



INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2020-2021 the COVID-19 pandemic added urgent context to the 10 critical action areas committed to by Member States in the political declaration at the SDG Summit in September 2019. The Department focused its work on entry points for accelerating integrated and cross sectoral progress towards sustainable development for all, with the need for future-focused pandemic response and recovery as a critical lens. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the need for transformative change. It has shone greater light on deep-set systemic flaws and added urgency to the need to root them out through data-driven, responsive, risk-informed, inclusive governance, a people- and planet-centred approach to economic development and financial management, and a reinvigorated multilateralism that unites the global community to resolve global problems.

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.
- Strengthening the high-level political forum.
- 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.



Fostering transformation towards a just, inclusive, and sustainable future

The world continues to be faced with the grim realities and the inescapable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, as of today, has no clear end in sight. As the global community grapples with what began as a health crisis and quickly escalated to a calamitous social and economic crisis, deep fault lines are felt in almost every aspect of our societies.

Indeed, the pandemic is cementing the reality that we live in a world of delicately integrated systems of operation and existence. The strength and stability of our economies goes beyond our ability to produce goods, provide services, and manage our finances. That is why we note with immense appreciation, that decision-makers at all levels are recognizing the importance of putting people and planet first. Throughout this pandemic, we have seen the benefits of prioritizing social protection, healthcare access, basic income, and other people-centred approaches. We also saw the criticality of access to the internet and digital services as the speed of the digital transformation and the growth of the digital economy were accelerated. The need for stronger, evidence-based, and risk-informed approaches to decision-making was also made clear.



Our experiences throughout the present pandemic have drawn greater attention to the importance of an effective science-policy interface and the need for reinvigorated multilateralism. The international community was challenged to provide an effective response to the health emergency while containing its acute social and economic fallout. UN DESA has responded to the challenge.

UN DESA Highlights 2020-2021 provides a quick look into the many efforts undertaken by the United Nations Department of Economic and

Social Affairs to foster transformation towards the just, inclusive and sustainable vision for the future as enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In the past year, we further strengthened our interdisciplinary approach, working across our range of expertise to shape multi-sectoral, multidimensional solutions to multi-faceted problems, building on synergies among the SDGs. We gave particular attention to building the capacities of Member States to operate through a multi-dimensional lens, strengthening public institutions to tap the 2030 Agenda as a framework for working across issues and sectors using whole-of-government approaches.

We strengthened our efforts to identify and promote social, economic, environmental, and financing policies and governance strategies, at global, regional, and national levels, that address the root causes of inequality within and across countries. Emphasis was placed on promoting and supporting the development of effective systems of social protection. Placing women and girls at the centre, and working across our work programmes on youth, older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples, we grew our attention to addressing intersectionality and discrimination.

We continued to support Member States and the global community to coordinate efforts to address the urgent issues of development financing. We provided guidance and options for shaping more sustainable financing systems with special emphasis on fairer management of international debt. We continued our work on guiding effective inclusion of the private sector in strengthening

development financing. Effective domestic resource mobilization through International Financing Frameworks, strengthened international tax cooperation, and guidance on curbing of illicit financial flows, remained highlights of our work.

We bolstered Member States' capacities to put data to the service of people and planet, by strengthening existing data sources and leveraging new ones, ensuring the availability of much-needed social, economic, and demographic data, information and analysis. We promoted and practiced a forward-looking approach, helping countries understand how to build greater resilience today, with an eye to supporting people and the planet tomorrow, with particular emphasis on the least developed countries, small island developing states, countries in Africa and in special situations.

Noting the acceleration of the global digital transformation, we worked with Member States and the global community to address the issues driving the digital divide. Our work aimed to mainstream attention to the role of science, technology, and innovation into broader development efforts, highlighting the mutually reinforcing nature of the digital divide and other forms of inequality.

The Department continued to make climate action a priority, aligning responses to the climate crisis with broader implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In our support to the High-level Dialogue on Energy, the United Nations Forum on Forests, and the Water Action Decade, among others, we continued to shape a global narrative of a people-centred approach to protecting our planet through sustainable use of natural and capital resources.

Our support to the intergovernmental machinery remains a fundamental part of our efforts to address these critical issues. As the substantive Secretariat to ECOSOC and its functional commissions and advisory bodies, the High-level Political Forum and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, we facilitated well-rounded deliberations, emphasising human dignity and justice for all. UN DESA's analysis and technical guidance informed a year of people-centred and planet-friendly intergovernmental outcomes that address global development challenges in a holistic manner.

As we move forward in the period of the 76th General Assembly and beyond, we will continue to promote accelerated action to achieve the SDGs. With the 2030 Agenda as the cornerstone of our efforts, we will continue to support relationships between governments and the people they serve, building trust and mutual understanding at global, regional and national levels, to advance our common agenda and to respond to current and future challenges.

Together with Member States, civil society, businesses, and other stakeholders, we will help the world to recover better.

刘振民

WHAT DOES UN DESA DO?



UN DESA is a vital interface between global policies and national action in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Our main activities focus on promoting progress towards global development priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UN DESA's work falls into three broad categories:



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 forward.



Analysis

UN DESA generates, analyses, compiles and monitors a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and statistics to inform and advise Member States and other stakeholders on recommendations for shaping effective development policy and practice.



Capacity-building

UN DESA aids in translating policy frameworks developed in UN conferences and summits into programmes at the country level. Through technical assistance and advisory support, the Department supports Member States to build capacities in policy formulation and implementation, data collection and data application, to translate internationally agreed commitments, standards, policies and programmes into action on the ground.

In executing these functions, UN DESA helps governments and other stakeholders take integrated and networked approaches to decision-making, organising and supporting consultations with a range of stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society.



Major databases

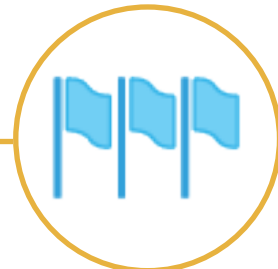
- UN COVID-19 Data Hub
- UN Data
- UN e-Government Knowledge Database
- UN Global SDG Indicators Database
- UN SDG Data Hub
- UN LDC Data
- Ocean Voluntary Commitment Database
- UN Public Service Awards Database
- National Accounts - Analysis of Main Aggregates (AMA)
- Population databases
- SDG Acceleration Action Database
- SDG Good Practices Database
- SIDS Partnerships Database
- UN Comtrade International Trade Statistics Database
- UN System SDG Implementation Database
- Voluntary National Reviews Database

Major publications



SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES

UN intergovernmental meetings are critical to allow countries and other actors to review development progress, and shape and commit next steps for moving development forward, including through implementation of the 2030 Agenda. UN intergovernmental processes support policy reflection and peer learning, galvanize political will, and help to mobilize international cooperation, solidarity, and whole-of-society efforts. In 2020-2021, the world continued to meet at the UN despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. UN DESA worked to support virtual meetings. It continued preparing reports of the Secretary-General, and other thematic reports, to inject analysis and ideas into the discussions and supported the President of the General Assembly, President of ECOSOC and other representatives of Member States in the substantive organization of meetings and negotiations. UN DESA also helped to engage NGOs and major groups and other stakeholders in intergovernmental work.



General Assembly

Intergovernmental processes supported by UN DESA

- Plenary
- Economic and financial committee (Second Committee)
- Social, humanitarian and cultural committee (Third Committee)

Related high-level events and special thematic meetings supported by UN DESA in 2020-2021

- SDG Moment 2020
- First United Nations Summit on Biodiversity
- High-level event on the 25th Anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development
- Ministerial Thematic Forums for the High-Level Dialogue on Energy
- UN Thematic Session on Water and Disasters

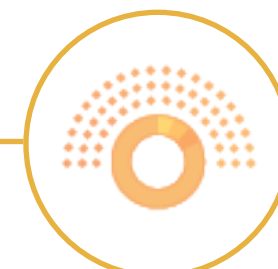


High-level political forum on sustainable development

Commissions

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

- ECOSOC Special Meeting on *Reimagining Equality: Eliminating racism, xenophobia and discrimination for all in the Decade of Action for the SDGs.*
- ECOSOC Special Meeting on *A Vaccine for All*



Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

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 (ECOSOC) | World Data Forum |
| Financing for Development Forum (ECOSOC) | World Summit on the Information Society Forum |
| Internet Governance Forum | Youth Forum (ECOSOC) |
| Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs | |
| Partnership Forum (ECOSOC) | |
| Sustainable Development Goals Investment Fair | |



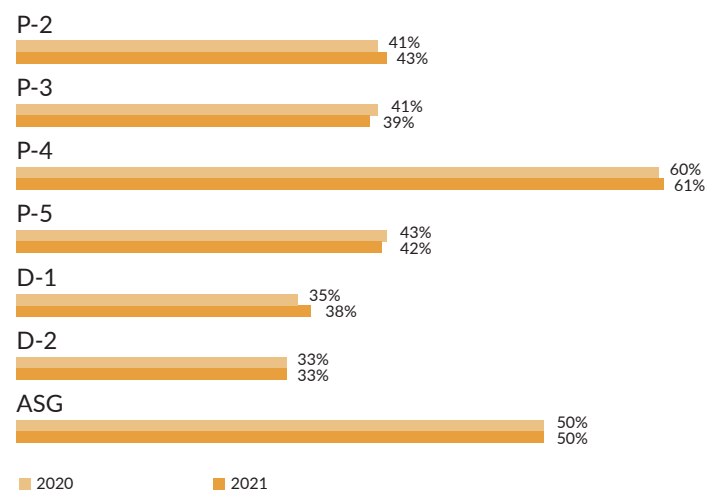
UN Collaborative Mechanisms

- 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
- Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs

UN DESA IN NUMBERS

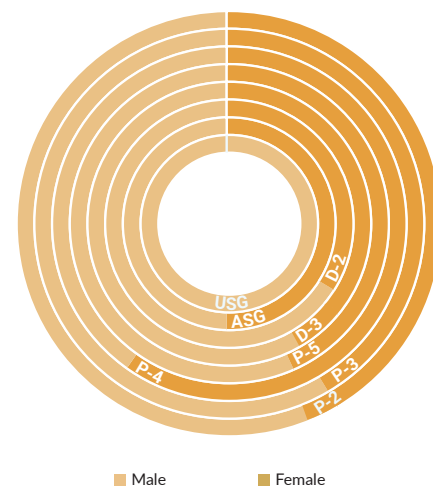
UN DESA Staff represent more than **80** countries worldwide, from all world regions

% of staff in professional categories who are female (2020 vs 2021)



As of 31 March 2021, 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.

Progress toward gender parity at the Professional level in UN DESA



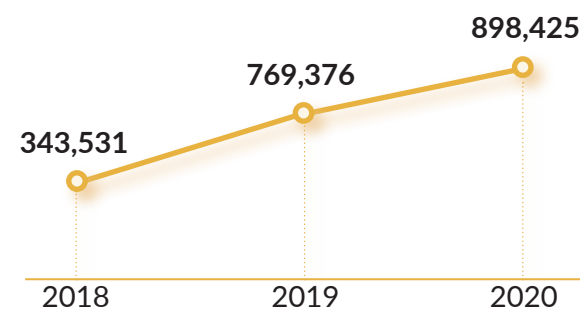
From January to December 2020, UN DESA submitted in total **208** parliamentary documents, including

- 51 Reports of the Secretary-General
- 28 Notes by the Secretary-General
- 48 Notes by the Secretariat
- 10 Procedural documents/agendas and programmes of work
- 4 Reports of the intergovernmental group meeting/expert bodies
- 16 New NGO Applications for Consultative Status with ECOSOC
- 7 Quadrennial Reports of NGOs with Consultative Status
- 40 NGO Statements
- 1 information document
- 1 Discussion paper on the theme of HLPF submitted by major groups and other stakeholders
- 1 Synthesis of voluntary submission to the HLPF
- 1 Compilation of main messages of Voluntary National Reviews

With the impact of the pandemic on travel, in 2020, UN DESA ran some **63** capacity-building projects and activities in more than **60** countries across the globe. The Department received **more than 100 requests** from Member States for capacity-building support.

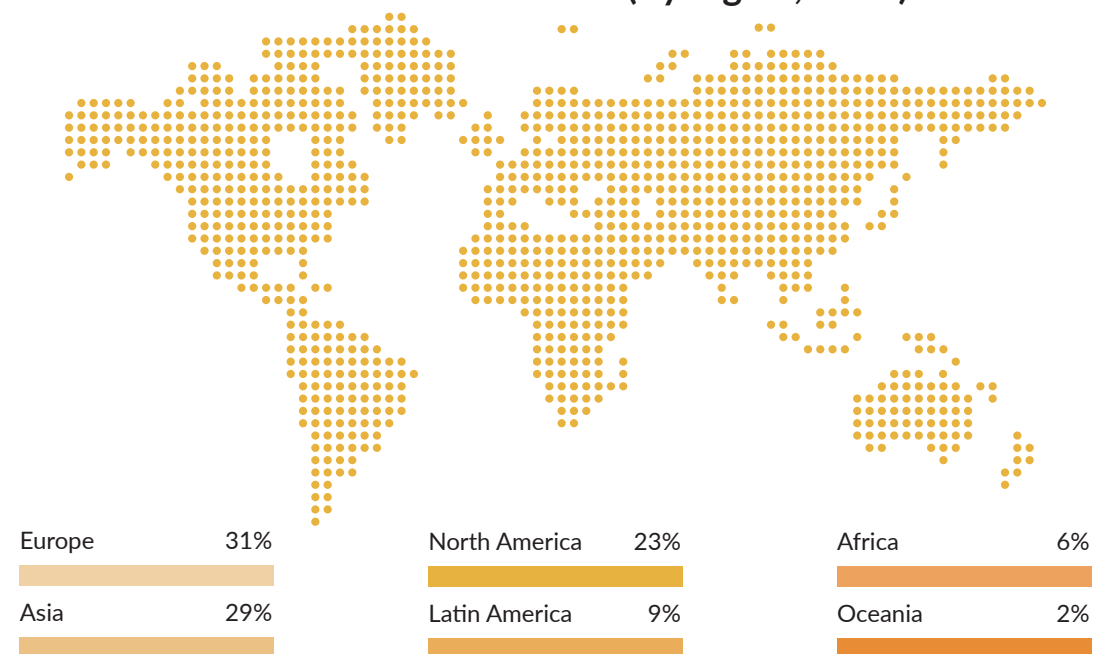
In 2020 **UN DESA's overall website visits increased by 15.2%** over 2019.

Top 5 downloaded UN DESA Publications

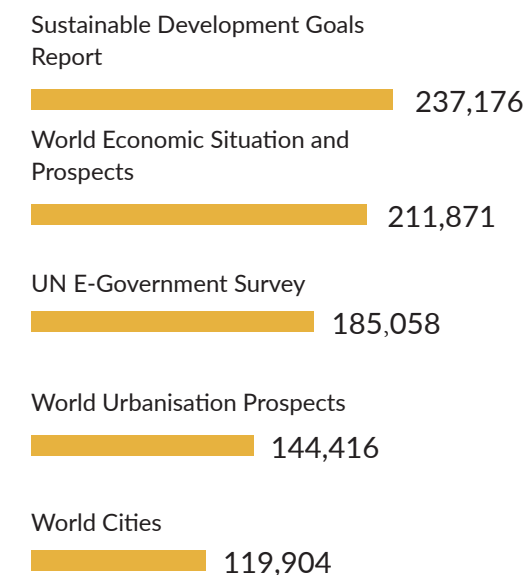


In 2020, UN DESA's top 5 most popular publications were downloaded a combined **898,425** times, a more than 16 per cent increase over 2019.

Share of visits to UN DESA websites (By region, 2020) Total visits



5 most downloaded UN DESA publications in 2020



Twitter

Combined followers across accounts managed by UN DESA: **800,938**
Follower growth in 2020: **7%**

Facebook

Combined Page Likes across accounts managed by UN DESA: **2,138,866**
Growth in Page Likes in 2020: **0.31%**