



**United
Nations**

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

HIGHLIGHTS

2022-2023

Towards
Sustainable
Development
For All

HIGHLIGHTS

2022-2023



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About the UN DESA Annual Highlights Report

The UN DESA 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. It showcases the Department's role in gauging trends, building capacities, and shaping solutions. UN DESA Highlights 2022-2023 covers activities over the period of the 77th Session of the General Assembly (September 2022 – August 2023) and reflects the Department's response to the set priorities and expressed needs of Member States. Over the course of the 77th General Assembly UN DESA put its expertise to the task of supporting Member State efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda amidst multiple, intertwined, compounding crises, building their capacities to respond effectively and shape a transformative recovery that builds their resilience for the future.

The UN DESA Annual Highlights is produced by the Strategic Planning and Communication Services in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, drawing on input authored across the Department. Acknowledgements go to the team of dedicated focal points who helped pull it all together: Adriana Alberti, Anni Haataja-Beerli, Nina Brandt, Madhushree Chatterjee, Elie Hobeika, Kenneth Iversen, Midori Kanda, Resina Katafono, Stephen Kisambira, Amine Lamrabat, Meng Li, Cheryl Sawyer, Mita Sen, Andrew Smith and Minoru Takada.

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The UN DESA Annual Highlights is available on UN DESA website at: <https://www.un.org/en/desa/highlights-report-2022-2023>. It can also be accessed through the QR code on the left.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIS	Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas	ICT	Information and communications technology	UNCRD	United Nations Centre for Regional Development
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism	IDLO	International Development Law Organization	UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
AU	African Union	IFMS	International Forum on Migration Statistics	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019	IGF	Internet Governance Forum	UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests	IMF	International Monetary Fund	UN-ENERGY	The United Nations' mechanism for inter-agency collaboration in the field of energy
CSocD	Commission for Social Development	INFF	Integrated national financing framework	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
DCF	Development Cooperation Forum	LDC	Least developed country	UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
DRR	Disaster risk reduction	LDC5	Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa	LLDC	Landlocked developing countries	UN-OHRLS	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council	LOSI	Local Online Service Index	UNOSD	United Nations Office for Sustainable Development
EGDI	E-Government Development Index	LRGF	Local and Regional Governments Forum	UNPDF	United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund
EGM	Expert Group Meeting	MGoS	HLPF Major Group and other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism	UNPSA	United Nations Public Service Awards
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	MDB	Multilateral development bank	UN-Water	Interagency mechanism for coordinating the UN's work on water and sanitation
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance	MVI	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index	UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
EU	European Union	NGO	Non-governmental organization	VLR	Voluntary Local Review
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	ODA	Official development assistance	VNR	Voluntary National Review
FfD	Financing for Development	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	WESP	World Economic Situation and Prospects
FSDR	Financing for Sustainable Development Report	OG-ZAF	Overlapping Generations Model for South Africa	WHO	World Health Organization
FTI	Frontier Technology Issues	QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review		
GDC	Global Digital Compact	RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office		
GDP	Gross domestic product	SAI	Supreme Audit Institution		
GEF	Global Environment Facility	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal		
GFG	Global Forest Goal	SDTF	Sustainable Development Transformation Forum		
GISD	Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance	SIDS	Small Island Developing States		
GSDR	Global Sustainable Development Report	STI	Science, Technology and Innovation		
HESI	Higher Education Sustainability Initiative	UN	United Nations		
HLAB	United Nations High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs	UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development		
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development				
IATT	UN Interagency Task Team on STI for the SDGs				
IBP	International Budget Partnership				

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INTRODUCTION



Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, Secretary-General António Guterres and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell gather at the SDG Pavilion during COP27 - Photo credit: UNIC Tokyo / Momoko Sato



Over the course of the 77th session of the General Assembly, the world continued to suffer significant setbacks in terms of development progress, triggered by inter-related shocks – the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts in many regions including the war in Ukraine, a cost-of-living crisis and debt distress in many parts of world, in addition to longer-term threats and challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and demographic change. Against this backdrop, UN DESA's work continued to address the 10 priority action areas committed to by Member States at the SDG Summit in 2019, while also responding to the Secretary-General's vision outlined in Our Common Agenda to turbocharge action on the SDG progress. The Department also looked ahead to support Member States in preparing for the SDG Summit in September 2023, as well as the Summit of the Future in 2024.

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

UN DESA: RESPONDING TO THE CALL FOR A RESCUE PLAN FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET



It is somewhat fitting that this fifth anniversary edition of the UN DESA Highlights coincides with the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In five short years, we witnessed a world filled with ambition and hopes for a better future transform into a battleground for its very survival. The unrelenting aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, an intensifying climate emergency and escalating conflict seemingly converged to undermine the global community's resolve to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At this half-way point, only fifteen per cent of the SDG targets with trend data are on track to be achieved by 2030. The message is clear: leaders from all sectors of society must step up in the second half of this journey, with urgency and ambition, to turn things around for a better future.

A commitment to supporting Member States meet this great challenge with action, agility and accountability was the driving force behind UN DESA's work in the past year. Getting the 2030 Agenda on track remains at the core of our commitment,

as we championed the SDGs as the pathway to a safe and secure future.

This edition of the UN DESA Annual Highlights report aligns with previous editions in demonstrating how UN DESA strives to deliver concrete achievements in its three key pillars of work – intergovernmental support, analysis and capacity-building.

UN DESA Highlights 2022-2023 showcases the achievements of the Department over the course of the 77th session of the General Assembly (September 2022-August 2023). Consisting of seven thematic chapters, the Highlights 2022-2023 presents the Department's latest efforts to advance key priorities of Member States and the Secretary-General. These include support to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and preparation for the SDG Summit, as well as the continued push to reform the international financial architecture, move beyond GDP, harness digitalization and deliver global public goods. The report also shows how UN DESA is expanding and leveraging partnerships and collaboration within the UN system and beyond to ensure meaningful and lasting impact where it matters most, particularly for the Least Developed Countries. Taken together, the report demonstrates UN DESA's alignment with the Secretary-General's call for a rescue plan for people and planet to accelerate efforts towards achieving the SDGs with just seven years left in our journey.

Chapter 1, "Accelerating action on the SDGs at the national and international level", highlights UN DESA's support to Member States and other stakeholders across various intergovernmental and multistakeholder platforms. During 2022-2023, the Department's efforts centred on successful delivery of the High-level Political Forum in July 2023, as well as support to

the preparatory processes leading up to the SDG Summit in September. The year also saw major progress in mobilizing SDG localization, strengthening the capacities of local governments to produce Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) of SDG progress. Since their launch in 2018, there have been more than 200 VLRs conducted worldwide.

Chapter 2, "Reducing poverty and inequality", shows how the imperative to leave no one behind is reflected in the Department's activities. In 2022-2023, UN DESA promoted fully inclusive discourse in key UN processes, amplifying the voices of older persons, youth and persons with disabilities. The Department provided capacity-building support for vulnerable groups, including small-scale farmers and women entrepreneurs, as key agents of SDG transformation. We also tackled the digital divide by calling on Governments to adopt the principle of "inclusion by design" in their policies and regulations.

Chapter 3, "Ensuring sustainable financing", features the Department's continued effort and progress made to overcome the 'great finance divide'. This means ensuring SDG financing and investment reaches those most in need, including Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States and other countries in heavy debt distress. Throughout the year, UN DESA has supported major financing for development processes, as well as the Secretary-General's key priority agendas, including the SDG Stimulus and reforms to the international financial architecture.

Chapter 4, "Making data count", gives attention to UN DESA's support to Member States in collecting official data crucial to monitor and assess SDG progress. Despite the many challenges in meeting the Goals by 2030, underlying work to expand the coverage and availability of data for SDG monitoring has steadily improved throughout the year, serving as a critical foundation to inform policymakers and identify areas for policy intervention. The Department also supported the Secretary-General to build momentum for broader measures of well-being, beyond traditional economic measures such as Gross Domestic Product.

Chapter 5, "Strengthening national institutions and accountability", places emphasis on UN DESA's work towards SDG 16, as a key enabler for the 2030 Agenda. It features actions the Department has taken at international, regional, national and local levels, to provide knowledge-sharing and capacity-building support and tools to Governments and institutions to effectively deliver on the SDGs.

Chapter 6, "Ending the war on nature", highlights the Department's work to tackle the climate and environmental crises, by ensuring a synergistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. This includes a successful United Nations 2023 Water Conference, as well as follow-up to key events on oceans, energy and forests. Together, these serve as a platform for accelerated actions by Member States and other stakeholders in the form of commitments, pledges and partnerships.

Lastly, Chapter 7, "Framing the future of development", presents UN DESA's key initiatives to enhance its strategic foresight and address socioeconomic challenges critical not only to meeting the SDGs, but also future-proofing sustainable development beyond 2030. It provides examples of the Department's analytical and capacity building work, offering policy options for countries to enhance their resilience to future shocks and crises, especially for the most vulnerable.

As we look to the key milestone moments of the 78th session of the General Assembly, UN DESA will continue to facilitate, and add value to, Member States deliberations on critical sustainable development issues. The upcoming COP 28 in 2023, at the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the annual High-level Political Forum and the Summit of the Future are among those critical moments of action and accountability that will demonstrate whether or not we've answered the call and are headed in the right direction, at pace. We in UN DESA stand ready to deliver results and help Member States to get ahead of the world's development challenges.

Li Junhua

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Head of UN DESA

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 and 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

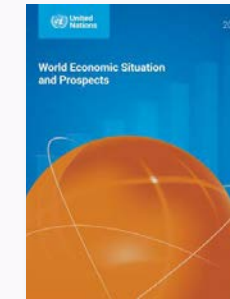
- UN COVID-19 Data Hub
- UN Data
- UN e-Government Knowledge Database
- UN Global SDG Indicators Database
- UN SDG Data Hub
- UN LDC Data
- Ocean Voluntary Commitment Database
- UN Public Service Awards Database
- Population databases
- SDG Acceleration Action Database
- SDG Good Practices Database
-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



MAJOR PUBLICATIONS



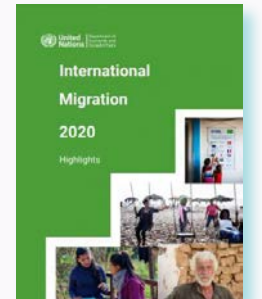
World Social Report



World Economic Situation and Prospects



Financing for Sustainable Development Report



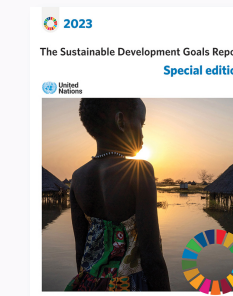
International Migration Report



State of the World's Indigenous Peoples



The Global Forest Goals Report



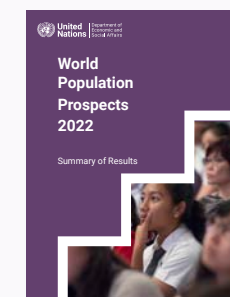
The Sustainable Development Goals Report



The World's Women



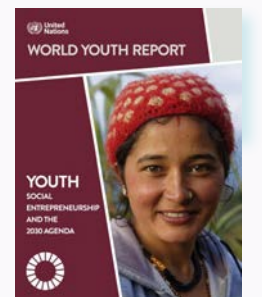
United Nations E-Government Survey



World Population Prospects



World Public Sector Report



World Youth Report

SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES AND INTER-AGENCY AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

United Nations intergovernmental processes and multistakeholder mechanisms support policy reflection and peer learning, galvanize political will, and help mobilize international cooperation and solidarity for moving development forward. UN DESA supports these processes through preparation of thematic reports, stakeholder consultations, and other input and advice to meetings and negotiations.

General Assembly

Intergovernmental Processes Supported by DESA

- 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 2022-2023

- UN 2023 Water Conference
- Fourth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies
- Summit on Transforming Education
- Special High-level Event of the General Assembly and ECOSOC on the “Doha Programme of Action as an accelerator of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Intergovernmental Processes Supported by DESA

Commissions

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

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

Related high-level events and special thematic meetings supported by UN DESA in 2022-2023

- Special Meeting on “Social and economic measures to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”
- Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
- Special Meeting on “Unleashing the transformative power of SDG16: Improving governance and reducing corruption”
- Special Meeting on “Saving Lives: Addressing the urgent food security needs of Haiti”

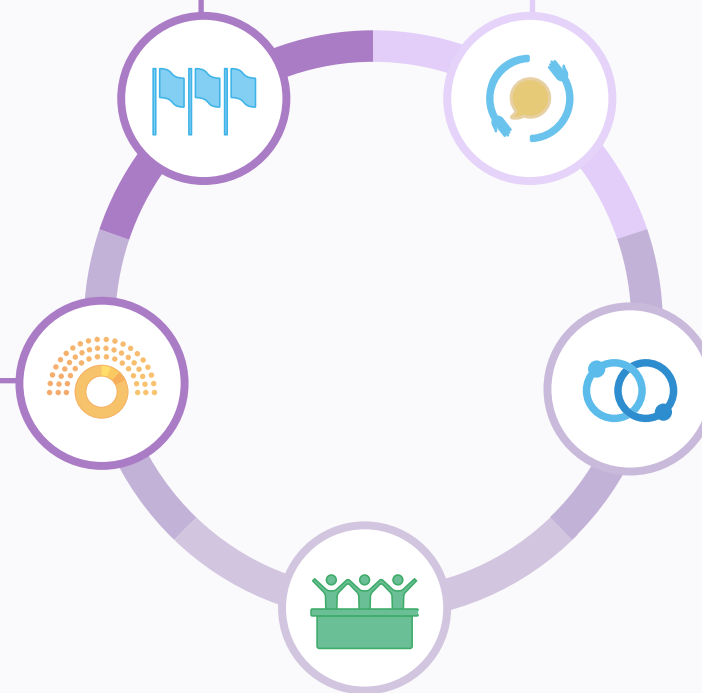
Forums

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

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-Energy
- UN-Oceans
- UN-Water

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development



UN DESA IN NUMBERS

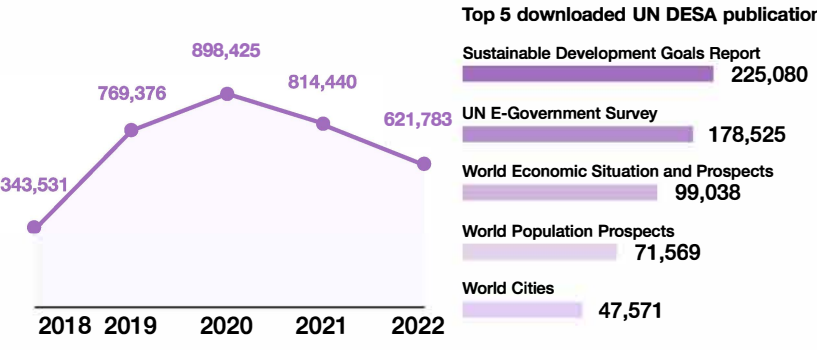
CAPACITY BUILDING



PUBLICATIONS OUTREACH

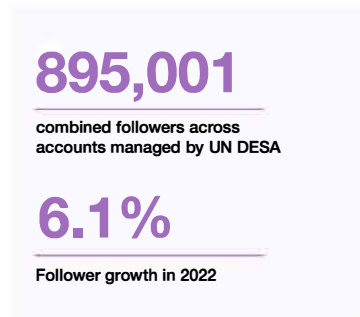
In 2022, UN DESA's top 5 most popular publications were downloaded a combined

621,783 times

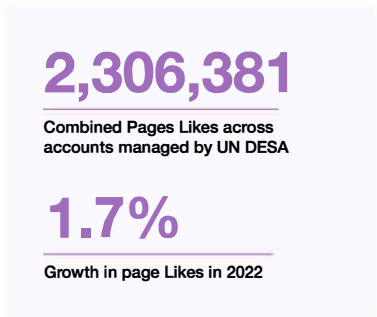


SOCIAL MEDIA

TWITTER(2022)



FACEBOOK(2022)



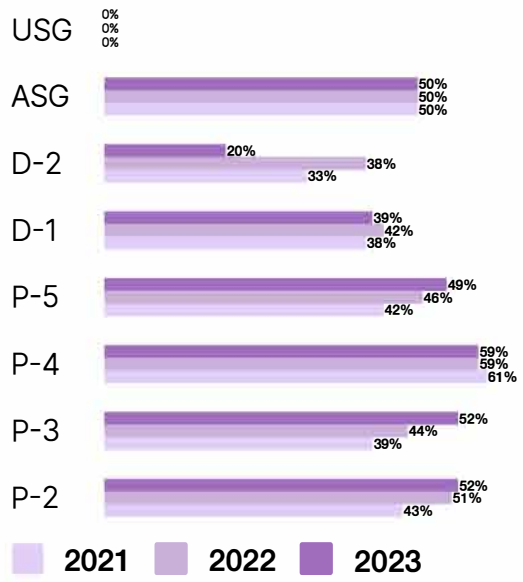
PARLIAMENTARY DOCUMENTS

- 251** Parliamentary documents were submitted by UN DESA from January to December 2022, including:
 - 78** NGO statements of expert group and meetings
 - 49** Reports of the Secretary-General
 - 42** Notes by the Secretariat
 - 35** Notes by the Secretary-General
 - 18** Reports of expert group and other meetings
 - 14** Reports of expert group and other meetings
 - 13** Procedural documents Agendas + Programmes of work
 - 2** New NGO Applications for Consultative Status with ECOSOC

INSIDE DESA

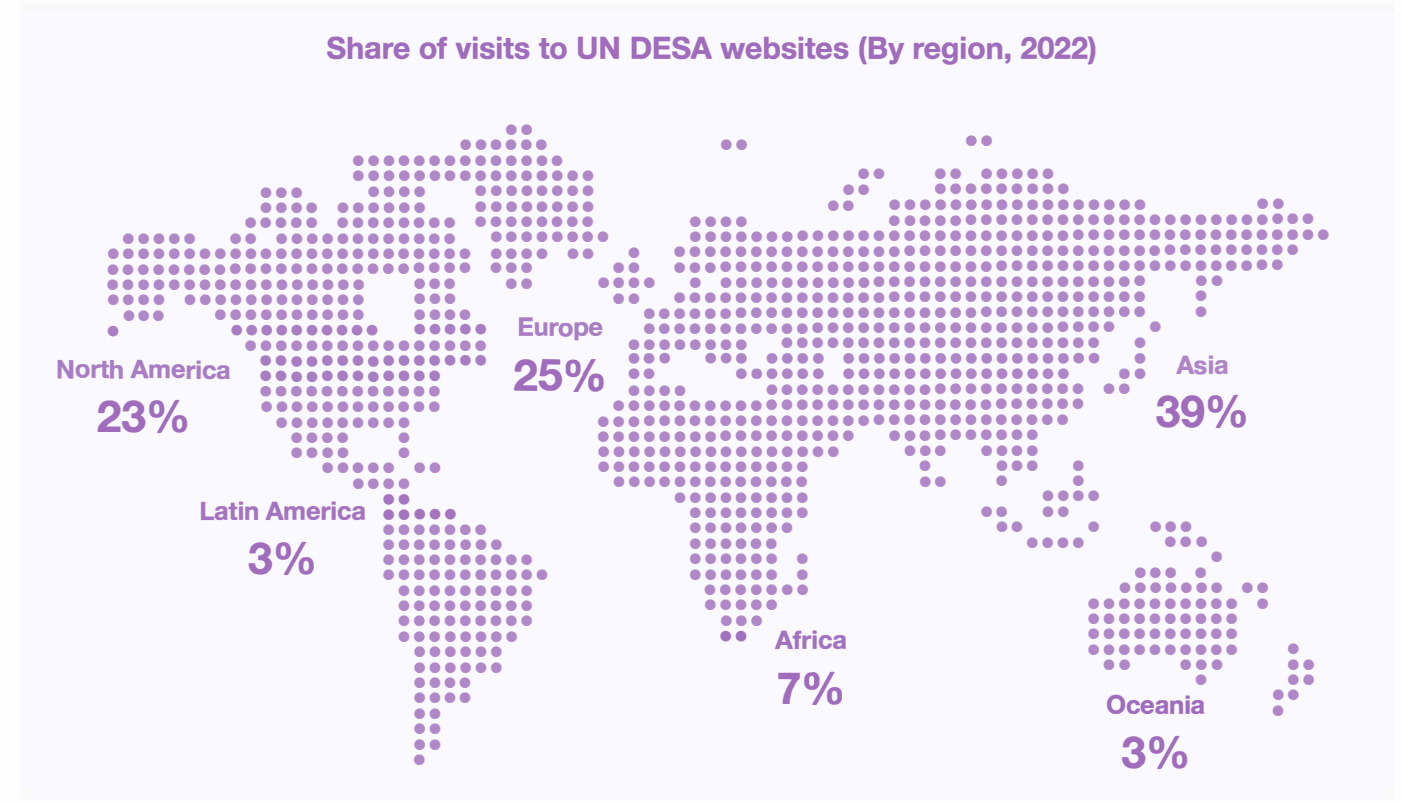
UN DESA Staff represent more than **94** countries worldwide, from all world regions

% of staff in professional categories who are female (2021 - 2023)



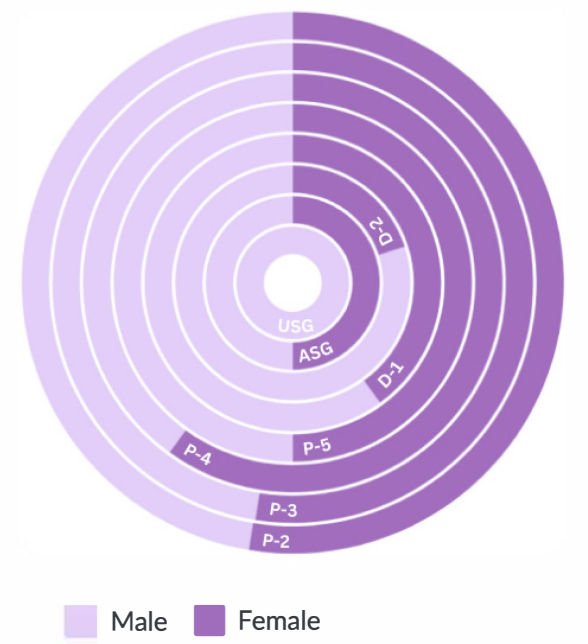
UN DESA ON THE WEB

In 2022, UN DESA website visits increased **16%** over 2021



Progress toward gender parity at the Professional level in UN DESA

As of 30 June 2023, **52%** of UN DESA staff in professional categories identified as female. UN DESA has so far met or exceeded gender parity at the ASG, P-5, P-4, P-3 and P-2 levels. Women represent more than 50% of staff at each level in general service categories. The Department remains committed to the promise of gender parity and women's empowerment within its workforce, operations and substantive approach.





ACCELERATING ACTION ON THE SDGs AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Photo credit: UN Photo / Manuel Elías

... to deliver on the promises of the 2030 Agenda.

In 2022-2023, UN DESA continued to support Member States and other stakeholders in addressing the multiple crises and formulating a global response to get the world back on track to achieve the SDGs. The Department supported SDG implementation across various intergovernmental and multistakeholder platforms, to ensure commitments lead to transformative actions at all levels.

UN DESA ...

- Provided data, analysis, policy recommendations and expert guidance to support a successful HLPF and SDG Summit in 2023, including supporting the intergovernmental consultations on its Political Declaration.
- Strengthened science-policy interface at intergovernmental policy debates, including support to the preparation of the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report by the Independent Group of Scientists.
- Supported Member States in conducting Voluntary National Reviews at the HLPF through global preparatory workshops and webinars and facilitated relevant peer learning through VNR Labs.
- Followed up on means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda through its support to the ECOSOC forums on financing, science, technology and innovation (STI) and partnerships.
- Created opportunities for broad stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes, particularly the private sector, local authorities, higher education institutions and youth.
- Supported SDG implementation at the regional, and national levels, in collaboration with Regional Commissions, with special attention to countries in special situations.
- Mobilized efforts to advance SDG localization, including collaboration with local networks and on-demand support to conduct Voluntary Local Reviews.

01

ACCELERATING ACTION ON THE SDGs AT THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

At the half-way point to 2030, the world is faced with complex and interconnected challenges that hamper the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, these challenges also present opportunities for integrated recovery strategies and systemic progress. In 2022-2023, UN DESA continued to support Member States in accelerating the recovery from the pandemic and getting back on track to achieve full implementation of the SDGs by 2030. The Department explored innovative ways to strengthen the leadership and effectiveness of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) as the central UN platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda.

Conducting in-depth review of the implementation of the SDGs

In July 2023, the HLPF brought more than 110 Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers, and Ministers along with other actors back to the UN Headquarters in New York to reflect on accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 and achieving the 2030 Agenda. The Forum addressed the theme “Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels,” and also reviewed in-depth SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, 7 on affordable and clean energy, 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure,

11 on sustainable cities and communities, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. The Forum served as the “pre-Summit” moment to conduct mid-term review of SDG implementation and drive the momentum towards the 2023 SDG Summit in September.

To inform in-depth reviews of the five SDGs in focus, as well as the mid-point review of the 2030 Agenda both at the HLPF and the SDG Summit, UN DESA also carried out a series of Expert Group Meetings (EGMs). The EGMs helped assess overall progress and challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda in the context of COVID-19 recovery and identified areas of concern as well as opportunities for transformation since each in-focus SDG was last

HLPF IN NUMBERS:

2023 HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC

Theme: Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

9

Days

5

SDGs under review

38

VNRs

1

EU Voluntary Review

Who was there?

More than 110

Heads of State or Government, Ministers, Vice Ministers and Ministerial Level Officials

134

Key note speakers, panelists, lead discussants, respondents, moderators and youth speakers in townhall, panels and fireside chats

181

Statements in general debate

to talk about



More than **800** MGoS & NGOs accredited to ECOSOC

12

Special Events

16

VNR Labs

204

Side Events
141 in person & 63 virtual

19

Exhibitions at UNHQ



Sherwin Bryce-Pease (centre at podium), Bureau Chief and Correspondent of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, moderates a panel discussion during the high-level political forum on sustainable development – Photo credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elias

reviewed at the HLPF. The meetings also looked to the future and suggested ways to mitigate trade-offs, harness synergies, and leave no one behind, including women and girls. The meetings were held in Bilbao, Spain; Vienna, Austria; and in New York, bringing together a diversity of experts and stakeholders from the UN System, government, the private sector, academia, and civil society.

Strengthening science-policy interface at national and international levels

UN DESA supported the Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General to draft the quadrennial Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), to strengthen the science-policy interface at the national and international levels. The Department organized five expert regional consultations and gathered widespread input to inform the report preparations.

As an assessment of assessments from the scientific community, the 2023 GSDR is one of the key inputs into the deliberations at the quadrennial SDG Summit where Heads of State and Government meet to take stock of progress on the 2030 Agenda. An advance unedited version of the report was made available to Member States and other stakeholders in March 2023 to inform preparations for the SDG Summit, including the intergovernmental consultations on the Political Declaration.

Facilitating peer-learning for effective review of SDG implementation

To help prepare the stage for Member States in presenting the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the HLPF in July 2023, UN DESA organized two global preparatory workshops in December 2022 in Turin, Italy, and in March 2023 in Sofia, Bulgaria. These workshops provided opportunities for



Participants at the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) and its interlinkages with other SDGs, held in March 2023, in Vienna, Austria – Photo credit: UN DESA

Member States to conduct peer-to-peer learning and exchange of experiences on the VNRs, including good practices, lessons learned, and issues faced by the VNR countries. The second workshop in May 2023 also featured “VNR Clinics”, where VNR countries provided case studies on their preparations.

The Department, in partnership with various UN and other entities, also organized 16 VNR Labs during the HLPF in July 2023. The VNR Labs served as an informal platform for experience-sharing and reflection on the VNR process, covering a range of topics related to SDG implementation.



UN DESA staff and participants discuss at the GSDR 2023 Regional Consultation Workshop for East Asia and the Pacific in November 2022 in Manila, Philippines – Photo credit: UN DESA



Nyovani Madise, member of the Independent Group of Scientists for the GSDR 2023, discusses with Shantanu Mukherjee, Director of the Economic Analysis and Policy Division of UN DESA at the Regional Consultation Workshop for Africa in December 2022 in Lilongwe, Malawi. - Photo credit: UN DESA

Accelerating localization of the SDGs

In November 2022, together with partners, UN DESA supported the production of a Voluntary Local Review (VLR) by the local government of Filadelfia in Paraguay, the first of its kind in the country. Based on the value of this experience, the SDG Commission and the Technical Secretariat for Economic and Social Development Planning of Paraguay, with support from UN DESA, began introducing the practice to local governments in other regions of the country, starting with a capacity building workshop in June 2023. The Department is further providing capacity building support on VLRs to local governments including from Argentina, Bolivia, the Gambia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

To further support the local and regional implementation of the SDGs, the UN Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) and the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) of UN DESA co-convened the International Mayors Forum in April 2023 in Dakar, Senegal. The forum supported local authorities and communities in achieving a better understanding of successes, lessons learned and good practices to the implementation of the SDGs, particularly those in focus of the 2023 HLPF.

In addition, UN DESA in collaboration with partners convened the Sixth Local and Regional Governments Forums (LRGF) as one of the key special events during the 2023 HLPF. The forum illustrated the



Voluntary Local Reviews

In 2022, UN DESA launched a demand-driven programme of work to support local governments to prepare Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) of the implementation of the SDGs. While VLRs are not mandated by the 2030 Agenda, the process of preparing them provides multiple benefits to the entities engaging in them and to SDG implementation at large, including:

- Contributing to the collection and analysis of timely, accurate and disaggregated data on SDG implementation and on the furthest behind at the local level;
- Bringing stakeholders closer to decision-making processes;
- Strengthening multilevel governance; and
- Fostering integration of the SDGs into local planning.

The practice of preparing VLRs is being taken up not only by capital and large cities, but also by a growing number of smaller cities, provinces, and districts, including in rural areas. Since 2018, more than 200 VLRs have been provided from all regions of the world to advance SDG localization.



Participants discuss at the International Mayors Forum in April 2023 in Dakar, Senegal - Photo credit: UNOSD/UN DESA

interconnected importance and breadth of SDG11 to the whole 2030 Agenda, as well as how local and regional governments are localizing the SDGs through high-impact localization policies.

Integrating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the AU Agenda 2063

UN DESA, in close collaboration with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), continued to support regional and national efforts in integrating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and African Union (AU) Agenda 2063. The collaborative work strengthens the AU-UN Cooperation Framework signed by the Secretary-General in 2018, by delivering joint activities and programmes for the implementation, tracking, monitoring and reporting of the two Agendas.

For example, in March 2023, UN DESA and APRM held the second joint continental workshop on VNRs and Domestication of Agenda 2063 in

Durban, South Africa. The workshop, attended by 48 government officials from 25 countries, provided a regional platform for peer-learning on good practices, aimed at integrating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and AU Agenda 2063. The workshop strengthened capacities of African countries to present progress on the implementation of the two agendas through the VNR process, including on effective national-to-local implementation of the SDGs through Voluntary Local Reviews. It also supported countries to build strong institutional and governance frameworks in line with the Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, which were developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.

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We share our experiences and learn from each other and when we leave a workshop like this, we have something to carry back home. It is a very good learning session, and it provides us with a wider range of issues that we can be able to accommodate as we contextualise them to our own situation.

by **Malefu Delinah Khanyapa**
Director for Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of
Finance and Development Planning, Lesotho

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Participants discuss at the APRM-UNDESA Continental Capacity Building Workshop, Durban, South Africa 2023 - Photo credit: APRM/UN DESA

Supporting Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs in Africa

In 2022-2023, UN DESA continued to serve as the secretariat for the eighth ECOSOC Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum), held in May 2023, and supported the work of the UN interagency task team on STI for the SDGs (IATT) and the 10-Member group.

To strengthen science, technology and innovation ecosystems in Africa to accelerate SDG implementation, UN DESA, together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), also supported the convening of the first STI in Africa Day on the margins of the 2023 STI Forum. It culminated in the launch of the STI for Africa Coalition, which presented a major step forward in mobilizing resources and support for STI globally for Africa's development. Co-led by Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, and South Africa and supported by UN DESA and ECA, the Coalition will focus on mobilizing talent and investment in the diaspora, promoting awareness of science, technology, and innovation opportunities in Africa, and act as a vehicle to advance Africa's STI interests within the various processes taking place at the United Nations and in Africa to accelerate the attainment of the SDGs.

Harnessing the power of partnerships to accelerate SDG implementation

In 2022-2023, UN DESA continued to serve as the secretariat for the ECOSOC Partnership Forum and organized a Partnership Exchange on the margins of the Partnership Forum to provide additional space for Member States and other stakeholders

to share knowledge and expertise in the design and implementation of partnerships that will contribute to SDG implementation."

Through its Partnership Accelerator Initiative, UN DESA also established regional networks of partnership champions in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, and strengthened multi-stakeholder partnerships at the national level in the Bahamas, Maldives, Mexico and Sri Lanka. Additionally, the Department launched an online Partnership Learning Centre with resources on how to build and manage effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for the SDGs.

Since its launch in 2019 in connection with the first SDG Summit, the Partnership Accelerator Initiative supported development and dissemination of freely available partnership guidebooks and research papers to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships, as well as organization of virtual and in-person trainings and events. The initiative has worked with a range of partners, including 18 countries and Resident Coordinators, regional UN entities and others, totaling more than 1,000 stakeholders from various sectors.

In collaboration with the Asia-Europe Foundation, UN DESA also convened the 2022 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum (SDTF) to facilitate transformative actions and maximize synergies towards SDG implementation for countries in both conflict and post-conflict situations. Held in Incheon, Republic of Korea in October 2022, the Forum gathered over 100 participants from developing countries as well as experts and practitioners from international organizations,

NGOs, the public sector and academia. It resulted in the Incheon Communique, which addressed issues related to the current geopolitical context and the impact of COVID-19, and highlighted the need for accelerated action for sustainable development governance, as well as transformative actions to account for interlinkages among the SDGs.

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The Partnership Accelerator generated a catalytic change, and reinvigorated the UN team on the ground in its efforts to convene and engage holistically in the Maldives for the 2030 Agenda.

by **Catherine Haswell**
UN Resident Coordinator for the Republic of Maldives

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Supporting sustainable development in Small Island Developing States

Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to support the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway to advance sustainable development in Small Island Developing States that face unique social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities. UN DESA supported the work of the High-Level Panel of the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) as well as the SIDS Partnership Framework. Ahead of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2024, in July and August 2023, the Department supported the regional preparatory meetings for the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas (AIS) region in Mauritius, for the Caribbean region in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, for the Pacific Region in Tonga, and the inter-regional preparatory meeting in Cabo Verde.

Enhancing national implementation of SDGs in Africa through capacity building and peer learning

Throughout the year, UN DESA helped government officials and relevant stakeholders to enhance their capacity to implement the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. For example, during August – September 2022, the Department organized a peer learning workshop for officials from the Governments of Namibia and Zimbabwe on “Rwanda’s experience integrating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and AU Agenda 2063 into its national development plans and strategies” in Kigali, Rwanda. The workshop provided an opportunity for policymakers from Namibia and Zimbabwe to study good practices and lessons learned in Rwanda, which can be reflected into their own national development plans, strategies

and policy frameworks. Following an intense five-day programme that combined presentations by senior government officials from various Rwandan ministries, departments and agencies, as well as field visits, participants were able to receive a deep appreciation of the inclusive development journey that Rwanda has travelled since the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis, to becoming one of the best performing countries implementing the 2030 Agenda and AU Agenda 2063.

Informing progress of UN development system’s offering to countries

To support ECOSOC in its role as an oversight mechanism for accelerating system-wide performance and results in relation to the 2030 Agenda, UN DESA conducted a comprehensive set of



Collaboration and Innovation took center stage at the Sri Lanka Partnership Week 2023 – Photo credit: UN DESA



Participants at the regional meeting for islands in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Sea meet in July 2023 in Port Louis, Mauritius – Photo credit: UN-OHRLLS

surveys, which received feedback from 179 countries as well as from the UN system, including the Resident Coordinators, UN development entities and UN country team members. The results of the surveys informed the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of UN system operational activities (QCPR), which was presented at the ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment in May 2023. The report identified the improved alignment of the UN development system to the needs and priorities of countries in special situations. In 2022, all Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries responding to

the UN DESA survey considered that development system activities were closely aligned with their needs and priorities. 95 per cent of African countries and 94 per cent of Small Island Developing States perceived likewise.

Building a Haiti free of hunger

In 2022-2023, UN DESA continued to address the complex and multi-faceted crisis in Haiti, through its support to the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti (AHAGH). In June 2023, the Department supported the organization of an ECOSOC Special Meeting on the issue of food security in Haiti, which



Government officials attending opening session of the peer learning workshop in Kigali, Rwanda – Photo credit: UN DESA

resulted in mobilization of action and resources to help create a more productive and resilient food system in the country. Haiti's food insecurity is anchored in deep-rooted structural problems and is exacerbated by the ongoing high levels of violence and insecurity perpetrated by armed gangs, which is further threatened by climate-related events. The meeting underscored the urgency for both emergency food assistance and livelihoods assistance to build resilience for food security, especially for the most vulnerable. Young Haitians shared their hopes, vision and solutions and called on the international community to act. Strong calls were made to current donors to demonstrate solidarity with Haitian people and to substantially increase their contributions, and to other donors to contribute to the urgent funding appeal to ensure the full operationalization of the humanitarian response plan.

in December 2022 and June 2023, to promote coherence and impact for peacebuilding, sustaining peace and sustainable development efforts on the ground. The importance of a nexus approach for peace, humanitarian action and development, as well as the need for greater emphasis on prevention and enhanced coherence on the ground were underscored. The HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, the SDG Summit and the Ministerial Meeting in September 2023 to prepare for the 2024 Summit of the Future were considered as key milestones to deepen the linkages between peace and development.

Bringing business voices and impacts closer to intergovernmental deliberations

Building on collaborative relationships with major private sector umbrella organizations, UN DESA continued to bring business voices and impacts closer to sustainable development debates at the global level, building a global community of sustainability leaders from the business sector and beyond to co-create solutions to accelerate SDG implementation. For example, UN DESA, in collaboration with the UN Global Compact, International Organisation of Employers and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, organized the 2023 SDG Global Business Forum in July 2023. This brought together a global multi-stakeholder community of movers and shakers, problem solvers and innovators on the margins of 2023 HLPF to review trends, discuss priorities, build alliances and co-create high-impact business solutions to turbocharge the SDGs in the remaining seven years before 2030. In collaboration with Resident Coordinators, UN Global Compact



Jose Milltrete Montacy calls for Haiti free of hunger through a video message at the ECOSOC Special Meeting on the issue of food security in Haiti – Video credit: Observatoire de la Jeunesse Haitienne

Harnessing the power of SDGs to link peace and development on the ground

ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission enhanced its collaboration through joint meetings

Local Networks, and Employer Federations, the Forum also featured an hour-long virtual session highlighting local impact stories from around the world.

Highlighting the critical role of higher education in achieving sustainable development

UN DESA, as the co-chair of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), continued to serve its role in building a strong interface between higher education, science, and policy making. In collaboration with other UN partners including UNESCO, the initiative supported raising the profile of higher education sector in supporting sustainable development. It also convened multi-stakeholder discussions to drive actions, share best practices and provide accessible education that effectively integrates sustainability at its core.

For example, in July 2023, UN DESA worked with partners to convene an evolving and action-oriented conversation on the critical role of higher education in achieving sustainable development at the 2023 HESI Global Forum, on the margins of 2023 HLPF. It was attended by 500 participants in-person and approximately 800 virtual, including student groups from Montclair State University and United Nations University.

Enhancing the capacity of public servants for the SDGs

As part of the Global Initiative on Building Capacities of Public Servants for the implementation of the SDGs, UN DESA's Presidential Summit of national schools and institutes of public administration resulted in commitments from around the world to mainstream the SDGs in their curricula. The

commitments and key recommendations from the Presidential Summit will be presented as an input to the SDG Summit in September 2023. The Presidential Summit also resulted in enhanced awareness of the Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development, developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration and endorsed by ECOSOC. It also helped strengthen the capacities to mainstream the SDGs in the curricula of their member schools by exchanging knowledge on challenges, opportunities and innovative practices.

Combating corruption and inclusive governance for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda


In May 2023, UN DESA supported the organization of the ECOSOC Special Meeting on Unleashing the transformative power of SDG16: Improving governance and reducing corruption. This demonstrated the need to further accelerate action to combat corruption to build peoples' trust in governments and ensure public funds and spending are allocated in support of sustainable development. To this end, Member States expressed the need for concerted efforts to leverage the existing international and regional legal instruments, increase international collaboration, intensify national anti-corruption measures and harness digital technologies, while fully engaging the civil society, media and the private sector in these efforts. Furthermore, particular attention was paid to the need to prevent and combat illicit financial flows and strengthen international cooperation and good practices on assets return and recovery.

Transformation is possible, coordination is key

The ECOSOC Coordination Segment brought together the ECOSOC system to address ways to respond to the impacts of the multiple crises on the SDGs, through risk-informed integrated transformative policies and actions in the areas of food security, clean water and sanitation, energy and digital transformation. The discussions gave a clear understanding that the global challenges are interlinked, but so are the solutions. There was emphasis on the need to take decisive action to resolve critical bottlenecks around key enabling areas, including data and digital technologies, effective institutions and financing for sustainable development, which have great potential to multiply efforts to advance SDG implementation. The Segment highlighted that the global, collaborative partnership that brought about the 2030 Agenda is the key to push forward and build up the momentum for bolder and transformative actions to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path and create peace and prosperity for people and planet.



Participants discussing just transition to net zero and a nature positive world at the SDG Global Business Forum in July 2023 - Photo credit: UN Global Compact



REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Photo credit: TopSphere Media on Unsplash

... to give meaning to the commitment to leave no one behind.

UN DESA ensured that global discourse for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is anchored by fully inclusive processes that not only support the most vulnerable people and countries, but also bring them to the forefront as the key agents of transformation.

UN DESA ...

- Promoted full and productive employment and decent work for all as a means to overcome inequalities, accelerate recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve the 2030 Agenda.
- Highlighted population ageing as a defining trend of our time, as well as its potential to accelerate sustainable development.
- Drew critical attention to the importance of engaging with persons with disabilities and young people in ensuring meaningful policy discourse and in the realization of the 2030 Agenda.
- Promoted leaving no one behind as the operational principle to guide the digital transformation shift from “digital by default” to “inclusion by design”.
- Provided tailored policy analysis and capacity-building support for low- and middle-income countries, as well as for the vulnerable groups within these countries.

02

REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

While the world was building back from the COVID-19 pandemic and grappling with ongoing interlinked food, fuel and financing crises, UN DESA's work in 2022-2023 sought to tackle the multidimensional challenges of poverty and inequality; shaping evidence-based policies to realize the 2030 Agenda's central promise to "leave no one behind".

Embracing the potential of population ageing for sustainable development

Twenty years ago, governments adopted the first global agreement recognizing older people as contributors to the development of their societies and committing governments to including ageing in all social and economic development policies. In commemoration of the 20th anniversary of this agreement, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, UN DESA worked with older persons' civil society groups to conduct an in-depth assessment of the Plan of Action in the context of the 61st session of the Commission for Social Development convened in February 2023. The assessment described overall

trends based on an analysis of the outcome of regional reviews and appraisals and the identification of emerging issues and related policy options. The Department also supported Member States as they adopted a resolution calling for the elimination of ageism, highlighting a gender perspective, and noting that intergenerational solidarity contributes to equity and sustainable development among present and future generations.

UN DESA provided an in-depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by ageing societies, resulting in policy recommendations for creating equitable, inclusive and productive societies that benefit people of all ages. Casting population

ageing as a success story and a major global trend, UN DESA's flagship *World Social Report 2023: Leaving No One Behind in an Ageing World* was cited by more than 500 media articles in 52 countries in the two weeks following its launch. The report offered recommendations to balance the need for fiscal sustainability of public pension systems with the goals of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality. It argued for promoting equal opportunities from birth to give every person an equal chance to grow older in good health and with economic security. As governments consider increasing the official age at

retirement or proceed to do so, the report stressed that older persons should be able to continue working for as long as they desire and are able to but should not be compelled to do so. It also called for eliminating barriers to older people's participation in the labour force and supporting learning and skills development throughout the life course. With appropriate foresight and planning, according to the report, governments can manage the challenges from population ageing while enhancing opportunities for all people to thrive and ensuring that no one is left behind.



Participants at the opening of the 61st session of the Commission for Social Development - Photo credit: UN DESA

Creating productive employment and decent work to overcome inequality

UN DESA continued to support Member States to accelerate their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and implement the 2030 Agenda through its work in employment and decent work. In February 2023, the report of the Secretary-General on *Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda* helped guide deliberations during the 61st session of the Commission for Social Development.

During the Commission session, UN DESA helped Member States and various stakeholders to identify

policies related to social protection especially for those in vulnerable situations, labour market regulation and social justice and equity, and development of business incubators and increase in productive opportunities for youth.

Advancing global policy discourse towards accessible and disability-inclusive societies

UN DESA continued to address gaps in disability inclusion through close engagement and collaboration with persons with disabilities and their organizations in convening the 16th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, from 13 to 15 June 2023. To ensure a fully inclusive discourse, persons with disabilities and their representative



A view of participants during the 16th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – Photo credit: UN Photo / Loey Felipe

organizations were consulted in all phases of the event planning and operations, including to identify specific accessibility and accommodation requirements. For example, with support from Member States, official Conference documents and relevant practical information on the usage of UN conference rooms and services were issued in accessible formats. This information was also made available on public portals and on social media platforms well in advance of the meetings, leading to more than 7,000 social media posts related to the Conference.

UN DESA's analysis revealed that at the halfway point to 2030, persons with disabilities continue to be at a disadvantage across all SDGs. The Department partnered with regional commissions, members of the UN Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and other research experts to compile

and analyse disability data, and highlighted best practices in fostering more accessible and disability-inclusive societies, which will be featured in the second UN Disability and Development Report, to be launched in December 2023.

Reflecting on youth voices in SDG implementation

Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to support several key initiatives to ensure youth voices are heard and have a seat in navigating the path to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

For example, UN DESA welcomed over 24,000 participants from around the world to join the April 2023 ECOSOC Youth Forum, which was held in a hybrid format for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. The forum leveraged the expertise of young people to generate the key solutions needed for a fairer, greener and more resilient



2023 ECOSOC Youth Forum – Photo Credit: Office of the UN Youth Envoy/Joel Sheakoski

future for all. From all corners of the world, young people called for the need to listen and work with them to tackle the complex and interconnected crises humanity is currently facing, including the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives. The forum resulted in the identification of several transformative actions needed to regain ground lost in SDG implementation, and shared other recommendations and innovative ideas in preparation for the SDG Summit in September 2023.

The Department also coordinated the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme offering a critical channel for enabling youth to participate in UN processes by formally joining their national delegations at intergovernmental meetings. This included the participation of 57 Youth Delegates

from 31 Member States in the 77th session of the General Assembly in September 2022. 33 Youth Delegates from 22 Member States also participated in the 61st session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) in February 2023, where UN DESA coordinated two briefings for Youth Delegates with the co-facilitators of the Youth Resolution, an informal dialogue with the President of the General Assembly and five information sessions with UN entities on their youth-related work. In addition, UN DESA provided guidance and support for a side event organized by several Youth Delegates from the European Union entitled, “Youth for Youth: Ensuring Quality Education and Gainful Employment within the Broader Framework of Sustainable Development.”



Hybrid side event organized by UN Youth Delegates on the margins of the CSocD61 – Photo credit: Samantha Savarese



Regional workshop on Juncao Technology and its contribution to the achievement of Sustainable Agriculture and the SDGs in Africa – Photo credit: UN DESA

Shifting from “digital by default” to “inclusion by design”

In September 2022, UN DESA released the *UN E-Government Survey*, which revealed that countries with higher e-government capacity tend to have greater gender equality. However, the survey found that there are relatively few countries offering online services of particular benefit to women. For example, only 45 out of 193 countries surveyed allow users to apply online for maternal or new born child benefits. The report also found a persistent gender digital gap, with women being 30 to 50 per cent less likely than men to use the Internet to participate in public life while also being less likely to own a smartphone. This impacts women’s online representation, access, perspectives and knowledge creation. It may also result in the unintentional

exclusion of women and girls from public services, with women less visible in datasets, algorithms, and the machine learning that takes place in the digital transformation of the public sector. The report recommends that leaving no one behind becomes the operational principle guiding policy development and digital transformation. At the policy and regulatory level, Governments should adopt “inclusion by design” or “inclusion first” strategies in the delivery of public services, rather than “digital by default” strategies common in some countries.

The same survey has also shown that while digital development is accelerating in both developed and developing countries, the path to digital inclusion and sustainable development remains fraught, especially in Africa and among countries in special situations. Progress in bridging the digital divide

through e-government development varies by regions. In Africa, only 4 of the region's 54 countries (South Africa, Mauritius, Seychelles and Tunisia) have E-Government Development Index (EGDI) values above the world average, and the very high EGDI group includes no African countries. However, there are positive signs of digital progress in the region, reflected in the movement of Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia and Rwanda from the middle to the high EGDI group and the significant improvement in EGDI values for Guinea, Madagascar, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Algeria and Benin between 2020 and 2022.

Capacity-building for small-scale farmers to tackle poverty and hunger in Africa

UN DESA strengthened knowledge of new sustainable agricultural technologies for more than 100 participants from six African countries and the African Union. The workshop on "Applications of Juncao Technology and its Contribution to the Achievement of Sustainable Agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa" focused on the adoption and implementation of Juncao grass in African countries; a technology with a proven track record of expanding livestock production, meeting demands of local and regional markets, and creating jobs and income streams. The workshop was held in February 2023, in Kigali, Rwanda, in collaboration with the National Engineering Research Centre for Juncao Technology of the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University of China, the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, and the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board. The workshop introduced using science, innovation and technology to promote agriculture development and build the

capacity of smallholder farmers, and resulted in the establishment of a real-time online Juncao technology platform.

Promoting free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education in low-income countries

UN DESA supported the Commission on Population and Development to examine the linkages between population, education, and sustainable development at its 56th session in April 2023. To inform the Commission, *The Report of the Secretary-General on population, education and sustainable development* underlined how the COVID-19 pandemic deepened the global learning crisis by exacerbating pre-existing inequalities in access to and quality of education. The global number of children aged 6-11 years, corresponding to those in primary education, is expected to reach an all-time high of 820 million in 2023, whereas the secondary school-aged population (12-17 years) will peak at 816 million in 2029. These trends will require significant investment in education and skills training particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where the school-age population will see the largest increase between now and 2050.

Member States noted that insufficient budgetary allocations, extreme poverty, early childbearing, armed conflicts, and natural disasters are key factors keeping students out of school, especially in low-income countries. Many recognized that meeting the objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, particularly around preventing early marriage and childbearing and gender-based violence, will help to keep girls in school. There

was also acknowledgement in several sessions that population data – from national censuses, population registers and other sources, with disaggregation by age, sex, and geographic unit – together with administrative data on school enrolment, attendance and completion are essential for planning educational services and monitoring progress towards the education-related targets of the SDGs.

Supporting middle-income countries' efforts to advance the 2030 Agenda

Middle-income countries form a large and heterogeneous group that accounts for around 30 per cent of global GDP and 75 per cent of the world's population, including 60 per cent of the world's poor. Despite their many differences, they face a set of common challenges that require joint action. Multiple and overlapping crises – including the global cost-of-

living crisis, food insecurity, growing sovereign debt burdens, high geopolitical tensions, and the worsening climate crisis – have amplified challenges and constrained countries' resources to address them. At the same time, their economies are yet to fully recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

To support these challenges, UN DESA provided tailored policy analysis for middle-income countries, including through the biennial report of the Secretary-General on *Development cooperation with middle-income countries*, to be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session. Preparations for the report included mapping the current support available to middle-income countries. The report also analyses challenges faced by middle-income countries in achieving sustainable development, with a focus on the environmental dimension, drawing especially upon the expertise of UNEP and other UN entities. The



Wolfgang Lutz, Interim Deputy Director General for Science, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), delivers a keynote address during the opening of the 56th session of the Commission on Population and Development - Photo credit: UN Photo/Loey Felipe

Department also provided policy-oriented briefings to the High-Level Meeting on Middle-income Countries, a session at the HLPF on "Overcoming middle-income countries' challenges in advancing the 2030 Agenda" and the Like-Minded Groups for Middle-income Countries.



Strengthening capacity of women entrepreneurs to accelerate SDG progress

UN DESA launched a series of demand-driven, capacity-building initiatives supporting women entrepreneurs together with Zimbabwe's Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and Small and Medium Enterprise Development and the UN Country Team in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, as in many developing countries, women-owned micro and small enterprises are driving forces supporting livelihoods of the working poor and groups in vulnerable situations. Nonetheless, with limited entrepreneurship and management skills, women entrepreneurs, especially those in the informal sector, have been confronting challenges underlining their resilience towards economic shocks and uncertainties.

The National Capacity Building Workshop on Strengthening Entrepreneurship for Accelerating Progress towards SDGs in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, drew together 65 women and youth entrepreneurs from four provinces. It provided business management skills and digitized solutions to seize online market opportunities. Participants expressed their satisfaction with the workshop and the Ministry has requested UN DESA to replicate the workshop to strengthen capacities of more women entrepreneurs of the country.



Meeting the changing needs for family planning: Contraceptive use by age and method

Contraception assists individuals and couples to achieve their reproductive goals and enables them to exercise the right to have children by choice. To support policy makers in understanding the latest trends and patterns in contraceptive use and needs, UN DESA launched the *World Family Planning 2022 report* in January 2023. Examining the trends and patterns at the global, regional, and national levels between 1990 and 2021, the report revealed that there are sub-populations of women, in particular young women whose needs for family planning are not being met to the same degree as others. The Department recommended that the needs of these groups be addressed to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information, and education (SDG target 3.7), and to ensure that no one is left behind.

A photograph of the Secretary-General speaking at a podium. The podium has a sign that says "SECRETARY-GENERAL". A microphone is in front of him. The background is blurred.

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Secretary-General briefs on "Our Common Agenda" Policy Briefs for the Summit of the Future, including on Reforms to the International Financial Architecture - Photo credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

... to mobilize the resources and investment for countries in need.

In a world where the great finance divide is worsening the debt overhangs that loom over many developing countries, UN DESA continued to support Member States in addressing the urgent need to inject SDG financing for those in need and move the needle forward to reform the international financial system for greater development impact.

UN DESA ...

- Supported Member States to reach consensus on a series of policy actions to scale up financing for sustainable development, including development cooperation, to address the multitude of crises affecting developing countries and support the most vulnerable.
- Led research and analytical work, proposing recommendations to finance sustainable transformations, and informing the Secretary-General's advocacy for an SDG Stimulus and proposals for reforms to the international financial architecture.
- Advanced dialogue and opportunities for mobilizing private investment for the SDGs, particularly for countries in special situations.
- Led and supported several capacity-building initiatives, including on taxation, domestic resource mobilization, integrated national financing frameworks and investing in forests.

03

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

As the confluence of multiple global shocks continues, prospects for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 remain dim without mobilizing stable and long-term financing and investment at sufficient scale to help countries and people most in need. Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to support the international community in navigating these challenges and delivering on the outstanding promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Providing policy advice for financing sustainable transformations

UN DESA led the preparation of the 2023 *Financing for Sustainable Development Report*, in collaboration with more than 60 UN Agencies and international organizations. The report finds that SDG financing needs are growing, but development financing is not keeping pace. It calls on the international community to pursue action in three key areas. First, scale up development cooperation and SDG investment, supporting the Secretary-General's call for an SDG Stimulus. Second, strengthen the international financial architecture by bringing different ongoing

reform processes together, strengthening their effectiveness, and ensuring full alignment with the SDGs and climate action. Third, accelerate national sustainable industrial transformations, supported by integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs). If left unaddressed, a "great finance divide" will translate into a lasting sustainable development divide.

The report formed the basis for discussions at the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, and informed the SDG Investment Fair, a platform which brings together government officials and investors for sustainable investment opportunities that support the achievement of the SDGs.



Raising ambition to scale up financing for sustainable development

UN DESA supported the 2023 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, held in April 2023, which featured high-level political engagement to address pressing issues across all areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The outcome document of the 2023 Forum, adopted by consensus, advanced priorities in key areas, including the Secretary-General's proposal for an SDG Stimulus. The outcome served as an important step forward to address the intertwined crises affecting developing countries. It advances issues that require political momentum at the highest level and will feed into the overall follow up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the High-level Political Forum in July 2023 as well as the SDG Summit and the



2023 Financing for Development Forum – Photo credit: UN DESA

High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in September 2023.

Heads of State and Government, a Deputy Prime Minister and over two dozen Ministers and Vice-Ministers participated in the Forum. Throughout the four-day discussion, participants expressed the need to massively scale up financing for sustainable development, in line with the SDG Stimulus proposals. Participants also noted the need to cope with the multitude of challenges facing developing countries through increased development cooperation, more effective and inclusive international tax cooperation, a comprehensive

policy agenda on tackling debt vulnerability, and fundamental reforms to the international financial architecture.

Advancing SDG Stimulus and reform of the international financial architecture

UN DESA spearheaded the analytical work to inform the Secretary-General's advocacy for an SDG Stimulus and ambitious reform of the international financial architecture. This analysis built on the 2022 Financing for Sustainable Development Report, which identified a 'great finance divide' that prevents many developing countries to raise sufficient



Secretary-General of the UN delivers opening remarks at the 2023 Financing for Development Forum – Photo credit: UN DESA

resources and borrow affordably for investment in climate action, recovery and the SDGs.

The *SDG Stimulus* calls for a significant increase in financing for development, of at least \$500 billion per year. It aims to accelerate progress towards the SDGs through greater investments in digital transformation, education and skills development, sustainable infrastructure, food systems, sustainable energy, nature-based solutions, and universal social protection. It also calls for reforms to the multilateral development banks (MDBs), improvements to the current debt treatment initiatives, and improvements in the global financial safety net and access to contingency financing.

The Secretary-General's *Policy Brief on reforms to the international financial architecture*, published in June 2023 in preparation for the Summit of the Future, builds on these calls in the SDG Stimulus. It adds an emphasis on medium- to longer-term structural and governance reforms that may be challenging to achieve in the short run but, when implemented, will make the financial architecture fit for purpose for the 21st century. The Policy Brief provides concrete recommendations in six key areas: global economic governance; debt challenges and the debt architecture; international public finance; the global financial safety net; financial and capital market regulation; and the international tax system.

Scaling up development cooperation to better support the most vulnerable

Kicking off this year's SDG financing discussions, UN DESA supported the organization of Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), in which Member States

and other stakeholders identified concrete measures and built momentum for transformative action among all development partners to rescue the SDGs and strengthen the SDG Stimulus. Discussions emphasized the role of international development cooperation – such as official development assistance (ODA), South-South and triangular cooperation and philanthropy – in reducing risks among the most vulnerable countries and people. More risk-informed development cooperation will be increasingly critical in addressing crises linked to pandemics, global food and energy shocks and climate change, particularly in countries that face special structural vulnerabilities such as LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and conflict-affected States. The recommendations delivered at the DCF will further inform the discussions at the SDG Summit, High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and beyond.

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Leaving no one behind is a solemn commitment made in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Development Cooperation Forum is indispensable for the attainment of this goal.
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by **Chen Chunjiang**
Assistant Minister of Commerce,
People's Republic of China

Enhancing the role of MDBs in catalyzing private investment for the SDGs

Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to support the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance and its engagement with multilateral development banks to enhance mobilization of private capital for the SDGs. At a side event during the World Bank Group/IMF Spring Meetings in April 2023, GISD Alliance members discussed with senior representatives from the UN, World Bank, shareholder governments and international organizations and recommended concrete actions to advance this agenda.

The discussion highlighted the urgency to develop new instruments and vehicles to address real and perceived risks for private investment, especially in low-income countries. The need to further strengthen the role of the MDBs in project pipeline development was also emphasized. In addition, GISD

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Realizing the full potential of MDBs as catalysts of private investment will require deeper collaboration between the MDBs, their shareholders and the private sector. I wish to thank the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance for their work in providing a private sector perspective on how to scale up investment for sustainable development.

by **Amina Mohammed**
United Nations Deputy Secretary-General

members underscored the importance of quality data on investment opportunities in developing countries.



GISD Alliance discusses SDG Investing with the private sector in Western Asia - Photo credit: GISD Alliance

In February 2023, members of the GISD Alliance engaged with local private sector representatives from Western Asia during a set of panel discussions in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Discussion focused on identifying actions to scale up green finance, including the role of COP28 in directing more private financial flows towards climate and other sustainable development objectives. It also considered ways to integrate long-term sustainability perspective into the investment ecosystem. Private sector representatives from the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the region welcomed this opportunity to exchange ideas on how the solutions developed by the GISD Alliance for scaling up investment in sustainable development could be applied at the regional level.

Convened by the Secretary-General, the GISD Alliance includes 28 members from among the world's largest investors, financial institutions and corporations.

GISD Alliance launches new initiative to enhance SDG-aligned sovereign bonds

The GISD Alliance, supported by UN DESA, has embarked on a new initiative in partnership with the UNDP, that aims to enhance the integrity and quality of thematic sovereign bond issuances by aligning them with the SDGs.

As part of this initiative, the GISD Alliance is developing integrated guidance for governments and investors interested in future issuances of sovereign SDG bonds. The guidance will consolidate lessons learnt and best practices emerging from bonds issued to date with a view to mobilizing longer-term finance for the SDGs.



Opening of the 8th SDG Investment Fair - Photo credit: Martin Fernandez Cardona

Mobilizing SDG investment where it is needed the most

The SDG Investment Fair continues to offer a platform for interactions between governments and private sector actors, peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and capacity building towards closing the SDG financing gap. In 2022-23, the SDG Investment Fair shifted from an annual to a continual platform to connect countries to private investors.

The 7th SDG Investment Fair, held in December 2022, opened with a high-level dialogue on mobilizing investment in LDCs as a prelude to the Private Sector Forum of the Fifth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Doha in March 2023. At the LDC5, the Fair brought senior

officials from Angola, Ethiopia, Malawi, and São Tomé and Príncipe to a side event, which focused on presenting policy reforms and projects that could attract investment in aid of LDC graduation.

At the 8th SDG Investment Fair in April 2023, several commercial banks, investment funds, and development finance institutions discussed solutions that could support investment risk sharing in vulnerable countries. A dozen projects and programmes were showcased, representing \$6 billion in deal flow. The Ethiopian Investment Holdings Co. and Mauritanian Investment Promotion Agency highlighted key projects in sustainable agriculture and infrastructure. Eswatini also featured prominently, with active participation from its Minister of Finance.



Pakistan launched over \$2.4 billion in new initiatives on climate finance at the 8th SDG Investment Fair – Photo credit: UN DESA

To date, roughly one-third of all participating countries are considered as LDCs, LLDCs or SIDS. More investors are signalling interest in these projects and emerging markets. A few recently presented projects in Namibia, Rwanda, Nigeria, and secured partial funding or started implementation. The Fair also provided technical advisory services to Kenya to design and enhance the bankability of three innovative SDG financing projects supported by three UN agencies.

Mobilizing SDG-aligned financing through integrated national financing frameworks

UN DESA continued to support a growing number of countries to incorporate integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs) in the planning of mobilizing and aligning financing for the SDGs. Development of INFFs was first committed to in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, with a view to support countries in establishing nationally-owned sustainable development strategies. Building

on this commitment, the UN, under UN DESA's leadership, has developed analysis and guidance to help countries implement integrated financing approaches at the national level. In response to growing demand for capacity support – with more than 80 countries taking forward INFFs – UN DESA helped broker technical assistance, facilitate knowledge exchange and provide access to technical guidance on INFFs through an INFF Facility, which was launched together with UNDP, the OECD and UNICEF in February 2022.

UN DESA has further stepped up its support in this area, launching two flagship e-learning courses on INFFs during the 2023 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum in April, and providing capacity support to selected countries. For example, UN DESA co-organized a four-day workshop on INFFs in Abuja, Nigeria, in September 2022, bringing together over 300 participants from 52 African countries, facilitating significant progress towards building an INFF community of practice in the region.



Participants of INFF workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, September 2022 – Photo credit: UN DESA

Mobilizing domestic resources and strengthening international tax cooperation

UN DESA's capacity development activities in tax and domestic resource mobilization for sustainable development have continued to support Member States in making effective use of practical guidance produced by the UN Tax Committee.

The treatment of payments for services is a matter of concern for many developing countries. The provision of services remotely by multinational enterprises that are not subject to taxation in the market jurisdiction not only erodes the tax base of that jurisdiction, but also can result in unfair competition with the local brick-and-mortar businesses that do pay taxes. To address these and other concerns regarding services, the 2021 UN Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries (UN Model)

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Tax treaties are complex legal instruments that govern the taxation of cross-border transactions and investments. Attending a tax treaties workshop would give officials a deeper understanding of these treaties' principles, provisions, and practical implications. This knowledge would be valuable for officials involved in international taxation, tax policy formulation, negotiations, and compliance.

by a participant from the Workshop on Treatment of Services in the UN Model Taxation Convention

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Active participation during the UN Workshop on Services in Mexico – Photo credit: UN DESA

includes a number of provisions relating to services that preserve Market State taxing rights – the domestic law taxing rights of the place to which the services are provided – more than under most other Models.

For example, by drawing on the UN Model, the Department organized in May 2023 a four-day workshop on tax policy and administration for countries in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. In cooperation with the Inter-American Center of Tax Administrations, the workshop provided a comprehensive review of the services provisions in the UN Model, including those related to technical and automated digital services. Participants from 18 countries in the region discussed practical examples illuminating key policy and administration risks, helping to build participants' tax treaty negotiation capacity and fiscal resilience.

Investing in forests for a greener future

Mobilizing additional financing for sustainable forest management is crucial for the achievement of the

Global Forest Goals, forest-related Sustainable Development Goals, and other international forest-related goals. UN DESA manages the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network of the UN Forum on Forests. This provides capacity development support to countries and subregional organizations to develop bankable project proposals to gain access to financing for sustainable forest management and in the design of national forest financing strategies. The Network is currently supporting 15 countries and 1 sub-region. UN DESA is also working in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature to prepare a USD 2 million medium-sized GEF-funded project on strengthening the conservation of primary forests. The project aims to raise the profile of primary forests among UNFF members and other stakeholders and highlight the need to increase investment in their management and conservation. In addition to providing capacity development support, the Network's Clearing House continues to provide online databases on funding opportunities, and practical information and learning materials on how to access existing resources, as well as best practices in mobilizing financing.

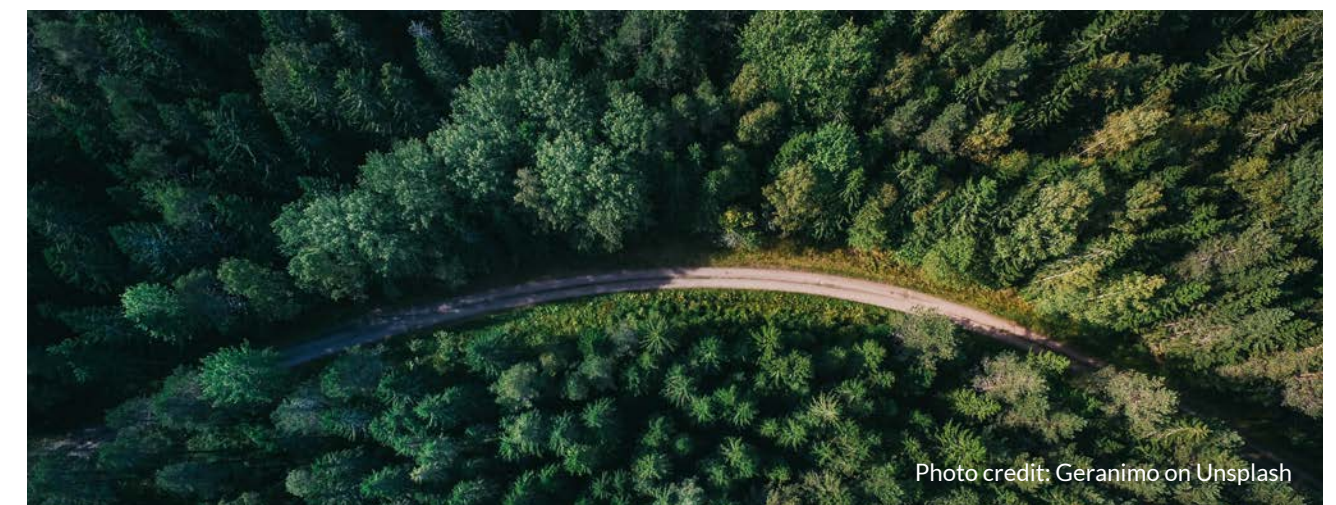
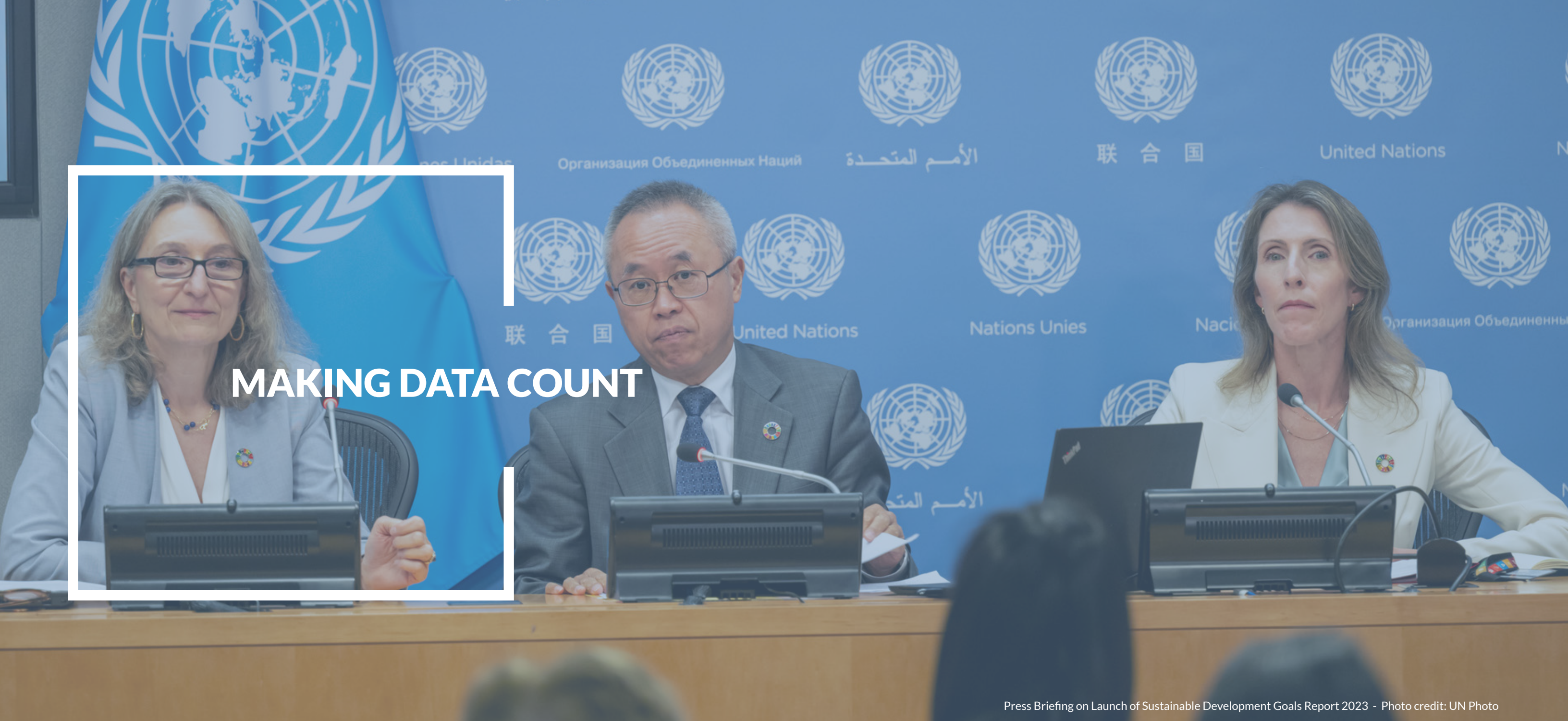


Photo credit: Geranimo on Unsplash



MAKING DATA COUNT

Press Briefing on Launch of Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 - Photo credit: UN Photo

... for evidence-based decision-making.

In 2022-2023, UN DESA continued to support Member States in collecting official data that are crucial for monitoring and assessing the pathway towards achieving the SDGs, as well as developing new measures that “value what counts” for people, planet and the future.

UN DESA ...

- Monitored progress and gaps in global efforts to achieve the SDGs, highlighting the ongoing impact of multiple global crises.
- Supported Member States’ efforts to compile, disseminate and analyze crucial, innovative, detailed, disaggregated, and geo-referenced data for decision-making, and responded to the increasing need for data.
- Convened opportunities for members of the international statistical community to connect, coordinate, collaborate, and strengthen capacities.
- Facilitated initial discussions about broader measures of well-being beyond traditional economic measures such as Gross Domestic Product.

04

MAKING DATA COUNT

Countries and international partners cannot identify priorities and respond to interlinked crises and sustainable development needs without solid data. High-quality data are needed to “make the invisible visible” and ensure that efforts to accelerate action toward the SDGs benefit the people and places most in need.

Monitoring progress toward the SDGs

As the central coordinator of the global SDG indicator framework and monitoring process, UN DESA continued to deliver data, analysis and monitoring tools to inform the latest SDG progress, enabling policymakers and stakeholders to identify areas for targeted policy interventions.

In July 2023, UN DESA launched the *Special Edition of the Sustainable Development Goals Report*, marking the halfway point to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2023 report provided a powerful call to action and presented a candid assessment of the SDGs based on the latest data and estimates. While highlighting the existing gaps and urging the world to redouble its efforts, the report also emphasized the immense potential for success through strong political will and the utilization of available technologies, resources, and knowledge. The report was produced in



The Sustainable Development Goals Report Special edition



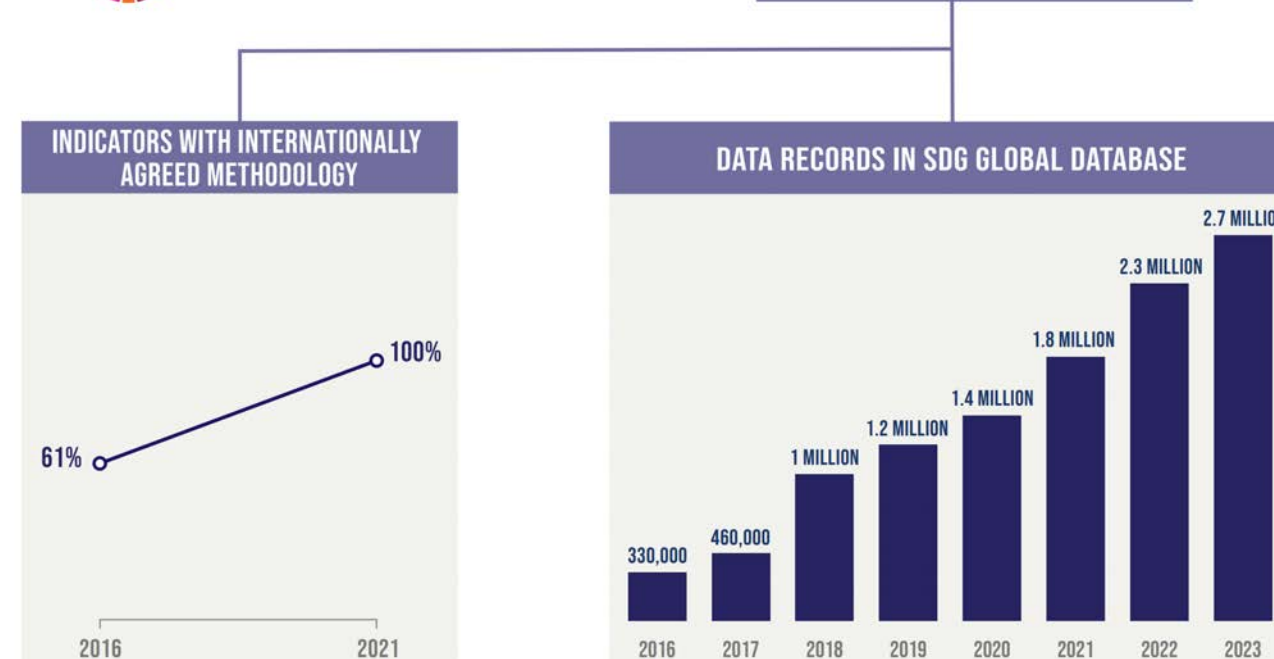
collaboration with the entire UN statistical system, consisting of more than 50 international and regional agencies, and based on data from over 200 countries and territories. It stands as one of UN DESA's most widely accessed publications, providing valuable insights for sustainable development.

Throughout the year, UN DESA also worked to expand the coverage and availability of data for SDG monitoring. In 2016, a concerning 39 per cent of the SDG indicators lacked internationally established methodology or standards. By 2021, all indicators had a well-established and internationally agreed methodology, ensuring the comparability, accuracy, reliability and usefulness of measurements. In addition, the number of indicators included in the global SDG database has increased from 115 in 2016 to 225 in 2023.

Improving the Global SDG Indicators Data Platform

UN DESA ensured universal access to up-to-date data critical for monitoring SDG progress. Through the improved Global SDG Indicators Data Platform, the Department developed a new interface that allows users to easily search, download and share data. The entirely new 'SDG Analytics' tool allows the interactive analysis of data availability, including for disaggregated data. The SDG Analytics tool also enables users to review global and regional trends for individual indicators and compare trends for countries and areas and for different indicators. The platform also provides access to the SDG Country Profiles which—with a single click—provide trends for individual countries across the SDGs. Most importantly, access to the metadata is

SIGNIFICANT STRIDES IN SDG DATA AND MONITORING



Source: Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition

dramatically improved. SDG indicators metadata are made available in machine-readable format using Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange.

Expanding the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians

The UN DESA-facilitated Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians has become a vital platform for the global statistical community to monitor the SDGs, growing rapidly during 2022 and 2023. The Network, with its innovative approach of open and inclusive membership, connects statisticians from all regions. Data experts and geospatial specialists use the platform to share knowledge on new data solutions and technologies, improve collaboration, and forge partnerships. In the two years since the Network began, it has connected over 2,500

statisticians and data experts from national statistical systems, international organizations, UN Resident Coordinator Offices, and data partners from academia, civil society, and the private sector. Network members from over 160 countries and territories shared over 4,600 exchanges (as of May 2023), reaching nearly 400,000 views. The Global Network Webinar Series is its most popular facilitated activity, where Members share innovative approaches using non-conventional and novel data sources and methods.

Promoting dialogue and exchanging experience on migration statistics

The number of international migrants has been growing consistently, but there is much to be learned on who migrants are, what their conditions are and

how international migration is affecting the global development landscape. Scarce or unused migration data allows for misconceptions to shape public debate. To address this, UN DESA, together with IOM and OECD, organized the 3rd International Forum on Migration Statistics (IFMS), from 24 to 26 January 2023, hosted by ECLAC in Santiago, Chile.

The event gathered experts from a range of backgrounds, with 230 in-person and over 400 online participants joining 30 sessions. Participants presented key challenges and innovative approaches to improve migration data and support evidence-based policymaking. Sessions covered new tools and methodologies; the impact of COVID-19 on migration and migration statistics; data gaps, including on vulnerabilities of migrants; the importance of collaboration; the use of data in the follow-up of global agreements, including the Global Compact for Migration; the importance of financing and political will for the production of data; and strategies to improve communication and fight misconceptions about migration. The connections and networks created during the IFMS will be fostered through different platforms and events until the next Forum.



Broad and inclusive measures of well-being

In support of SDG target 17.19 and the Secretary-General's call in his Our Common Agenda report, UN DESA supported the system-wide effort on finding measures that complement GDP, which culminated in the launch of the Secretary-General's policy brief *Valuing What Counts: Framework to Progress Beyond Gross Domestic Product* in May 2023, drafted by UN DESA, UNCTAD and UNDP.

In parallel to this effort, UN DESA also supported the High-level Forum on Official Statistics in February 2023 to explore broader measures of progress, and addressed both the need from data users for social and environmental measures to complement traditional measures of economic performance, as well as the approaches national statistical offices have taken in responding to these demands for broader measures.

Since June 2023, the Department has also supported the UN Network of Economic Statisticians to look at various initiatives to measure and monitor people's well-being and quality of life; measure progress made in the development of standards to measure enterprises' non-financial performance (Environment, Social, and Governance, or ESG); compile well-being dashboards by looking at examples in selected countries; and compile distributional measures of macroeconomic aggregates such as income, consumption, savings, and wealth.

Mobilizing international cooperation on data and statistics

UN DESA convened the fourth UN World Data Forum in April 2023 in Hangzhou, China. It concluded with the launch of the Hangzhou Declaration: Accelerating progress in the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data. The Hangzhou Declaration calls for an urgent and sustained increase in the level and scale of investments in data and statistics, closing data gaps for vulnerable groups, and enhancing country resilience in the current context of an economic crisis, protracted conflicts, climate emergency, and increased food insecurity.



A plenary session of the 3rd International Forum on Migration Statistics, Photo credit: IOM/DESA

More than 2,000 data experts participated in person and over 10,000 participants joined virtually, across four days. The Forum addressed the use and value of data for better policymaking; the value of innovation for timely and broader disaggregated data; public transparency and rights to privacy; establishing partnerships across different data ecosystems; and the national and international data and statistical capacities.

Shedding light on living arrangements of older persons

Living arrangements of older persons (persons aged 65 years or over) affect their economic well-being, physical and psychosocial health, life satisfaction and mortality. To support research on this important topic, UN DESA continued to monitor the living arrangements of older persons in households. In

2022, DESA also initiated monitoring of living arrangements in collective living quarters, and in October released new and unique dataset on this topic covering 135 countries from 1960 to 2018.

The data show that most older persons continue to live in private households. However, in many high-income countries, but increasingly also in developing countries, living in an institution has become more common, especially for those who need specialized medical services. At the global level, 3 per cent of older persons resided in collective living quarters. These new data revealed not only the need for improved healthcare infrastructure and specialized services to cater to the needs of ageing populations, but also the need to prioritize the development of age-friendly communities and housing options, along with the establishment of social support systems to maintain independent ageing.

Promoting integrated geospatial information for sustainable development

UN DESA convened the second World Geospatial Information Congress, held in Hyderabad, India in October 2022. It emphasized the importance of community, collaboration, and commitment to the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) in achieving the SDGs and societal well-being. The congress also highlighted the importance of integrated geospatial information to address environmental and climate challenges, embrace digital transformation and technology development, and catalyze a vibrant economy. It further addressed the development and strengthening of integrated geospatial information management and demonstrated the importance of international cooperation and coordination among geographic data experts.

The Congress featured nine keynote speakers from diverse backgrounds and received positive feedback for its inclusiveness and diversity, particularly for involving young people and individuals from under-represented groups in the official programme.

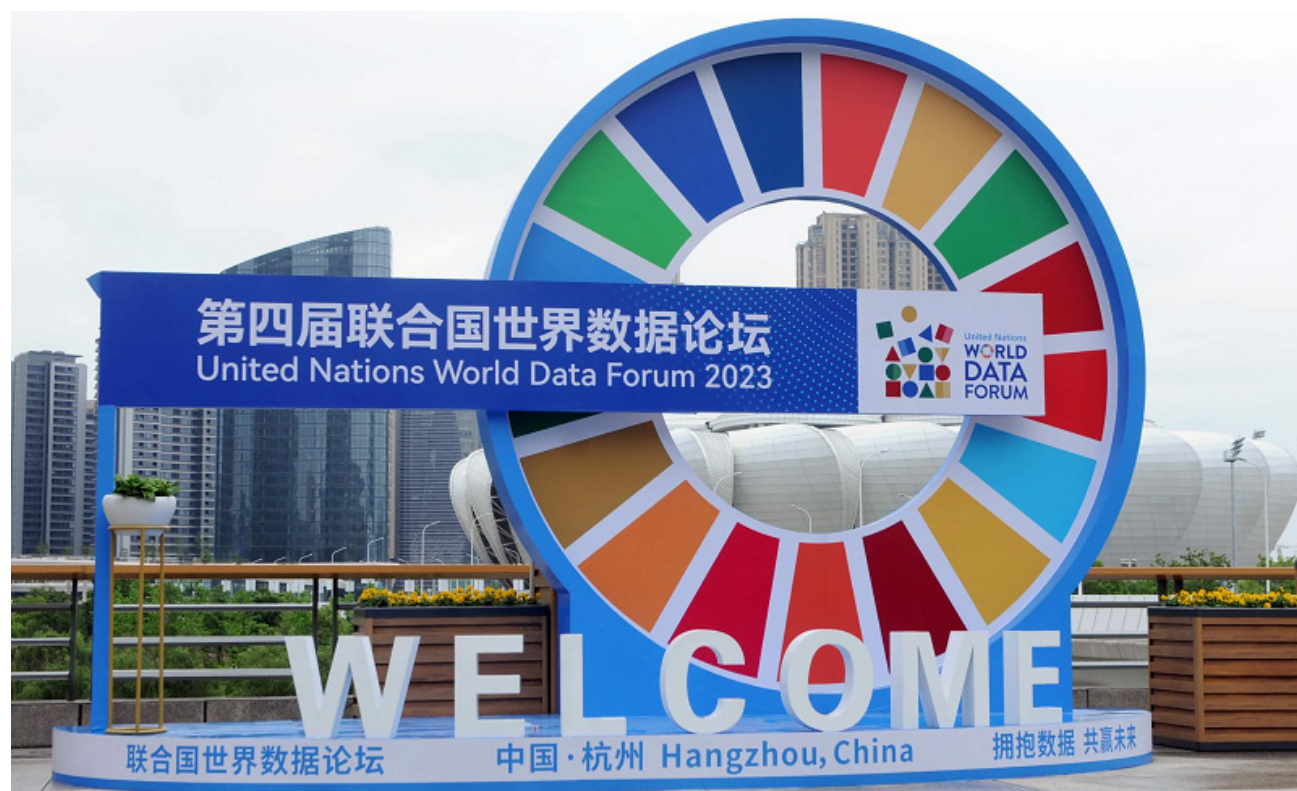
Providing new guidance on the organization of National Statistical Systems

UN DESA's *Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems*, endorsed by the UN Statistical Commission, offered guidance to the statistical community on how to develop and maintain national statistical capacity and explained critical issues and topics, including integration of innovative data sources and technologies in the production of statistics and indicators. To remain

relevant in a rapidly changing data ecosystem, the Handbook has been designed as a "living document" to be regularly updated and revised under the guidance of an Advisory Group composed of national and international statisticians. The Handbook, comprising 16 illustrated chapters, informative annexes, and a glossary, was made available on the Statistics Division's website in October 2022.

Delivering an SDG Monitoring Dashboard for local and regional governments

The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), administered by UN DESA, supported Japanese local and regional governments to monitor SDG progress and identify gaps in SDG implementation. Through a public-private partnership, UNCRD developed an SDG Monitoring Dashboard to enable the local and regional governments to conduct data- and evidence-based Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), which would be used to monitor, evaluate and take further actions to accelerate SDGs progress. The Dashboard allows for local policymakers and other stakeholders to evaluate the SDG progress made by each city and region, while ensuring the data is internationally comparable for reference by other countries and municipalities.



The fourth World Data Forum, Hangzhou, China - Photo credit: UN DESA



**STRENGTHENING
NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
AND ACCOUNTABILITY**



17th Internet Governance Forum in December 2022 in Ethiopia - Photo credit: UN DESA

... to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to provide necessary knowledge-sharing and capacity-building support to Member States in order to ensure delivery of the SDGs is integrated into planning, oversight mechanisms and budgets of governments and institutions.

UN DESA ...

- Built capacity on the implementation of the 11 *Principles of Effective Governance for Sustainable Development*.
- Brought together stakeholders to discuss the critical role of SDG 16 in accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- Advanced digital government transformation, cooperation and digital inclusion worldwide.
- Enhanced Member States' capacities to promote new mindsets, and innovation in public institutions.
- Worked with schools of public administration to equip public servants with the capacities to implement the SDGs, including by strengthening institutional arrangements for policy coherence.
- Engaged youth and women in institution-building and public service delivery for sustainable development.

05

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Effective, inclusive and accountable public institutions and digital government are key to people's well-being in every society across the world. UN DESA, through its support to public institutions in the design and implementation of public policies and the delivery of services, ensured their efforts are directed towards the achievement of all the SDGs.

Accelerating action for effective governance for sustainable development in Africa

Since 2019, UN DESA, in partnership with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), has worked to enhance the institutional capacities of national governments to adopt the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, elaborated by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration. For example, in response to ongoing demand from African countries for expert guidance and peer learning, UN DESA organized a workshop in September 2022 in Cape Town, South Africa, to discuss how countries can follow up on the key messages from the 2022 high-level political forum, including good practices from the presentations of the Voluntary National Reviews. Attended by

representatives of 18 countries, the workshop resulted in key recommendations for African countries on how to make progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063.

UN DESA and the APRM also held a workshop on Strengthening National Institutional Capacities for the UN Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development and the AU Agenda 2063. Attended by representatives of 25 African countries, this annual workshop explored how effective, accountable and inclusive institutions and the principles of effective governance for sustainable development can accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and

the AU Agenda 2063. 94 per cent of respondents indicated that they would be interested in further capacity-building support from the APRM and UN DESA. Ten strategy guidance notes to operationalize selected principles of effective governance were also developed to provide practical guidance to Member States on intergenerational equity, leaving no one behind and participation.



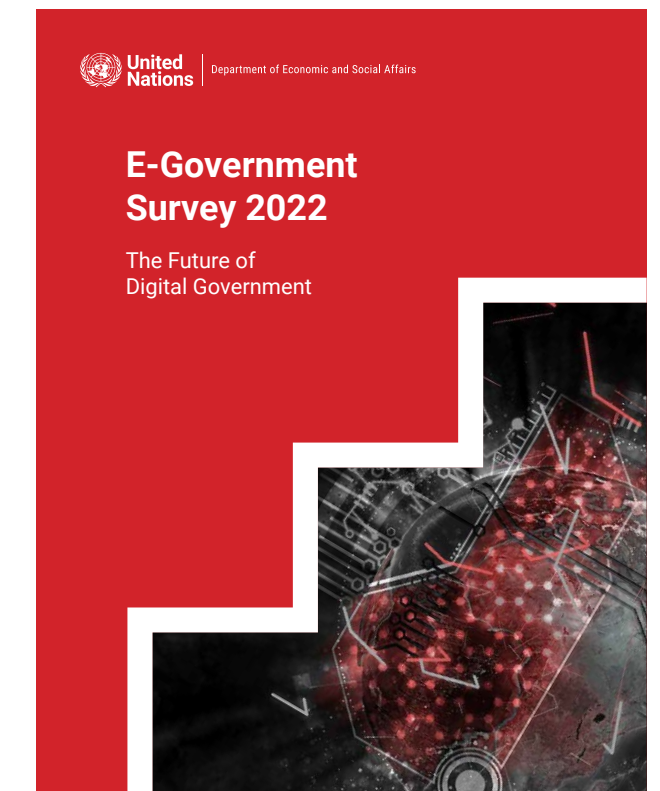
UN Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development Navid Hanif addresses the African Continental Workshop on Strengthening National Institutional Capacities for the UN Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development and AU Agenda 2063 in Cape Town, South Africa - Photo credit: UN DESA

Promoting digital government transformation and digital data governance

Multiple crises and opportunities have propelled countries to accelerate and advance digital government strategies, according to the *UN E-Government Survey 2022*. The Survey, prepared by UN DESA, assessed the digital government landscape across 193 Member States with a ranking of countries based on the E-Government Development Index (EGDI) and the Local Online Service Index (LOSI) at the national level and local level, respectively. Despite a digital performance gap between city portals and their national counterparts, most cities have improved their LOSI. The 2022 Survey also highlighted that the future of digital government is not just digital but hybrid and pointed

to addressing different forms of digital divides that have been amplified because of the pandemic, including gender divides, urban-rural divides, and age divides.

To address the existing challenges and gaps in digital data governance, UN DESA organized workshops on enhancing the institutional capacities of countries in Africa and Asia. Five national workshops have been conducted in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Lao PDR, and Rwanda, with national baseline studies conducted to assess the state of national data governance and to recommend policy actions to further govern data effectively in supporting the accelerated implementations of the SDGs. Working with UN ESCAP, UN DESA also organized workshops on regulatory sandboxes, aimed at enhancing the institutional capacity of countries in special



situations to develop policy experimentation and regulatory sandboxes to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Calling for global multistakeholder action on digital cooperation and bridging digital divides

The 17th Internet Governance Forum (IGF), held in November and December 2022 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the Internet's role in enabling individual and economic resilience, and illustrated how those who lack connectivity or meaningful access are severely disadvantaged, potentially exacerbating inequalities in multiple forms. These and other "IGF Messages" have been a touchstone in the preparation of the Secretary-General's policy brief on a Global Digital Compact (GDC), launched in May 2023 to help support Member States

deliberations as they prepare for the Summit of the Future. The messages underlined the importance of synergizing the IGF with the Summit process and underscored the Forum's centrality to emerging digital cooperation mechanisms. The programme of the Forum aligned with the Secretary-General's envisioned GDC and included issues of universal connectivity and human rights, data privacy and protection, digital security and accountability, Internet fragmentation, and advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI). The strong presence of young people ensured talks were forward-looking and prioritized the needs and concerns of future generations. Bringing together more than 5,000 participants from stakeholder groups from around the world, onsite and online, the Forum featured more than 300 sessions, 1,000 speakers, and representatives from over 170 countries.



Under-Secretary-General addresses at the 17th IGF Forum in December 2022 in Ethiopia - Photo credit: UNECA / Daniel Getachew

SDG 16 as a compass for navigating intersecting crises

UN DESA, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy co-organized the fourth SDG 16 Conference in May 2023 to identify concrete measures for supporting peace, justice, social inclusion and effective institutions at all levels in support of sustainable development. Under the theme "SDG 16 as a compass for navigating intersecting crises", the event brought together leading experts on peace, justice and strong institutions representing governments, civil society, UN entities and other international organizations, academia and other stakeholder groups. More than 250 participants attended the conference in person, and more than 500 joined online. Civil society was strongly represented and issued the 2023 Rome Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+, which emphasized key areas that need immediate action and genuine commitment to prosperous, peaceful and inclusive societies. The conference focused on three themes that are central to addressing the current intersecting crises: promoting the United Nations' New Agenda for Peace; restoring trust in public institutions; and promoting participatory decision-making to accelerate transformative action: food systems and climate change. It also took stock of progress made on SDG 16 since 2015.

Promoting accountability through budget credibility and external audits

UN DESA supported Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in improving their analyses on the credibility

of government budgets, aimed at delivering sustainable development promises as recognized in SDG 16. UN DESA, together with International Budget Partnership (IBP) and a group of eight SAIs (Argentina, Brazil, Georgia, Indonesia, Morocco, the Philippines, Uganda, and Zambia), developed a Handbook on SAIs' contribution to strengthening budget credibility through external audits. The development of the Handbook followed a user-driven approach, with UN DESA and IBP closely working together with various SAI working groups and regions. The initiative was widely supported by the audit community, which has been engaged through webinars, technical expert and peer review meetings, a side event in the margins of the 24th International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions and presentations at the SAI Working Group on Public Debt and the Capacity Building Committee. The Handbook was launched in July 2023.



Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Antonio Tajani, speaks at the SDG 16 Conference 2023 - Photo credit: UN DESA

Developing institutions' capacities for climate action and disaster risk reduction

UN DESA continued to work on building the capacities of institutions and awareness of public servants for climate action. In June 2023, the Department provided training to media officials in Mongolia on promoting risk-informed communication for reporting on emergencies and disaster risk reduction (DRR) to achieve the SDGs. The training was supported by one of the toolkits of UN DESA's Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs, focusing on the issue of Risk-informed Governance and Innovative Technology for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience.

In April 2023, the Department also organized, in collaboration with partners including UNITAR and UNDRR, among others, an online workshop on Risk-informed Governance, Climate Action and Finance Mechanisms for Local Resilience. The workshop was attended by local government officials and other stakeholders from national government, civil society, academia and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The workshop helped improve the participants' understanding on the global DRR framework, as well as climate change adaptation and innovative finance mechanisms in support of the SDGs. It also enhanced their capacities to promote governance innovation and leverage risk-informed governance for DRR and resilience, including through usage of the Disaster Resilience Scorecard for Cities to assess their city resilience progress for the development of an evidence- and needs-based action plan.

Changing mindsets in public institutions to accelerate the SDGs

Through various capacity-development activities, UN DESA worked with schools of public administration and UN Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) to promote new mindsets of public servants, digital government transformation and innovation to implement the SDGs. For example, working with the RCO in Pakistan, and Pakistan's National School of Public Policy, National Institute of Management, and Civil Services Academy, UN DESA equipped public servants with innovative mindsets and behaviours to better address current and future challenges through a real-life case study on ecological restoration of the Indus River Basin. Based on the Toolkit on Changing Mindsets in Public Institutions, part of the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs, the training on the same topic is being mainstreamed and embedded in the courses of Pakistan's National School of Public Policy. Trainings and training of trainers were also conducted in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Sri Lanka. Emphasis was given to nurturing innovative mindsets to enhance vertical and horizontal coordination and effective and inclusive delivery of public services by focusing on leadership, collaboration, and innovation mindsets.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UN DESA launched the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs for the Latin America and the Caribbean region. With more than 70 participants from the region, many expressed an interest in applying the toolkit to their institutional and organizational context.

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The symposium has ignited a profound spark of innovation and strategic thinking within us, enabling the anticipation of future challenges and proactive responses to emerging issues. It has provided us with valuable lessons that we must wholeheartedly embrace and translate into tangible and meaningful actions.

by **Rumina Khurshid Alam**
Member of Parliament of Pakistan, Convener
of Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs

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Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs

UN DESA's *Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs* is a set of Training of Trainers toolkits to promote understanding of sustainable development issues, enhance governance capacity, and strengthen public servants' awareness of their active roles in contributing to the achievement of the SDGs. It covers topics such as changing mindsets, transparency, accountability and ethics, policy coherence, innovation for social inclusion and risk-informed governance, and contains ready-to-use and customizable training materials on key governance dimensions needed to advance the implementation of the SDGs. The toolkits provide methodologies and approaches to advance knowledge and assist governments in developing capacities at the individual, organizational, and institutional/societal levels. They are structured around modules that include readings, self-assessment situation analysis, application of theories to concrete issues and challenges, priority-setting exercises, case studies, action planning, and other activities that can assist countries in advancing governance transformation for sustainable development.

Bringing stakeholders together for effective governance for the SDGs in Asia-Pacific

UN DESA facilitated peer-to-peer learning between public institutions and civil society organizations in the Asia-Pacific region with the aim to foster collaboration in tackling pressing challenges and achieve the SDGs. In November 2022, government and non-government representatives gathered in the Republic of Korea for the Regional Symposium “Effective Governance and Digital Transformation for Accelerating the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Addressing Global Challenges” to discuss how to strengthen governance across a region struggling to make up ground lost to COVID-19, climate change and extreme weather events. Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon also participated in the event and urged continued investment in strong institutions and digital capacities to address climate emergencies and pandemics. At the request of several governments, UN DESA will provide further capacity-building support to governments based on its Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs, focusing on multi-level governance, transparency and accountability, disaster risk reduction and digital transformation for SDG implementation.



Representatives from across the Asia-Pacific region meet to advance the Sustainable Development Goals - Photo credit: UN DESA

Equipping public servants with the capacities to implement the SDGs

Throughout the year, UN DESA spearheaded several capacity-development activities to mainstream the SDGs in the curricula of schools of public administration and equip public servants with the capacities to implement the SDGs. For example, together with local governments and schools and networks of public administration in Africa, UN DESA organized the Regional Symposium on Mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals in the Curricula of Schools of Public Administration in Africa, and launched the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs in the Africa region. UN DESA also conducted a training of trainers on innovation and digital government, in collaboration with organizations of public administration in Asia. In Mongolia, through a workshop organized with the local RCO, the national academy and the national news agency of Mongolia, UN DESA supported the delivery of an action plan for effective governance mechanisms for accelerating the SDGs implementation in the country. The Department also organized an annual meeting with schools of public administration on mainstreaming the SDGs in the curricula of schools of public administration, new mindsets and competencies and began the review of the Standards of Excellence for Public Administration Education and Training.

In addition to country and regional-level efforts, UN DESA continued to expand its online training course selection to further enhance learning from the Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs and its toolkits. The online training course on Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions

- Understanding and Assessing Corruption was utilized by the participants of the Malawi national workshop on Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions, organized by UN DESA in collaboration with the Office of the Ombudsman, the UN RCO and UNDP in Malawi. The workshop resulted in the development of action plans to promote an accountable, ethical, transparent, and inclusive public service to accelerate progress on the SDGs, leveraging digital government and building partnerships and cooperation for transparent and inclusive services. In May 2023, the Department also developed new toolkits on effective digital data governance to accelerate digital government transformation, and on capacities for digital government transformation.

Celebrating 20 years of excellence in public service and promoting innovation

For two decades, the United Nations Public Service Awards Programme (UNPSA) has celebrated excellence in public service by recognizing the creative achievements and contributions of public institutions to address the social, economic and environmental needs of society. In the last 20 years, the UNPSA has gathered over 500 global initiatives showcasing the vital role of public service innovation in promoting sustainable development and inclusion. Throughout the years, UN DESA has supported the organization of the UNPSA and recognized initiatives in support of tackling global challenges including poverty, climate change, and public health. Past winners include projects that improved access to healthcare, promoted gender equality, strengthened public financial management, and leveraged technology to enhance transparency and

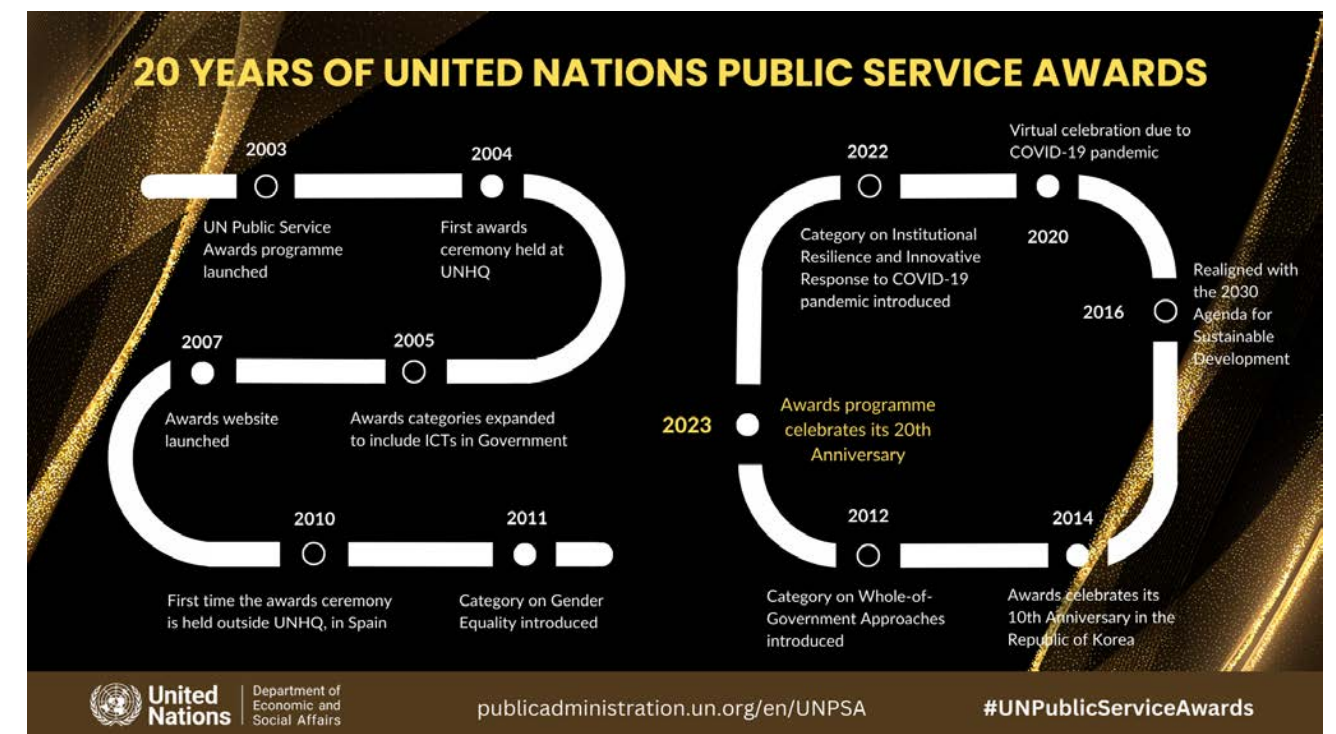
accountability in governance. In 2022, the Awards paid special tribute to initiatives that addressed the COVID-19 pandemic. As the programme marks its 20th anniversary in 2023, which also coincides with the SDG Summit in September and the mid-point review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a comprehensive review of the programme was undertaken to assess its effectiveness and to better promote and disseminate innovations in the public sector.

Youth engagement in institution-building and public service delivery for sustainable development

UN DESA contributed to enhancing the capacities of young leaders and government officials to support the implementation of the SDGs. In Côte d'Ivoire, the Department organized a workshop to boost the

capacity of young leaders and government officials to implement the SDGs. More than 50 youth-led civil society organizations, with a reach of over one million members, participated in the workshop, which prepared participants to conduct devolution sessions with their peers in their communities on how to effectively engage youth in public policymaking to achieve the SDGs.

UN DESA also hosted its 6th Youth Forum on SDG Implementation, in support of leveraging public governance to promote youth participation for climate action and building resilience. At the Forum, held virtually in November 2022, youth shared their vision on pursuing sustainable and resilient recovery from climate change and to accelerate SDG implementation. Furthermore, a special youth session was organized during the UN DESA's Regional Symposium on Effective



Governance and Digital Transformation, where participants of the Youth Forum engaged in a dialogue with the UN Member States and explored ways and means of promoting youth development and engagement for climate action with the view of realizing the SDGs and the Decade of Action.

reviews of laws, organizational policies and good practices. The reviews identified an analytical framework hinging on gender equality as a foundation for achieving all SDGs and women's equal participation and leadership as essential for an inclusive, responsive and accountable public sector. Using the analytical framework as a benchmark, UN DESA, in collaboration with UN country teams, supported self-assessments of norms and practices promoting gender equality within public administration in the project countries. In partnership with UNDP, UN DESA also developed capacity-building modules to address the gaps identified in the national reviews. Based on these modules, UN DESA has organized capacity-building activities to support the development of an action plan that prioritizes gender equality and promotes women's career progression towards leadership positions in the public sector in each project country.

Empowering women as leaders in public institutions

In 2022, UN DESA continued to collaborate with UNDP, UN Women and the UN Regional Commissions in Africa and Asia and the Pacific to address persistent gender inequality and the below-parity representation of women in positions of power and decision-making in both regions. With the aim of increasing the presence and leadership of women in public institutions at national and subnational levels, UN DESA commissioned global



Participants at the Cote d'Ivoire workshop on youth engagement - Photo credit: UNDP Cote d'Ivoire



The opening ceremony of the UN 2023 Water Conference – Photo credit: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

... to ensure a safe and healthy planet for all.

UN DESA helped Member States and global stakeholders in accelerating the synergistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, grounded by firm commitments and pledges, capacity-building support and strong partnerships across the world.

UN DESA ...

- Led the organization of UN 2023 Water Conference to accelerate water action and integrated water management, including through the pledges announced in the Water Action Agenda.
- Continued to foster stronger connections between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement by co-convening the Fourth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies and by hosting more than 130 events at the SDG Pavilion at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27).
- Supported the implementation of commitments made at the

2021 UN High-level Dialogue on Energy by organizing the SDG 7 Action Forum and providing policy analysis to make progress on achievement of SDG 7.

- Reinforced implementation of the outcomes of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference, through organization of events to highlight the need for financing and partnerships to support voluntary pledges.
- Continued to support Member States in implementing the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030 to safeguard the world's forests for the well-being of people and the planet.

06

ENDING THE WAR ON NATURE

As policymakers strive to urgently address the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, they are becoming increasingly aware of the need to simultaneously address the interrelated challenges of poverty, inequality, the energy crisis, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy, as well as protect key natural resources such as freshwater, the ocean, and forests. UN DESA continued to support countries in addressing these challenges by ensuring synergistic and integrated policymaking and action globally.

A new chapter in accelerating water action

UN DESA led the organization of the UN 2023 Water Conference in March 2023, which opened a new chapter in accelerating water action and integrating water management in response to climate change and the full range of sustainable development challenges. A key outcome of the Conference was the Water Action Agenda, a compendium of voluntary pledges that were announced or registered in the lead-up to and during the Conference. More than 800 commitments have been published, which reflect the collective ambition of the international community for water action in support of SDG 6 and its linkages with a broad range of other SDGs.

The Conference, co-hosted by the governments of the Netherlands and Tajikistan, with UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua serving as the Conference Secretary-General, featured five interactive dialogues and over 500 side events held at the UN, around New York City and online.

UN DESA also facilitated a dialogue to review the important links between water and climate action. Co-chaired by the governments of Egypt and Japan, the interactive dialogue on Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment explored ways in which climate change negatively affects both water supply, in terms of availability, quantity and quality, as well as water demand, and the challenges of mobilizing financial resources to build and maintain resilient infrastructure. The dialogue emphasized the need to further integrate water actions in the upcoming 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28), ensuring more innovation and better access to finance for resilience and adaptation.

In addition, the side events organized by Member States, intergovernmental organizations, UN entities and various stakeholders provided a valuable opportunity for all participants, including young leaders, to exchange best practices, solutions and challenges, while fostering cross-sectoral collaboration and partnerships. In addition to

focusing on climate-smart acceleration of SDG 6, the side events highlighted the importance of mobilizing action and funding to ensure climate-resilient water and sanitation services. The particular challenges for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in ensuring sustainable water management as part of their climate adaptation plans also was highlighted.

Building on the momentum generated by the Water Conference, in July 2023, a special event on SDG 6 and the Water Action Agenda was held during the HLPF. Co-hosted by UN DESA and UN-Water, the event provided an analysis of water-related progress across sectors and across other SDGs and global frameworks, showcased the success stories and lessons learned, and generated new commitments to the Water Action Agenda.



To foster stronger connections between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, UN DESA hosted

its fifth SDG Pavilion during COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. Bringing together practitioners from international organizations, Member States and diverse stakeholders, the SDG Pavilion featured a record 130-plus events organized by almost 140 partners from more than 90 countries. The events included in-person and online participation on Facebook, where dynamic fireside chats with experts were streamed live. The Pavilion's inauguration was attended by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, UN DESA Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua and UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell, underscoring the fact that the climate agenda and the 2030 Agenda share the same interlinked goals. Through this platform, UN DESA shared its expertise in critical areas such as energy, forests, the ocean, transport, water and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

To enhance the momentum for action, UN DESA and UNFCCC are jointly initiating the preparation of the First Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies, to be launched in September 2023.



A view of a #WaterAction sign at UN Headquarters during the UN 2023 Water Conference – Photo credit: UN Photo/Mark Garten

This report is being prepared by a diverse group of 14 experts and aims to provide empirical evidence and forward-looking recommendations to accelerate synergistic climate and SDG action while transitioning toward more just and equitable societies.

To further link and synergize the two agendas, UN DESA collaborated with UNFCCC to host a side event during the 58th meeting of the Subsidiary Bodies in Bonn in June 2023. This event shed light on the benefits of synergistic action to amplify results and to support countries in replicating successes.

Additionally, UN DESA and UNFCCC organized the Fourth Global Conference on Synergizing the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement in July 2023 as a special event during the HLPF, aiming to mainstream the climate agenda within the review and follow-up processes of the SDGs. The event convened high-level representatives from Member States and international organizations, along with experts and practitioners from across the globe. In total, more than 400 in-person and nearly 4,000 virtual participants from 140 countries participated at the event.

Looking ahead, UN DESA will continue to advance this integrated agenda in key forums, including the SDG Summit, the UNFCCC Regional Climate Weeks and COP28 in Dubai, to drive action and collaboration towards achieving the SDGs and addressing climate-related challenges.

Securing a clean energy future

UN DESA, as the secretariat of UN-Energy, convened the EnergyNow SDG 7 Action Forum in September

2022 to follow-up on the commitments made by world leaders during the High-level Dialogue on Energy in 2021 to accelerate energy access and the energy transition. Held on the sidelines of the high-level week of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, leaders from the UN, national governments and civil society discussed challenges and opportunities during the past year and took stock of progress on the more than 185 voluntary Energy Compact commitments, worth over USD 600 billion.

To inform intergovernmental dialogue on energy, UN DESA continues to drive policy analysis on progress towards achieving SDG 7. The multi-stakeholder SDG 7 Technical Advisory Group, convened by UN DESA, launched the SDG 7 Policy Briefs 2023 together with Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report at a special event at the HLPF on 11 July 2023. In support of the HLPF, the SDG 7 Policy Briefs each year provide policy recommendations towards achieving SDG 7, placing a special focus on energy's interlinkages with other SDGs and on regional challenges. Together with UN-Energy, the Department also mobilized technical guidance and recommendations through the Global Expert Group Meeting held in May 2023. Together, these analyses and recommendations served as the basis for strong engagement of Member States in ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

Furthermore, UN DESA also organized events, including a symposium and various webinars, to build capacity for integrated water and energy solutions that also respond to broader sustainable development challenges, such as fostering

innovation and clean technologies for climate change and biodiversity, promoting circular economies, enhancing regional cooperation towards climate resilience, and developing sustainable cities and human settlements. These capacity-building efforts benefited representatives from key stakeholders including governments, civil society, the private sector and practitioners.

Delivering on commitments to restoring and sustainably using the ocean

UN DESA has been leading in the implementation of the outcomes and follow-up of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference, for which it served as secretariat. The Conference was a major milestone that heralded a new chapter of global ocean action, featuring scaled up actions, new innovative partnerships, science-informed policies and a whole-of-society approach to

effectively implement SDG 14. The ocean sits at the nexus of the triple planetary crisis plaguing our world – climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution – and underpins many SDGs including food security, poverty eradication, gender equality, and economic growth.

In response to the concern raised by many delegations during the Ocean Conference that SDG 14 remains the most underfunded of the 17 goals, UN DESA organized a side event during COP27 in Egypt, on financing for SDG 14. In collaboration with UN-Oceans, UN DESA also organized a side event focusing on source-to-sea in the margins of the UN Water Conference, making clear the interlinkages between freshwater (SDG 6) and saltwater (SDG 14), and promoting policy integration and coordination across freshwater and marine sectors to tackle challenges across aquatic ecosystems. Looking



UN Secretary-General António Guterres speaks at the SDG Pavilion at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. – Photo credit: UNFCCC

ahead, the Department has begun preparations for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, together with the co-hosts France and Costa Rica.

UN DESA also manages the online registry of voluntary ocean commitments and facilitates the implementation of the pledges through partnerships and networks, such as the Communities of Ocean Action. The first two UN Ocean Conferences amassed more than 2,000 voluntary commitments from governments, the UN system, the private sector, academia, NGOs, and civil society for concrete initiatives and actions to advance the implementation of SDG 14. Billions of dollars were pledged by philanthropic organizations and multilateral development banks during the 2022 Ocean Conference to address the deteriorating health of the ocean and sustainable use of marine resources. Currently, there are about 2,800 pledged actions on the SDG Action Platform managed by the Department, making SDG 14 the most registered

goal among the 17 SDGs. By actively engaging with governments and other stakeholders, UN DESA ensures that the pledges made during the conferences translate into tangible actions, bringing about positive change for our ocean.

Recognizing forest-based solutions for sustainable development

Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to support Member States to safeguard the world's forests for the well-being of people and the planet through implementing the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030, a global framework for forest action.

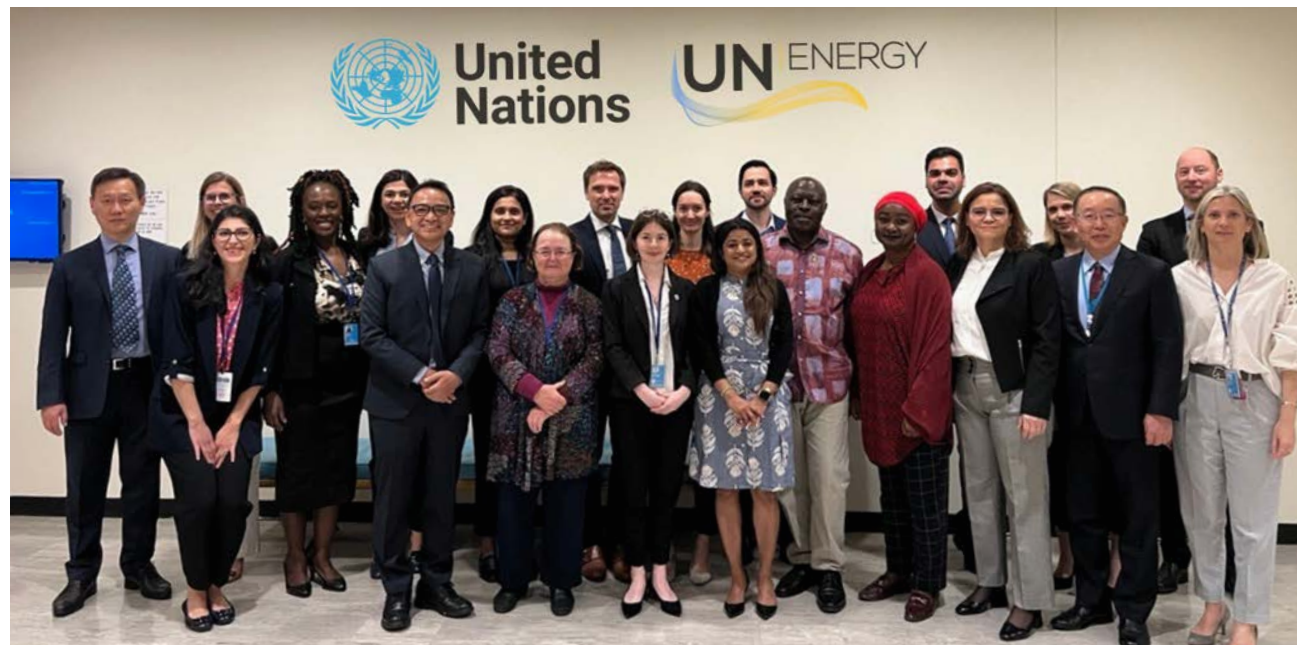
In May 2023, delegates took stock of progress towards the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) of the Strategic Plan at the 18th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, organized by DESA. Several key opportunities and challenges were identified at the Forum, including: interlinkages with

the SDGs under review at the 2023 HLPF and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; emerging issues related to forests, energy and livelihoods; challenges related to mobilizing forest financing, and the need to strengthen cooperation and collaboration including through the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). With the participation of around 400 representatives from Member States, UN system, other intergovernmental organizations, regional and sub regional entities and other stakeholders, the Forum also highlighted how the 2023 International Day of Forests and its theme of “forests and health” shed light on the importance of forests for all aspects of health, from clean air and water to providing food, fuel, medicine, and income.

UN DESA also supported countries in the development of comprehensive reporting frameworks for monitoring and assessing progress toward the achievement of the GFGs. For example, the Department ensured increased consistency in

international forest-related data and reporting by organizing a capacity-development workshop in March 2023, together with FAO, focusing on sharing knowledge and national experiences among experts from countries and CPF member organizations.

Furthermore, at COP27 in November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, UN DESA and FAO jointly held the High-level Dialogue of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, which brought together heads and principals of the participating member organizations to discuss actions, transparency and finance to accelerate global efforts in turning the tide on deforestation. UN DESA also supported the preparations for the Mid-term Review of the International Arrangement on Forests in 2024, to review progress to date, and to consider how the Partnership could provide greater support to the work of the Forum and countries in strengthening their implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.



Members of UN-Energy gather in New York in May 2023 - Photo credit: UN DESA



18th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests - Photo credit: UN DESA



FRAMING THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT

Children Visit UN Headquarters on UN Kids Day - UN Photo/Loey Felipe

... to build greater resilience and preparedness.

UN DESA continued to enhance its strategic foresight in addressing long-term socioeconomic challenges and risks that are emerging on the horizon towards 2030 and beyond. The Department also helped policymakers strengthen their strategic planning efforts through provision of capacity-development programmes and tools globally.

UN DESA ...

- Advocated for developing countries' enhanced and strategically directed support from the global community to stimulate economic recovery and protect the most vulnerable.
- Strengthened national capacities in achieving sustainable, resilient and green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other shocks, to build back better towards achieving the SDGs.
- Implemented a digital learning hub to deliver client-centered, agile, and effective e-Learning activities for Member States and other stakeholders and continued to offer engaging, flexible, and highly effective programmes that drive transformative change and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Continued to enhance policymakers' capacity to use innovative modelling tools to analyze macroeconomic and demographic challenges.
- Continued to provide definitive global population estimates and projections, which are indispensable to planning for future demographic changes and ensuring progress towards the SDGs.

07

FRAMING THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT

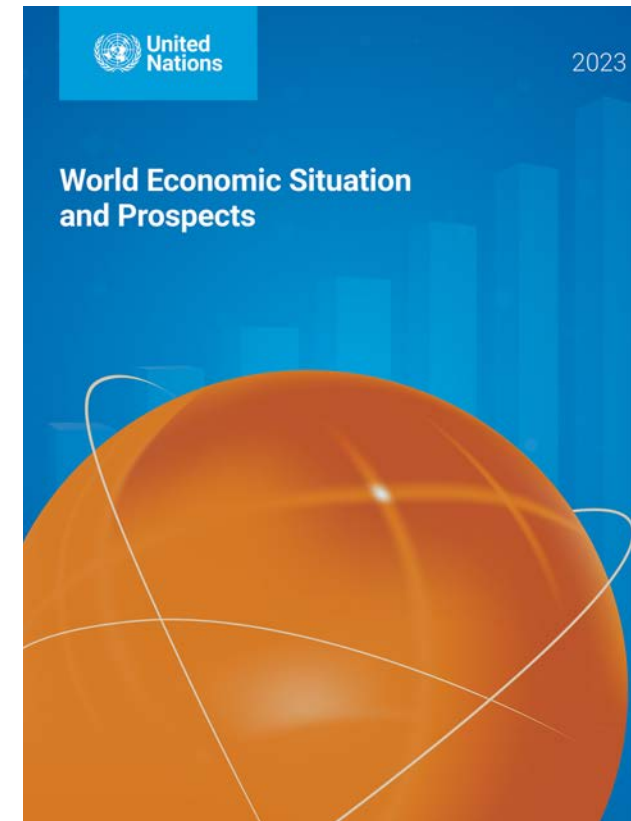
Recurring and overlapping crises continue to strain the capacity of countries to respond, introducing uncertainty and undermining longer-term investments in development priorities. Faced with this reality, UN DESA has – through its analytical work and capacity development activities – supported countries to frame the future of development by offering policy options for countries to address present and future challenges, identify new and innovative opportunities to enhance resilience through capacity building and put forward fresh ideas to strengthen the multilateral cooperation needed to solve our global problems.

Continuous monitoring and assessment of the world economic situation

Understanding the current global economic picture is crucial for Member States to adopt the right policies and to inform intergovernmental processes. UN DESA's flagship *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2023 (WESP)*, and its mid-year update, presented a nuanced outlook for the global economy. On the one hand, relatively positive growth prospects for some of the major economies fed into a modestly favourable outlook for the global economy, albeit still below recent averages. On the other hand, grimmer expectations of economic growth in many developing countries, coupled with the erosion of real incomes by persistently high inflation, pose challenges for achieving the SDGs.

The report stressed that developing countries require enhanced and strategically directed support from the global community to stimulate economic recovery and protect the most vulnerable. With shrinking fiscal space, the report warned that many developing countries were at risk of entering a vicious cycle of weak investment, slow growth, and rising debt-servicing burdens amid an increasingly challenging macroeconomic and financial environment.

At the same time, the new crisis landscape has put the capacity of countries and individuals to respond and recover under severe stress, while creating greater vulnerability to future shocks. The sooner the international community begins to understand the impact of such crises, the easier it will be to address



and build resilience against them. To anticipate global challenges beyond the immediate macroeconomic situation, this year UN DESA launched a special research and analytical effort, with support from leading experts, to examine the longer-run implications of the new recurrent crisis landscape. The findings of this initiative will be presented in the forthcoming World Social Report 2024.

Strengthening integrated planning and decision-making capacities of policymakers and stakeholders in Caribbean SIDS

UN DESA supported SIDS in the Caribbean region to strengthen national capacities for a sustainable, resilient and green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to respond to other shocks and build back better towards achieving the SDGs. In cooperation with UN ECLAC and other UN partners, UN DESA conducted national consultations in



Participants at a workshop on sustainable and green growth opportunities, held in April 2023 in Trinidad and Tobago – Photo credit: Ministry of Planning and Development, Trinidad and Tobago

Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, and Trinidad and Tobago, and provided capacity-building support to Dominica and Trinidad and Tobago that included technical advisory assistance and training workshops. The joint initiative assessed the social and economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic and other global crisis setbacks for SIDS in the Caribbean region and developed methodologies for future analysis and forecasts. It also made policy recommendations and practical measures for sustainable, green and resilient recovery and transition that have multiplier effects and can accelerate achieving the SDGs.

Building coherent strategic planning capacities in Mauritius to achieve the SDGs

UN DESA helped the Government of Mauritius enhance its long-term strategic planning and resilience by introducing qualitative systems thinking approaches in policy formulation and decision making towards integrated policy-making. This approach fostered improved collaboration between ministries towards a more coherent implementation of the SDGs and the implementation of their national development plan, which was a challenge identified during their VNR. It also provided a better understanding of the country's vulnerabilities, such as the intensifying impact of climate change, as well as the heightening risks of food security, inequality, and energy dependency, which became more imminent during and after the pandemic. It further led to the establishment of an informal working group, led by senior academics in the country, to provide support to evidence-based policymaking by government officials. Through online and in-person workshops, participants from various ministries, including the Ministry of Finance and its Planning

Division, the Prime Minister's Office, as well as the Ministries of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Industrial Development, Agro-Industry, Finance, and others, actively participated in this policymaking process. A similar workshop was held for senior academics to enhance the science-policy interface.

Strengthening digital capacity development programmes

In 2022-2023, UN DESA implemented a digital learning hub to deliver client-centered, agile, and effective e-Learning activities for Member States and other stakeholders. This initiative aligns with the commitment outlined in the Secretary-General's Strategy on New Technologies to enhance UN system support to government capacity development. The digital learning hub modernizes UN DESA's learning methods and platforms, recognizing the growing importance of technology as a strategic tool for capacity development activities. The success of various e-Learning programmes – developed to complement in-person capacity development activities – has led to the establishment of a central support structure to monitor best practices, scale innovations and create a more user-centered approach.

UN DESA now offers engaging, flexible, and highly effective digital capacity development programmes that drive transformative change and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. So far, more than 2,100 individuals from 141 Member States have benefited from learning opportunities on DESA's digital learning hub, earning more than 1,100 certifications across 44 learning offerings.



Image credit: UN DESA

Promoting new economics for sustainable development

The Secretary-General has highlighted the need to correct glaring blind spots in how we measure economic prosperity and progress in Our Common Agenda. UN DESA is at the forefront of this push to expand the conceptual, analytical and policy frontiers of mainstream economics.

For example, as the secretariat of the United Nations Economist Network, the Department supported the launch of a series of policy briefs on the “New Economics for Sustainable Development” to address shortcomings of mainstream economic theory and practice. The policy briefs cover key concepts, including the circular economy, creative economy, care economy, social and solidarity economy, and attention economy, and discuss policy options for countries. They identify key examples of how countries are moving the concepts forward and realizing the synergy of the three sustainable development dimensions: social, economic and environmental.

By bringing more than 400 economists from across the UN system together in a peer-to-peer collaboration platform, the Network encourages dialogue and joint work that brings together global,

regional and national experiences to advance our economic thinking.

Pioneering innovative tools for policy design in developing countries

In February 2023, UN DESA introduced the Overlapping Generations Model for South Africa (OG-ZAF). It demonstrates how to adapt the open-source “OG-Core” macroeconomic model to countries with more limited data. OG-ZAF is a sophisticated economic model that incorporates comprehensive demographic data for analysis. This initiative showcased UN DESA's capability to support policymakers analyze policy changes on macroeconomics and population.

The success of OG-ZAF opens the door to adapt the innovative model for other developing countries, leveraging flexibility, accessibility, and compatibility with data from sources like the UN, World Bank, and IMF— crucial in countries where data is scarce.

Future-proofing sustainable development strategies for SIDS

UN DESA, working with UNITAR, has helped to reinvigorate the Resident Coordinator system by providing substantive guidance and advice on strategic planning and systems thinking for SIDS. This capacity development support led to greater focus on risk and foresight analysis, seeking to “future-proof” sustainable development strategies for SIDS. It has also helped the United Nations Sustainable Cooperation Frameworks to identify interventions that will allow the UN to best define its comparative advantage and policy and programme interventions that can accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.

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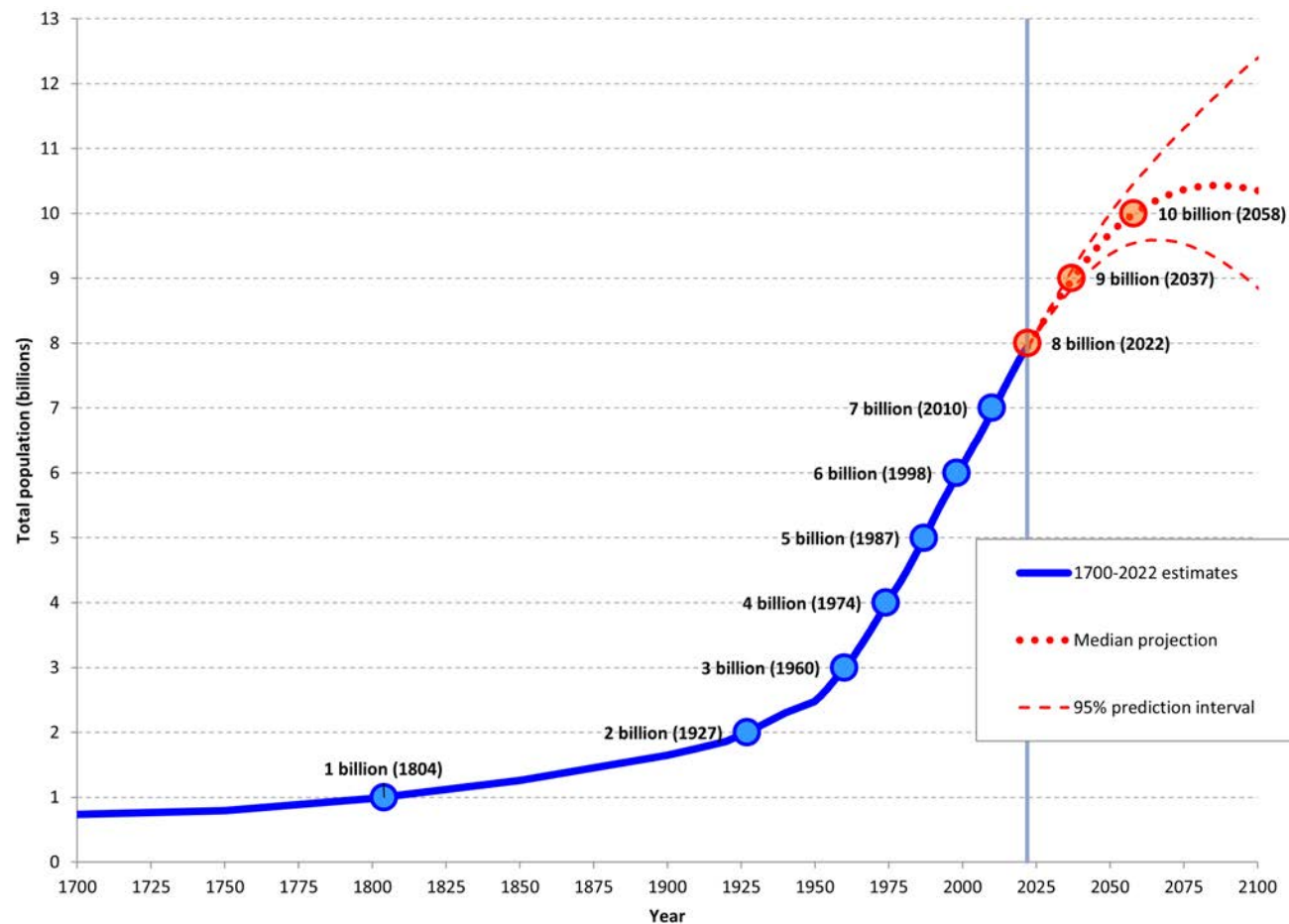
UN DESA's (and UNITAR's) capacity building approach in the field of coherent strategic planning is a "best practice case" which should be replicated in other SIDS to help with the implementation of the SDGs at the UN country level.

by **Christine N. Umutoni**
former UN Resident Coordinator
in Mauritius and Seychelles

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Providing new population data as the world passes 8 billion people

UN DESA reaffirmed its place as the definitive source of global population figures through its *World Population Prospects 2022* report. As projected in the report, the global population surpassed 8 billion people in November 2022, due to longer life expectancy and high levels of fertility in some countries. The report's analysis also indicated that rapid population growth poses challenges to progress in social and economic development, requiring increased resources to meet growing needs. It highlights the need for sustainable



Global population size surpassed 8 billion in 2022 and is projected to reach 10 billion in 2058 - Image credit: UN DESA

economic development, while also protecting the environment. At the same time, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in countries where population growth is slow or even negative continue to contribute to environmental degradation and climate change. Understanding and planning for future demographic changes is essential to achieving continued progress towards the SDGs.

Another major trend revealed by UN DESA's population projections is that India surpassed China in April 2023, becoming the world's most populous country. India's continued population growth presents significant socioeconomic implications, while China faces an ageing population due to a sharp decline in fertility. A UN DESA Policy Brief showed how managing these demographic changes is crucial for achieving the SDGs globally, especially in areas of poverty, food security, health, education, gender equality, decent work, inequality, urbanization and the environment.

Adapting national statistical systems to prepare for population ageing

UN DESA strengthened the capacity of Malaysian policymakers through a training on National Transfer Accounts (NTA) – an economic-demographic accounting system designed to measure how people at different ages consume, produce, and share economic resources. The basis for this training was the manual *National Transfer Accounts: Measuring and Analysing the Generational Economy* published by UN DESA in 2013 and still relevant today.

Responding to a request from Malaysia's Ministry of Finance, UN DESA held a week-long virtual

workshop on NTA in March 2022 attended by more than 90 government officials from multiple ministries. This was followed by an in-person training workshop on NTA at the request of Malaysia's Department of Statistics in March 2023. Together, these events strengthened the technical capacities of Malaysian officials to integrate population dynamics into their economic planning.

“

The pooling of renowned speakers from all over the world to selflessly share their knowledge, is something that we may not be able to do ourselves. I believe all participants had benefited enormously from the training programme

by **V. Sivabalasingam**
Chief Economist, Fiscal and Economics Division,
Ministry of Finance, Malaysia

”

Using technology to harness the economic dividends from demographic change

Developing countries with a growing, young workforce have an opportunity for economic growth, but it requires investments in technology, skills, and education. UN DESA published a Frontier Technology Issues paper on *Harnessing the Economic Dividends from Demographic Change*. This new analysis emphasizes the need for skill development and productivity enhancement among youth to fully benefit from this demographic transition. It provides policy pathways for countries in bridging

the digital gap, ensuring access to ICTs, investing in future-oriented education, and fostering innovation. The paper shows how strategic investments in these areas can enable countries to leverage their demographic advantage for sustainable economic growth in the face of population ageing.

Strengthening UN DESA's thought leadership through linkages with socioeconomic policy research community

Throughout the year, UN DESA continued to work closely with the United Nations High-level Advisory Board (HLAB) on Economic and Social Affairs, funded by the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund (UNPDF) and convened by Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua of UN DESA, to enhance the Department's strategic foresight capacity in responding to the multifaceted crisis

and identify emerging megatrends that will shape the development landscape into 2030 and beyond. Consisting of 21 prominent thought leaders from across the world, as well as the principals of UNCTAD and the UN Regional Commissions as the ex-officio members, the Board gathered in April 2023 for the fourth round of Advisory Board meetings and provided UN DESA with innovative insights and actionable guidance on how the Department and the UN system could address key global challenges, including the urgent need for reforms to the international financial architecture and ensuring sustainable development in an ageing world. The Board has also been instrumental in helping to shape the overall analytical direction of UN DESA's flagship reports, through its members' participation at the Advisory Board meetings and Expert Group Meetings held during 2022-2023.

Additionally, the UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue Series, also funded by UNPDF, continued to engage global thought leaders and stakeholders to showcase new ideas and solutions for making the SDGs a reality. Throughout the year, the series served as a platform to convene a global conversation on critical issues, such as financing for sustainable and inclusive industrial transition, indigenous and youth solutions for clean water and leaving no one behind in an ageing world. Furthermore, in June 2023, two hybrid sessions were held to accelerate SDG implementation and took a deeper look at the goals under review at the 2023 HLPF.

Members of the HLAB have been closely engaged in the Policy Dialogue series. For example, Ms. Izabella Teixeira, a former Environment Minister of Brazil, participated in a Global Policy Dialogue Fireside Chat, "Building a Sustainable World for 8 Billion People," at the DESA-organized SDG Pavilion at COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, along with speakers from UN DESA, UNFCCC and UNFPA. As the world population surpassed 8 billion people, the event marked the milestone with a discussion on how to ensure a sustainable future for this growing population.

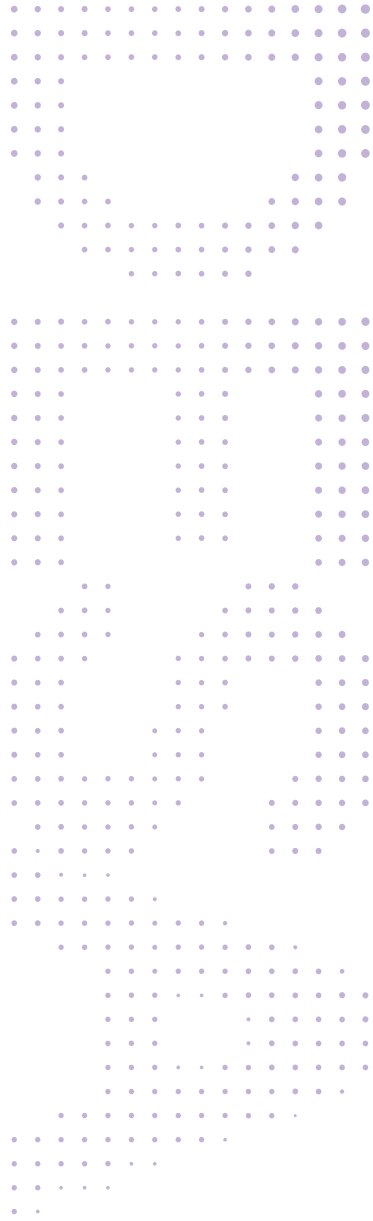


UN Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs Maria Francesca Spatolisano speaks at the UN DESA Global Policy Dialogues to Turbocharge SDG Implementation, in June 2023 – Photo credit: UN DESA



Ms. Izabella Teixeira, member of the United Nations High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs participates at the UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue Fireside Chat, held at the SDG Pavilion during COP27 in November 2022 in Egypt – Photo credit: UN DESA

ANNEXES



- UN DESA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
- UN DESA ORGANIGRAMME
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 77TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 78TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Mr. Li Junhua
Under-Secretary-General

Mr. Li Junhua took office as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, effective 30 August 2022. He succeeds Mr. Liu Zhenmin, who served as Under-Secretary-General from July 2017 through July 2022.

As Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Li guides UN Secretariat support for the follow-up processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. He also oversees the substantive services to many intergovernmental processes, including 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. Li oversees 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.

Prior to joining UN DESA, Mr. Li served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Italy and San Marino. Prior to this, he was Director General of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China (2013-2019). He has contributed to numerous meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, as well as other multilateral meetings including the G20, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), BRICS etc.

Mr. Li began his career at the Foreign Affairs Ministry in 1985. Since then, he has served in various capacities, including as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Myanmar (2010-2012), Deputy Director General of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences (2008-2010), Minister Counselor (Political), Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations (2003-2008), Division Director and Counselor in charge of UN General Assembly and Security Council Affairs (2001-2003), Second and First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations (1997-2001). Third and Second Secretary, the Department of International Organizations and Conferences (1992-1997) and Assistant to the Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok (1986-1992).

Mr. Li holds a Master's in International Public Policy, School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University. Mr. Li is married.



Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano

Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs

Ms. Maria-Francesca Spatolisano joined UN DESA as the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in March 2019. Between January 2020 and July 2022, she also led the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Technology. As Assistant Secretary-General, Ms. Spatolisano assists the Under-Secretary-General in the overall strategic guidance of the Department, with particular focus on ensuring the effective integration and contribution of its work within broader inter-agency initiatives and guiding the mainstreaming of broader organizational priorities into UN DESA's work, including in implementation of Our Common Agenda. She also guides the Department's strategic approach to effective inclusion and engagement, including on gender equality and the empowerment of women, youth participation and disability-inclusion.

Ms. Spatolisano has over 30 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. Navid Hanif

Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development

Mr. Navid Hanif was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, effective 1 July 2022. As Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hanif assists the Under-Secretary-General in the overall strategic guidance of the Department, with particular focus on ensuring the quality and value-added of its thought leadership and analytical work, its support to the broader UN development system and its support to countries in special situations.

Mr. Hanif has more than 30 years of experience in national and international civil service, encompassing analytical work, policymaking, programme planning, capacity development, multilateral diplomacy and extensive knowledge of the United Nations system. He first joined UN DESA in 2001 until 2003, serving as 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. He later served as Director of the former Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, from 2012 to 2018 and as Director of the Financing for Sustainable Development Office from 2018-2022.

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.



Mr. John Wilmoth

Director, Population Division
Officer-in-Charge, Division for Inclusive Social Development



Mr. Wilmoth joined as Director of the UN DESA Population Division in December 2013. He oversees the Department's support to the Commission on Population and Development and to intergovernmental discussions on international migration in follow-up to 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.

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 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 also served previously in the UN DESA Population Division as Chief of the Mortality Section from 2005 to 2007.

Mr. Wilmoth is a member of the Population Association of America and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population and has served on the editorial boards of leading demographic journals. He 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. Wilmoth holds a joint Ph.D. in Statistics and Demography from Princeton University.



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 (UNGGIM) 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.

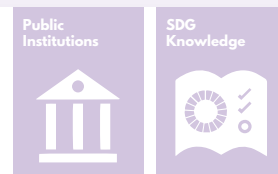
He played a key role in the negotiations leading to the 2011 ECOSOC resolution to establish UNGGIM and has actively involved himself with global geospatial information management since, including the negotiations leading to a second ECOSOC resolution in 2016 that strengthens and broadens the mandate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

Director, Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government
Acting Director, Division for Sustainable Development Goals

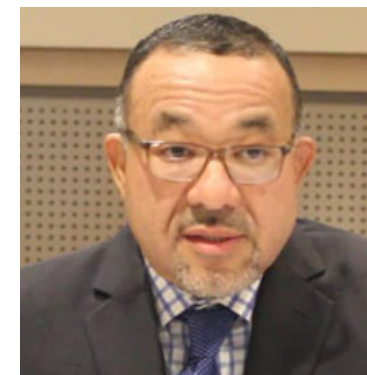


Mr. Juwang Zhu leads the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government in promoting inclusive, effective, accountable institutions that are well equipped to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 16. He also currently serves as Office-in-Charge of the global secretariat 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).

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. Neil Pierre

Acting Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support
and Coordination for Sustainable Development



Mr. Neil Pierre is Acting Director for Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development at UN DESA.

Mr. Pierre was previously Chief of the Strategic Engagement and Policy Integration Branch in the Financing for Sustainable Development Office, where he led the planning and organization of the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, Sustainable Development Goals Investment Fair, and other activities related to the Financing for Development follow-up process. Mr. Pierre also served as Chief of the Policy Coordination Branch in the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, DESA.

Prior to joining DESA, Mr. Pierre served as the Director of ECLAC Sub-regional Headquarters for the Caribbean and, before that, with the United Nations Development Programme. From January to December 2020, Mr. Pierre was the Coordinator of the Group of 77 and China under Guyana's chairmanship of the Group, working with the Permanent Mission of Guyana to the United Nations.

Before joining the United Nations Mr. Pierre worked as a diplomat in the Foreign Service of Guyana, serving in London, Brussels and at the Permanent Mission of Guyana to the UN in New York.

Mr. Pierre obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Guyana, a Certificate in Diplomacy from the University of Oxford and a Master of Science Degree (Political Economy) from the London School of Economics (LSE).



Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee

Director, Economic Analysis and Policy Division

Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee was appointed Director of the UN DESA Economic Analysis and Policy Division in December 2022. In this position he oversees the Division's work on macroeconomic monitoring, modelling and forecasting; the economic analysis of emerging and long-run trends that relate to sustainable development; reviewing the development progress of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) including the secretariat support to the Committee on Development Policy (CDP); and the substantive support to the UN Economists' Network (UNEN), as well as to economic policy related capacity building in developing countries.

Prior to this appointment he served as Chief of the Integrated Policy Analysis Branch in the Division for Sustainable Development Goals where his team led the work on integrated SDG analysis with a special focus on harnessing science and technology for the SDGs. In this capacity, he oversaw the Global Sustainable Development Report and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, as well as the substantive back-stopping to the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development.

He began his career in the UN system with the United Nations Development Programme, where he led the research team at the "Human Development Report Office". Prior to that, he led the MDG team in UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy where his work included both global policy analysis as well as support to national and local governments, including extensive collaboration with UN and other multilateral entities.

A micro-economist with interests in poverty, health and sustainability, Mr. Mukherjee began his career in his native India working on development policy and public finance as part of the national government.

Mr. Mukherjee earned a Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton University and holds advanced degrees in Public Policy, and in Physics.



Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo

Director, Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo was appointed as Director of the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2022.

She has a wealth of experience in international development and 32 cumulative years managing complex initiatives across Africa, in Latin America, and Canada with a focus on the environment, community livelihood and gender equality. She has worked with a range of international organizations developing, managing or mobilizing resources.

Prior to her appointment in UN DESA, Ms. Biao, worked in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi where she served for over six years as the Director and Regional Representative for Africa. She worked previously with Canadian Crossroads International as the Director of Programmes, has served the Canadian Centre for international Studies and Cooperation as the Regional Director for Africa, and has worked with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Office for West Africa. She also worked for seven years with a private sector organization.

Ms. Biao has served in her native Benin as Minister of Environment and Nature Protection as well as Acting Minister of Family and the Child. As the first female forester in West Africa, Ms. Biao pioneered ground-breaking initiatives including participatory management of protected areas. She has won the Global Women's Leadership and Green Future Leadership Awards and was named Commander of the National Order of Merit.

Ms. Biao Koudenoukpo holds an M.Sc. in Forestry Economics and a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Walden University



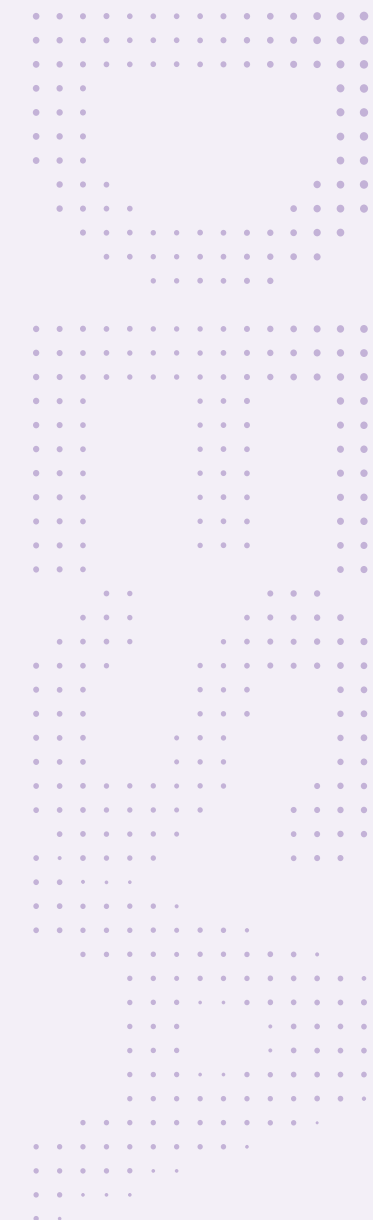
Ms. Shari Spiegel

Acting Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Office

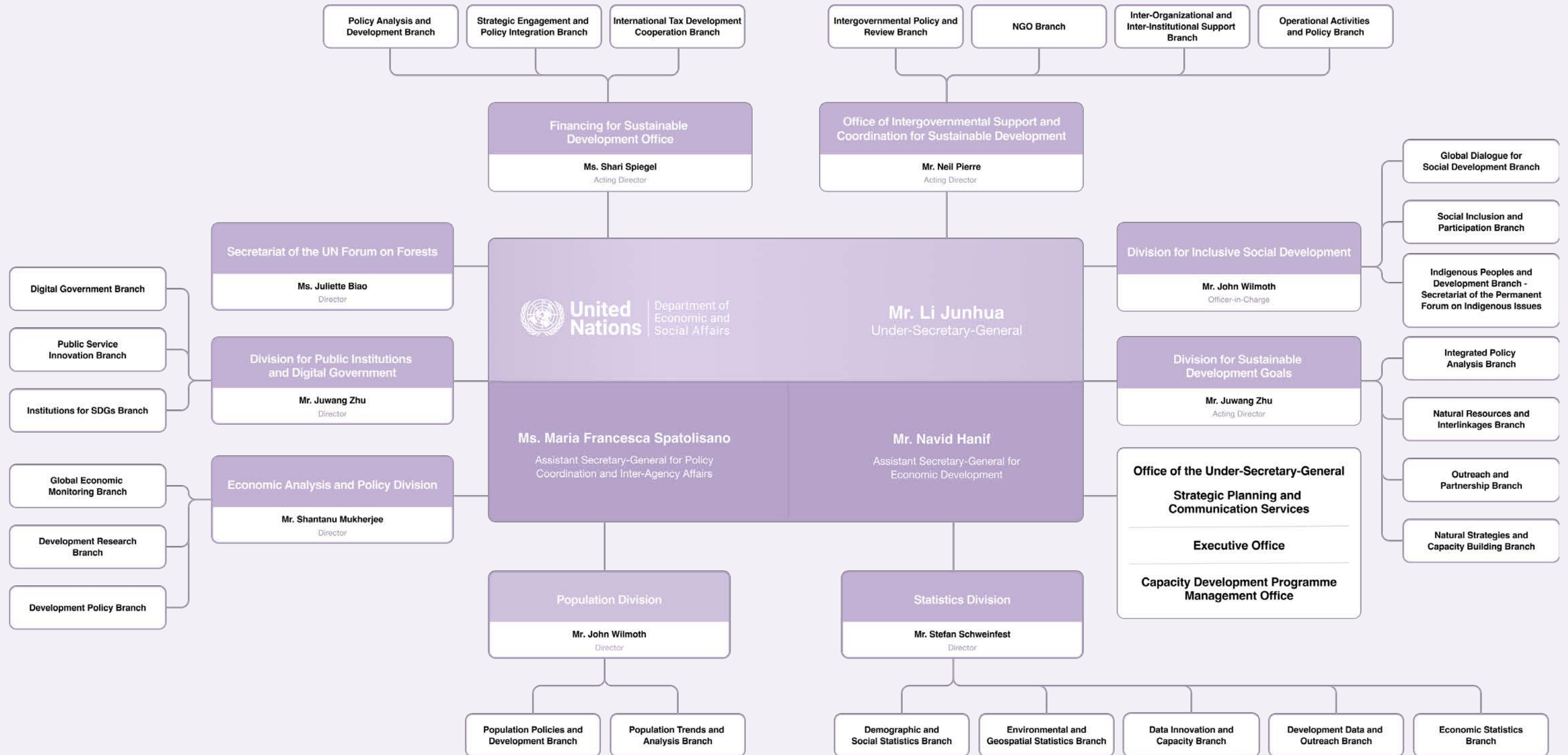
Ms. Shari Spiegel is the Acting Director of the Financing for Sustainable Development Office within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In this capacity, she oversees support for intergovernmental negotiations on financing issues, analytical work on financing for sustainable development, and the UN work on tax issues. She was previously Chief of the Policy Analysis and Development Branch of FSDO (UN DESA), where she was integral to the negotiations on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, launched the 60-agency Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, and oversaw publication of the task force's annual Financing for Sustainable Development Report.

Ms. Spiegel has extensive private sector experience, including as a Principal at New Holland Capital (an advisor on alternative investments to APG, the Dutch Civil Servants Pension Fund), Director at Lazard LLC and the Senior Portfolio Manager in charge of emerging market debt and foreign exchange at Lazard Asset Management, and posts at Citibank and Drexel Burnham Lambert in fixed income research, cross-currency interest-rate-swap trading, and credit research. In the early 1990s, she co-founded and was Chief Executive Officer of Budapest Alapkezel, which launched the first domestic investment funds in Hungary.

Ms. Spiegel also served as the Executive Director of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD), a think-tank at Columbia University founded by Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, which focuses on macroeconomics and economic development in developing countries. She has worked as a foreign adviser to the Hungarian Central Bank and as a consultant to the World Bank/International Finance Corporation. She is author and co-author of several books and articles on financial and capital markets, debt issues, macroeconomics, and development. She has an MA in economics from Princeton University and a BA in economics and applied mathematics from Northwestern University.



UN DESA Organigramme



Key moments and milestones of the 77th 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

Month	Key moments and milestones
September 2022	7 Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2022
	13 Opening of the 77th session of the General Assembly
	16-19 Transforming Education Summit
	20-26 General debate of the 77th session of the General Assembly
	21 High-level meeting to mark the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities
	28 UN E-government Survey 2022
	29 Opening of the 77th session of the Second and Third Committees
October	1 International Day of Older Persons
	10-14 United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress
	12 Fourth Annual Meeting of the GISD Alliance
	17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
	18-21 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
	25-28 Expert Group on Environmental Statistics
	31 World Cities Day
November	7-11 Conference on Big Data and Data Science for Official Statistics
	7-18 SDG Pavilion at the 27th Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP 27)
	15 Day of 8 Billion
	19 World Toilet Day
	28 Nov – 2 Dec Internet Governance Forum
December	1-2 SDG Investment Fair
	2 Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission
	3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities
	18 International Migrants Day
	20 International Human Solidarity Day
January 2023	12 World Social Report
	24-26 International Forum on Migration Statistics
	25 World Economic Situation and Prospects 2023
	31 ECOSOC Partnership Forum
February	1-2 ECOSOC Coordination Segment
	6-15 Commission for Social Development
	20 World Day of Social Justice
	20-24 Committee for Development Policy
	28 Feb – 3 Mar Statistical Commission
March	14-15 ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)
	21 International Day of Forests
	21 World Down Syndrome Day
	22 World Water Day
	22-24 UN Water Conference
	27-30 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
	27-31 Committee of Experts on Public Administration

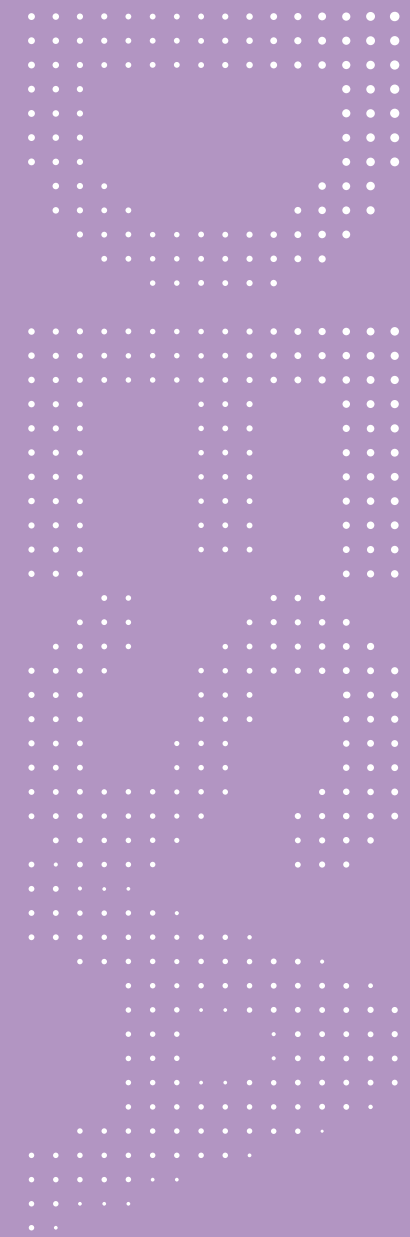
April	3-6 Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
	5 Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2023
	6 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
	10-14 Commission on Population and Development
	17-20 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up
	17-28 Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
	18-20 SDG Investment Fair
	25-27 ECOSOC Youth Forum
May	1-5 UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names
	3-4 ECOSOC Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum)
	8-12 UN Forum on Forests
	11 High-Level Meeting on Middle-Income Countries
	15 International Day of Families
	15-23 Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
	16 World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2023
	23-25 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment
	30 May – 1 Jun SDG 16 Conference
June	7-8 ECOSOC Management Segment
	8 World Oceans Day
	13-15 Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
	15 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
	16 International Day of Family Remittances
	16 ECOSOC Special Meeting on Haiti
	20 ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development
	21-23 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
	23 UN Public Service Day
	29 Joint meeting of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission
July	4 International Day of Cooperatives
	10 Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023
	10-14 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
	11 World Population Day
	15 World Youth Skills Day
	16 Global Climate-SDG Synergy Conference 2023
	17-20 High-level Segment of ECOSOC, including the three-day ministerial segment of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
	25-26 ECOSOC Management Segment
27 ECOSOC Organizational Session for 2024 Cycle (July 2023 - July 2024)	
August 2023	2-4 UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
	9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
	12 International Youth Day
	29-31 UN Global Forum on Gender Statistics

Key moments and milestones of the 78th 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

Month	Key moments and milestones
September 2023	5 Opening of the 78th session of the General Assembly
	12 Global Sustainable Development Report
	16-17 SDG Action Weekend
	18 Private Sector Forum
	18-19 SDG Summit
	19-29 General debate of the 78th session of the General Assembly
	20 Climate Ambition Summit
	20 High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development
	20 Climate Ambition Summit
	21 Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the Summit of the Future
28 Opening of the 78th session of the Third Committee	
October	1 International Day for Older Persons
	2 Opening of the 78th session of the Second Committee
	8-12 Internet Governance Forum
	17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
	17-20 Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
31 The World Cities Day	
November	19 World Toilet Day
	28-29 SDG Investment Fair
	30 Nov-12 Dec SDG Pavilion at the 28th Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP 28)
December	3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities
	18 International Migrants Day
	20 International Human Solidarity Day
January 2024	22-26 GA Preparatory Committee Meeting for SIDS4
	30 ECOSOC Partnership Forum
	31 Jan-1 Feb ECOSOC Coordination Segment
	tbd World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024
	tbd World Social Report 2024
February	5-14 Commission for Social Development
	20 World Day of Social Justice
March	4-8 Committee for Development Policy
	21 International Day of Forests
	21 World Down Syndrome Day
	22 World Water Day
	22 ECOSOC Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

April	1-5 Preparatory Committee of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States
	6 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
	16-18 ECOSOC Youth Forum
	22-25 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up
	tbd Fifth Global Conference on Synergies between Climate Change and Agenda 2030
May	6-10 UN Forum on Forests
	9-10 ECOSOC Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum)
	14-16 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment
	15 International Day of Families
	27-30 Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States
tbd World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2024	
June	5-6 ECOSOC Management Segment
	8 World Oceans Day
	15 World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
	16 International Day of Family Remittances
	18 ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development
	19-21 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
23 UN Public Service Day	
tbd Global Stocktaking on SDG7 Implementation	
July	4 International Day of Cooperatives
	8-12 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
	11 World Population Day
	15 World Youth Skills Day
	15-18 High-level Segment of ECOSOC, including the three-day ministerial segment of the high-level political forum on sustainable development
23-24 ECOSOC Management Segment	
25 ECOSOC Organizational Session for 2025 Cycle (July 2024 - July 2025)	
August 2024	9 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
	12 International Youth Day



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