

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS





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Improving national capacities for managing social protection systems

The UN DESA/ILO project, Achieving SDGs and Ending Poverty Through Universal Social Protection, continued its support to the governments of Cambodia and Pakistan to improve national capacities for developing and implementing inclusive social protection measures and schemes.

The project, which started in January 2019, ran through June 2021. The project provided technical support at country level to strengthen the capacity of public institutions and practitioners in areas identified as critical for social security governance in each context, including better coordination, improved data management, and better enforcement of social security laws.

UN DESA prepared comparative research on governance of social protection systems to provide better technical information for policymaking and undertook related in-country studies, that helped to inform in-country efforts.

Hundreds of civil servants and other stakeholders were trained in governance, administration, and management of social protection systems. ICT support was provided and databases for enhanced data collection, analysis and service provision were created. The project also supported increased visibility and coverage of programmes, while building a broader advocacy base for universal social protection. In Pakistan, more than 550,000 workers were registered during a coverage campaign, with two provinces moving towards universal coverage.



Taking asset management principles and tools to the field

Between February and April 2021, UN DESA brought the asset management expertise of various field authorities to over 2,500 individuals across Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean in the “Online Solutions Dialogues”. This three-part interactive workshop series convened local and national government officials, together with industry, academic and civil society professionals, in discussions about

how to leverage infrastructure assets to meet the challenges affecting our economies, societies and geographies. Participants gained hands-on experience in developing Asset Management Action Plans, the flagship tool developed jointly by UN DESA and UNCDF, analysing trends in asset data over time and devising a climate adaptation strategy for a hazard facing their own communities.

The Dialogues put asset management on the radar screens of thousands of governments, cultivating a deeper commitment to sustainable and resilient infrastructure for the SDGs, backed by a growing network of knowledge and practical support.



Improving data governance

UN DESA has developed a new interactive online training course on data governance for sustainable development. While there is an increasing emphasis on the centrality of data in implementing the SDGs, data governance has not been given sufficient importance. UN DESA's online training course aims to help countries fill this gap.

Strengthening the collection of administrative data

UN DESA and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data initiated the multi-stakeholder Collaborative on Use of Administrative Data for Statistics, consisting of countries and regional and international agencies. The Collaborative takes a cross-cutting approach to bring experiences from different thematic areas, countries and experts with different expertise. Administrative data collected by governments and service providers is increasingly important as a source for the production of official statistics in order to fill data gaps to monitor progress and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to address emerging challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.



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.



Accelerating digital transformation

UN DESA organized a capacity building webinar on *Developing Institutional Capacities in Digital Transformation for a More Inclusive and Equitable Recovery* in December 2020. One of the webinar's key messages is that the global community can best support the digital transformation of developing countries by forging effective partnerships. During the webinar, country lessons were shared in addressing emerging requirements and challenges for policy and decision-making in the age of digital transformation. Overall, more than 300 Member States representatives and other stakeholders benefitted from the webinar, helping to develop country capacity to participate in, and benefit from, the growing opportunities of digitalization while mitigating the risks.

The webinar, *Accelerating Digital Transformation for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from COVID-19*, further provided a platform for sharing different country experiences on effective digital government strategies and supporting countries' efforts in strengthening digital capacities for accelerating the digital transformation to address recovery from COVID-19. The Webinar was pre-registered by a total of 425 participants, from 120 countries. Among them 168 participants were from Africa, and 106 from Asia. The actual number of viewers of the videoconferencing tools is much higher than this number. The number of views of the Facebook livestream video exceeded 3,800.



Institutional arrangements in support of integrated approaches to global climate, land, energy and water strategies

UN DESA is helping Member States to establish effective institutional arrangements that promote coordination and cooperation among national stakeholders for formulating coherent sustainable development policy and strategy.

In 2020-2021, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Namibia received assistance to strengthen national mechanisms to adopt integrated approaches to policy formulation with specific focus on the areas of food, energy and water security and their vulnerability to climate change. The capacity development programme combines support for institutional integration with quantitative assessments using the CLEWS tool.

Supporting data provision for evidence-based VNRs

UN DESA helps countries to use data and statistics for supporting data-driven and evidence-based voluntary national reviews (VNRs).The Department held a workshop in January 2021 on Preparing Evidence-based VNRs, ahead of the 2021 HLPF. The workshop aimed to equip countries with tools, resources and best practice examples for assessing and including the impacts of COVID-19 in VNRs, best practices for integrating new data sources and data innovations with official statistics, data disaggregation and ways to engage data users and communicate data in the VNRs.

Feedback from country participants highlighted the usefulness of the presentations and good practice examples, and identified additional topic areas for future trainings, including data visualization, rapid evaluations for VNRs and methodologies for assessing COVID-19 impacts.

SDG 16 Conference

The SDG 16 Conference, held on 28-30 April 2021, focused on SDG 16 as a key part of the roadmap to respond to

COVID-19 and build back better. It gave the positive message that institutional and policy innovations at all levels can accelerate the implementation of SDG 16 and promote integrated approaches to tackle complex challenges.

Aware of governance challenges posed by the pandemic, experts underscored the importance of strengthening institutional capacity for a sustainable recovery that supports SDG 16 and the 2030 Agenda. Institutional and policy innovations at all levels can accelerate the implementation of SDG 16 and promote integrated approaches to tackle complex challenges including conflict, increasing inequalities, gender inequality, social and economic insecurity, climate change and rapid technological disruption.

UN/INTOSAI Symposium

The 25th UN-INTOSAI Symposium on *Working during and after the pandemic: Building on the experience of supreme audit institutions for strengthening effective institutions and achieving sustainable societies* was held virtually from 28 to 30 June 2021. The meeting discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the operations, working methods and oversight work of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs). UN DESA and partners brought together about 500 participants from 120 countries, including representatives from SAIs, the United Nations and other international organizations and resource experts. The discussions were

organized around four sub-themes: (i) the impact of COVID-19 on the organization, working methods and processes of SAIs; (ii) experiences and good practices in the external oversight of COVID-19 responses and recovery plans; (iii) innovation in enhancing transparency and accountability

on COVID-19 responses, and (iv) resilient accountability systems and institutions in the aftermath of COVID-19. Discussions underscored the dynamism and flexibility of SAIs in their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, both internally and externally and in very different contexts.

