pathways, providing policy-focused analysis and recommendations to help policy makers navigate uncertainties in the height of the pandemic.
- Examined key demographic trends and their future trajectories, highlighting their likely impact on our future.
- Delivered technical assistance and capacity development support for countries on the path to graduate from the LDC category.

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Building Resilience and Preparedness

UN DESA helped Member States build greater resilience and preparedness by monitoring and forecasting social, economic, and demographic trends, analysing their implications, and helping policy makers forge a path forward.

Examining the impact of global trends on our global goals

The UN DESA-led United Nations Economist Network (UNEN) came together to examine how five megatrends: climate change; demographic shifts, particularly population ageing; urbanization; the emergence of digital technologies; and inequalities – affect economic, social and environmental outcomes. This first joint publication by UNEN, **Report of the UN Economist Network for the UN 75th Anniversary: Shaping the Trends of Our Time**, demonstrated UN DESA's strength for collaborating with system partners to build and share knowledge.

Analysing links between resilience and sustainable development

The **World Economic Situation and Prospects 2021 (WESP)** analysed the interactions between resilience and recovery, highlighting that there is no sustainable development without resilience and there is no resilience without sustainable development. The report identified the long-term scarring effects of the pandemic on employment, trade, and output. It underscored that strengthening public finance and debt sustainability, improving digital infrastructures, bridging digital divides, revitalizing global trade, and combating inequality and



expanding social protection and promoting climate action and environmental sustainability, must form the cornerstones of a resilient recovery from the current crisis. The WESP continued to draw significant attention in 2021. Downloads reached 137,296 by 31 August and the report saw uptake in major media houses, with over 1,000 articles published in 67 countries and territories and 9 languages.

Translating global policy guidance into country level policy support

UN DESA in collaboration with UN DCO started a series of clinics led by the Chief Economist with the Resident Coordinators to discuss the broad range of macroeconomic, fiscal, financial and debt management issues that challenge countries' ability to build resilient and sustainable development. The objective of the clinics is to provide a platform to discuss the latest policy research and good

practices to help identify suitable entry point for the UN to promote national recovery policies that build resilience, improve inclusiveness and reduce inequality. So far Resident Coordinators from more than 40 countries have participated in these clinics, which have covered policy issues related to innovative, climate and domestic finance; fiscal space, rising debt and debt management; fiscal policies for social inclusion and poverty reduction; social protection systems; and social protection for vulnerable groups. Upcoming clinics will concentrate on economic transformation, including blue and green economy transformation, energy and digital transformation.

Promoting a better understanding of international human mobility

UN DESA worked with partners to develop the overarching conceptual framework and accompanying definitions



PLACING WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

Promoting a gender-based perspective of economic development

The need for a gender-based perspective of economic development is clear from SDG goal 5, but traditional economic development indicators, such as those that measure GDP and other economic activity, are not disaggregated by gender. Most economic measurement focuses on the market economy, where men's production predominates. Child and elder care as well as household work – typically provided without pay and mostly by women – are unmeasured. The unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work between women and men

add to women's daily work and may prevent them from participating in the labour market. UN DESA found that this gender gap had been decreasing in many countries until the COVID-19 pandemic. Preliminary data shows a recent diminishing of that positive trend. UN DESA and partners developed a short survey instrument to inform policy makers on impacts on time-use and developed the manual National Time Transfer Accounts: Measuring and Analysing the Gendered Economy.

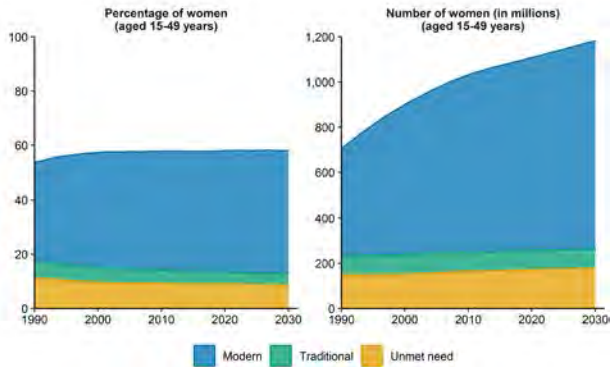
The new methodology and manual provide systematic, comprehensive and coherent methods for the age and sex disaggregation of the major components of National Accounts. This will result in an improved understanding of the gender dimension of economies through a standardized methodology that permits international comparisons and identification of best practices in support of gender equality.

for Statistics of International Migration. The framework links with data needs for policy making, covers new migration patterns and new data sources, and will be the basis for statistical capacity efforts conducted by UN DESA and partners. UN DESA prepared the report **International Migration 2020 Highlights**, showcasing the latest estimates of international migration. The number of international migrants globally has grown rapidly over the last two decades, reaching 281 million people in 2020. However, preliminary estimates suggest that disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of international migrants by around 2 million. Nearly half of all international migrants worldwide are women or girls. The United States of America remains the largest destination of international migrants, followed by Germany and Saudi Arabia. India has the largest diaspora, followed by Mexico, the Russian Federation and China.

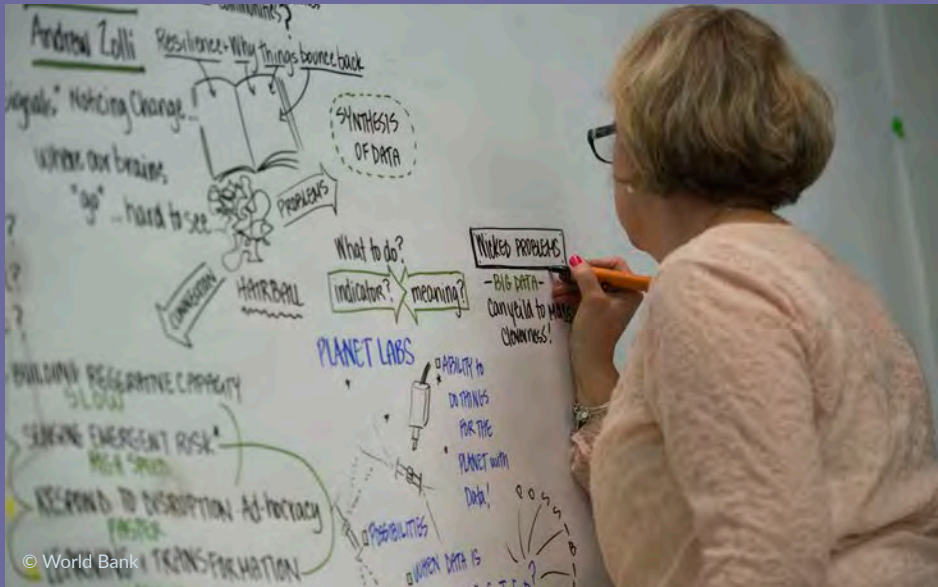
Estimating and projecting demand for family planning

Expanding access to contraception is an essential component of achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, as called for in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN DESA prepared the report **World Family Planning 2020 Highlights**, examining global and regional progress in meeting the growing demand for family planning. The report presents the latest estimates and projections of the proportion and number of women of reproductive age who use contraceptive methods or have an unmet need for family planning. The number of women with a demand for family planning has increased markedly over the past two decades, from 900 million in 2000 to nearly 1.1 billion in 2020. An additional 100 million women are projected to have a demand for family planning by 2030, with the fastest growth in sub-Saharan Africa. Future

population growth will pose challenges to countries that seek to expand reproductive health-care services in order to keep pace with these growing needs. Lastly, the report discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic has made the path towards achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services by 2030 more uncertain.



Estimates of the proportion and number of women aged 15-49 years who use modern or traditional contraceptive methods or who have an unmet need for family planning, 1990-2030



DRIVING INNOVATION

Taking a catalytic approach to data development

Through a Development Account Project beginning in March 2021, and over a four-year period, 2021-2024, UN DESA is working to improve the institutional capacity of selected countries in special situations to develop policy experimentation and regulatory sandboxes for new technologies. This innovative and catalytic approach to data development is expected to accelerate progress towards achieving the vision in the Decade of Action and delivery of sustainable development, embodied by the 2030 Agenda. Under the right circumstances,

Governments could adopt an experimental approach to policy design, using empirical data to validate theoretical and historical understandings of the impact of variations in regulations and policies. In this environment, novel digital technologies, financial products, and business models can be tested under a set of rules, supervision requirements, and appropriate safeguards. These measures bring the cost of innovation down, reduce barriers to entry, and allow regulators to collect important insights before deciding if further regulatory action is necessary, especially when existing regulations (or the absence thereof) can impede innovation. Policy experimentation and sandboxes constitute an essential component of the innovation ecosystem and institutional resilience. Policy experimentation or regulatory sandboxes can provide opportunities to study feasibility and scalability.



STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Strengthening capacities on risk-informed governance and innovative technology for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and resilience

UN DESA trained over 200 government officials from 70 countries using the Training Toolkit on Risk-informed Governance and Innovative Technology for DRR and Resilience, as part of UN DESA's Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs. During these workshops, Member States provided resounding feedback and testimonies emphasizing that:

- While climate change is compounding disaster risk and increasing the frequency and intensity of disasters, ICTs and digital government technologies provide enormous opportunities for ensuring DRR and building resilience for achieving the 2030 Agenda.
- Disaster risk management and resilience building cannot be efficient or effective without strong, inclusive, accountable, and empowered institutions based on risk-informed governance.

Robust, timely, accurate, disaggregated, evidence-based and people-centred data with access to information are key enablers for ensuring the inclusion of vulnerable groups in decision-making for DRR.

Latin America and the Caribbean 1 Africa 33 Asia 9 Oceania 3



Countries in the LDC category after the 2021 triennial review

SUPPORTING COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Supporting LDCs beyond graduation

UN DESA designed an LDC Graduation Support Facility to address graduation concerns by Member States. The Department piloted five of the six main service offerings of the Facility in Vanuatu, which graduated out of the LDC category in December 2020 - the first to do so in the midst of COVID-19. The Facility strengthened the capacity of government officials to prepare and engage

in trade negotiations on extending trade preferences and preferential market access for specific export commodities to Japan and China. Working with ESCAP, UN DESA helped Vanuatu to mainstream its smooth transition strategy into its national plans, fiscal budget, and monitoring and reporting processes.

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We wish to acknowledge the invaluable backing from UNESCAP, UN DESA, UNCTAD, EU, the Government of Australia, New Zealand and those development partners who supported the development of our Smooth Transition Strategy. With their support, Vanuatu will transition smoothly beyond graduation – with new vigour, new thinking and new pathways of development and partnerships towards equality, resilience and environmental sustainability.

Excerpt from Statement by Hon. Marc Ati (MP), Vanuatu Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and External Trade, at the UN ESCAP 77th Commission Session.

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

Responding to the crisis created by COVID-19 has been the major line of activity for UN DESA during this period, as it has been the case for the rest of the United Nations family. UN DESA continued the efforts started in 2020 to take a close look at the socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic, through its dedicated series of policy briefs providing timely analysis and policy guidance to ensure that sustainable development goals remain in reach during the post-crisis decade. UN DESA briefs continued to draw the attention of a broad swath of readers, amassing nearly 1 million downloads in 2020.

To help countries in designing their responses to COVID-19 crisis in the short-, medium-, and long-term, UN DESA carried out an in-depth analysis of the experience of ten countries, including countries that have been more

successful in their responses as well as countries that found it more challenging to be successful in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This comparative analysis helped to bring out the determinants of COVID-19 response strategies across countries and the lessons that provide for countries that are struggling to bring the pandemic under control. The results of this analysis were published in the form of the UN DESA Working Paper No. 172, titled **Variations in COVID Strategies: Determinants and Lessons**. The analysis and findings presented in this working paper is proving useful for policymakers in many countries in evaluating their existing COVID-19 responses in determining ways of making them more effective.



FACILITATING MULTILATERAL ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

Examining risk-informed, climate-smart development cooperation

UN DESA stimulated and shaped a reimagined understanding of development cooperation – informed by risk, designed to build resilience, and strongly linked with climate action – through its support to the 2021 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). Held virtually on 6-7 May 2021, discussions at the DCF stressed the need for governments to fulfil ODA commitments and provide fresh concessional finance for developing countries, especially for LDCs and SIDS, with emphasis on grants rather than loans. The availability of concessional resources for Middle Income

Countries (MICs) was also stressed as imperative for recovery. Participants identified ways that development cooperation should do more to support recovery efforts, including to strengthen health systems in vulnerable countries, while also promoting solidarity and coordination to advance the production, supply, and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. The resurgent interest and expanded engagement in the work of the DCF, as the UN platform that brings the diversity and dynamism of development cooperation into action-oriented policy discussion, underscored the essential role of development cooperation in pandemic recovery in the Decade of Action.



BOOSTING PARTNERSHIPS AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Bringing the business community to the table

With over 12,000 registered participants, the 2020 SDG Business Forum, co-convened virtually by UN DESA, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and the UN Global Compact (UN GC), saw a growing recognition of the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships in our response to and recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. At the Forum, UNDP, UN GC and ICC jointly announced the COVID-19 Private Sector Global Facility, aiming to mobilize a minimum of 5

billion USD in support of local business communities to enable a resilient rebuild from the pandemic. DHL, Microsoft and PwC are among the first strategic partners to join the Facility.

Mapping UN-system resources and capacities for supporting preparedness

In the context of consultations on recommendations for developing Our Common Agenda, UN DESA and UNDP coordinated a mapping exercise of existing reports, mechanisms and processes in the UN system focused on preparedness, disaster risk reduction, forecasting and other related fields. Forty-nine UN entities participated in the mapping exercise. Entities worked together to assess

assets and gaps, identify opportunities for leveraging the UN system's data and knowledge, and co-create solutions for advancing the commitment on preparedness envisioned by Member States in the Declaration adopted on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations.

The mapping yielded more than 800 submissions, addressing one or more of eight broad typologies of risk: biological risks, including epidemics/pandemics; conflict and security risks (social unrest, conflict, violence); cybersecurity risks; disaster risk, including from climate variability and change; economic and financial risk; environmental risks (technological, natech, environmental degradation); risks related to human mobility, including situations of forced displacement; and social risks (inequality, discrimination, lack of social protection, gender-based violence, or similar). The mapping helped to raise awareness of the immense depth and breadth of UN-system knowledge and operations that address multiple forms of risk in both individual and intersecting ways.