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Feature Articles

“I will draw upon my background in sustainable development”

Right before the opening of the 68th session of General Assembly, its President, John W. Ashe, gave a special interview to DESA News. He points out how his background may help him promote the building of Sustainable Development Goals among Member States. He also explains why he is the first PGA to extensively use social media and online communication.



On 18 September 2013, John W. Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda took the gavel as the President of the 68th session of the General Assembly, the main deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. Comprising all 193 Member States of the Organization, it provides the only forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the UN Charter.

Following his election as Assembly President on 14 June, John W. Ashe and his team outlined their priorities for the session under a theme entitled, “The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage!”. Under it, he is encouraging Member States and other stakeholders to promote dialogue, reflection and commitment to the formulation of an effective new agenda to overcome poverty and insecurity and ensure sustainable development, to be launched during the 69th session following the 2015 deadline of the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Prior to his assumption of the Assembly Presidency, John W. Ashe served simultaneously as his country’s Permanent Representative to both the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, positions he held since 2004. He has served in a leadership capacity on many of the governing bodies of the major UN environmental agreements, including as the first Chairman of the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). He holds a Doctorate in Bioengineering.

Link to the video interview: <http://youtu.be/8ICA9ywDKrY>

3 High-Level events and 3 thematic debates

During his year at the head of the General Assembly, the President will convey three High-level events and three thematic debates. The first High-level Event will discuss the role of Women, Youth and Civil Society in the post-2015 development agenda. The aim is to heighten dialogue and strengthen approaches intended to improve conditions and development prospects for women and youth, who have been further marginalised by the global crises in food, fuel and finance.

A second High-level Event will explore the contributions of Human Rights and the Rule of Law in the post-2015 development agenda, particularly looking at the appropriate framework to ensure that human rights, the rule of law, and good governance practices anchor the evolving policy platforms in a manner that empowers people to contribute to sustainable development.

The third High-level Event will look at the contributions of South-South, Triangular Cooperation and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Development in the post-2015 development agenda. In the past two decades, dramatic global change and national and regional transformations have led to unprecedented and increasingly complex socio-economic and environmental threats, challenges and concerns. Responding to these new threats, as well as existing challenges, will require new forms of collaboration, innovation and partnership, which in turn can maximize the potential for ICT to contribute to reaching our development goals.

In addition to the High-level Events, three thematic debates will provide an opportunity for in-depth exploration of key issues in the post-2015 development agenda. Partnerships are the eighth and much overlooked MDG, and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has placed renewed emphasis on this area. John W. Ashe intends to increase that spotlight by exploring the role of partnership and its contribution to the post-2015 development agenda. Technology and knowledge transfer, financing and innovative means of implementation will be critical parts of the coming debate.

Another thematic debate will examine how to work towards and ensure Stable and Peaceful Societies in the post-2015 development framework, including by creating an enabling environment for development and progress, diminishing external stressors that contribute to conflicts, ensuring accessible institutions of justice, reducing violence, and enhancing the capacity and accountability of good governance mechanisms and practices that benefit peace and sustainable development.

The third thematic debate will focus on the roles of Water, Sanitation and Sustainable Energy in the post-2015 development agenda. With some 1.4 billion people without reliable electricity, 2.5 billion without decent cooking fuels, 900 million lacking access to clean water and 2.6 billion without adequate sanitation, action is urgently needed to address these persistent challenges.

Many initiatives in these fields are now underway but there is a need to harness, share and scale up proven technologies and best practices in the areas of integrated water management, sustainable energy and sanitation services as part of any proposed post-2015 development agenda.

Related information

- [Official website of the President of the 68th General Assembly](#)
- [68th session of the General Assembly](#)
- [The PGA on Facebook](#)
- [The PGA on Twitter](#)

“I want to understand what is at stake”

Recently appointed by the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in UN DESA, Thomas Gass, from Switzerland, describes himself as an unconditional supporter of inclusive development and multilateralism. In his video interview, he explains how his experience in development cooperation and as a Member State representative will be an added value to work on setting Sustainable Development Goals.



Link to the video interview: <http://youtu.be/3h2QE74UfnA>

“I believe that 2015 is our next big opportunity to place sustainable development, poverty eradication and other important issues center-stage. And I hope that through my work as coordinator and facilitator within DESA, I will be able to play a catalytic role in this process”, said Thomas Gass, during our interview, a few days after his arrival at UN DESA. A week

later, he jumped into the High-level segment of the General Assembly, and was impressed by the positive energy that emerged from this gathering.

A sense of global hope

After a G20 summit where the issues related to development were somewhat eclipsed by the Syrian crisis, Thomas Gass was encouraged to see how poverty alleviation and sustainable development were centrally placed in this high-level segment. He was heartened to hear how many Heads of States started their statement by saying how valuable the MDGs were, even representatives from states, which didn't accept the MDGs when they were first formulated. "It will motivate me to look towards those statements of ambition and of vision rather than to the challenges of negotiations that may come. The GA debate had a sense of global urgency but also interestingly a sense of hope. Most of the speakers said "we can do it", underlining the UN's relevance in the area of poverty alleviation and sustainable development."

From Kathmandu to New York

Thomas Gass took office on 3 September as one of the two Assistant Secretary-Generals of UN DESA. He brings with him wide-ranging experience in bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. From 2009 to 2013, he served as Head of the Mission of Switzerland to Nepal (Ambassador and Country Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), where he established the Embassy of Switzerland in Nepal, and ensured the delivery of a development cooperation programme of up to 33 million dollars a year. He also chaired the Donors of the Nepal Peace Trust Fund, the main instrument for international support to Nepal's peace process.

Before his posting to Nepal from 2004 to 2009, Mr. Gass was Head of the Economic and Development Section at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York, where he represented Switzerland's interests, in particular in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), its subsidiary Commissions, the General Assembly and the Executive Boards of the major UN Funds and Programmes. During this time, Mr Gass was the Chair of the Donor Group of the UN Global Compact.

In 2006, he was the Vice-President for Western European and Other Group (WEOG) of the Commission on Population and Development and in 2008, he was the Vice-President (WEOG) of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA. In 2007, he successfully facilitated the landmark TCPR/QCPR Resolution, the periodic review of the General Assembly operational system for development.

Mr Gass also served as Policy and Programme Officer for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, as Deputy

Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Guyana, and as Regional Director for Europe with the International Plant Genetic Resources Institute in Rome.

"I want to listen and understand"

When talking about his agenda for the Department, Thomas Gass is prudent: "I am not a CEO who comes in with a ready-made restructuring plan. I want to take time to hear all parties, to understand what is at stake, what are the challenges of all our teams before investing my energy to move in one direction or another."

Inclusive development and multilateralism are key to Mr. Gass. Regarding the upcoming High-level events to be conveyed by the President of the General Assembly ([see article](#)), the new ASG sees them as an opportunity to bring a refreshing perspective on the process leading up to 2015 that will be very structured and systematic. "I hope we will take the opportunity of these events to also bring non-conventional stakeholders to the discussion." For him, the recent tendency to include civil society in the consultation processes is crucial and reflects an evolution at the country level, both in the North and in the South. Governments know they have no monopoly in development and management of their country. All stakeholders have to share their expertise to build the city. Although it is not the UN Secretariat's role to bring too much originality, we need to remain open and keep listening to the voice of those who will promote this approach at the national level.

The goals, including the MDGs and those coming from the Rio+20 process, cannot be achieved without the support of all stakeholders, including the private sector. "To succeed, we cannot ask the stakeholders only to pay and make an effort, they have to find a seat at the table, in order to develop an ownership of the objectives and the processes", explains Mr. Gass.

Negotiator and passionate

As the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Mr. Gass would like to keep in touch with substantive issues: "I have a substantive background in management and utilisation of genetic resources for agriculture. I know a lot about the importance of agriculture research to secure food and income for humanity, but I also easily develop passion for many different subjects. I have been working here in the basement of the UN as a negotiator, for example on behalf of the Friends of Mountains, a group of about 45 countries supporting sustainable development in mountain regions. In 2006, as the Vice-President of the Commission on Population and Development, I chaired the negotiation of an extremely interesting resolution on ageing. By learning about the subject, I realized how important and vital it is for humanity to deal with ageing issues in a very deliberate way."

“I don’t want to lose touch with the field reality that I experienced in Cameroon, in Guyana, in Nepal, and in the Andean countries, where I monitored and developed projects that made a difference for people who depend on the support of the international community to elevate their livelihood”, he added.

For Thomas Gass, this new position is a culmination of several sets of skills he developed during his career. “I see this position more as the result of investments in my different competencies than as a springboard to get somewhere else.” The new ASG brings a very concrete understanding of the challenges of development cooperation, has a sound knowledge of how states interact with each other and demonstrates flexibility in relation to interoperability of organizations, agencies and partners. “I am looking forward to combine efficiently and effectively these three sets of skills, which I developed during my career so far, and I hope they will allow me to play a useful and catalytic role in enabling the UN to raise to the challenge ahead.”

Born in 1963, Thomas Gass holds a PhD in natural sciences from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and an MSc and engineering diploma in agricultural sciences from the same Institute. He is married and father of three adult children.

Related information

- [Biography of Thomas Gass](#)
- [L'interview de Thomas Gass en français](#)

A new era of discussions on migration

For the second time in history, the General Assembly will convene a high-level event on 3-4 October, devoted to international migration and development at the United Nations. This meeting provides an opportunity for the international community to review progress since the first High-level Dialogue in 2006 and promote and advance the debate and cooperation in the field of migration and development.



Governments are increasingly recognizing that partnership and cooperation are needed to leverage the benefits and address the challenges of migration. They also realize that migration is relevant to all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Thus, this year’s High-level Dialogue, taking place at UN Headquarters on 3-4 October, also provides an opportunity to discuss the inclusion of migration into the post-2015 development agenda.

International migration continues to increase in scope, complexity and impact. With 232 million international migrants worldwide, as new estimates from the Population Division reveal (see *Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision* under publications), more people are living outside their country of birth than ever before. The demographic transition, economic growth coupled with a globalization of labour markets, the recent financial crisis and the plight of migrants stranded in dire environmental and humanitarian situations is reshaping the face of migration. At the heart of this phenomenon are people, some looking for decent work and a better and safer life for themselves and their families, others migrating to escape poverty, violence, conflict and the effects of environmental change.

With 232 million international migrants worldwide, more people are living outside their country of birth than ever before.

In 2006, the General Assembly convened the first High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development. The meeting placed migration firmly on the United Nations agenda bringing together about 160 high-level Member State representatives in addition to representatives of civil society, international organizations and the private sector. Earlier that year, the Secretary-General had appointed Mr. Peter Sutherland as his Special Representative for Migration. Also, the Global Migration Group (GMG) was formed consisting of 15 United Nations entities and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The group is the main interagency coordination mechanisms on migration. It meets regularly at the working-level, has organized technical meetings and issued joint publications and statements. The group was chaired by UNDESA in 2007 and is currently chaired by the IOM.

Following the 2006 High-level Dialogue, the State-led, voluntary Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) was formed providing a platform for informal, non-binding dialogue among governments and between governments and other partners, such as civil society, the private sector and international organizations. Since 2007, the Global Forum has taken place annually, alternating between developed and developing countries as its chair. Currently, the Government of Sweden is chairing the GFMD.

Enhancing the benefits of international migration for migrants

In response to this progress in dialogue, cooperation and trust-building, Member States decided to hold another dialogue in 2013 and opted on an action-oriented agenda for this meeting:

“Identifying concrete measure to strengthen coherence and cooperation at all levels, with a view to enhancing the benefits of international migration for migrants and countries alike and its important links to development, while reducing its negative implications” (A/RES/67/219, OP3a).

Following this theme, the 2013 High-level Dialogue will consist of four plenary meetings and four interactive round tables, addressing:

- migration and the post-2015 United Nations development agenda;
- human rights of migrants;
- partnerships and cooperation in migration, and
- labour migration.

Member States will act as co-chairs of the round tables, with each consisting of a panel discussion featuring high-level representatives of Member States, international organizations and civil society.

The President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the President of ECOSOC, (Professor Ian Goldin, Director, Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford) and a migrant voice (Mr. Gibril Faal, Chairman, African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)) will make opening remarks in the plenary. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Migration will also address the plenary.

DESA’s Population Division is assisting the Office of the President of the General Assembly in its organizational and substantive preparations for this event. In addition, Mr. Hongbu Wu, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, will participate as a panellist in round table 3 focusing on partnerships and cooperation in migration.

“The High-level Dialogue is an opportunity to promote concrete actions to improve the lives of migrants.”

John Wilmoth, Dir. Population Division, DESA

The Secretary-General, in his report to Member States for the High-level Dialogue (see *Report of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development* under related links hereunder), proposed an eight-point agenda for action:

1. Protect the human rights of all migrants;
2. Reduce the costs of labour migration;

3. Eliminate migrant exploitation, including human trafficking;
4. Address the plight of stranded migrants;
5. Improve public perceptions of migrants;
6. Integrate migration in the development agenda;
7. Strengthen the migration evidence base; and
8. Enhance migration partnerships and cooperation.

The 8-point agenda provides a “roadmap” for the activities of Member States, the United Nations system, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), civil society and other key stakeholders in the follow-up to the 2013 High-level Dialogue.

Mr. John Wilmoth, Director of the Population Division, expressed his hopes for the High-level Dialogue on the occasion of the Population Division’s launch of new global migrant stock estimates last week by saying: “The High-level Dialogue presents an opportunity for Member States, civil society and the international community to advance the debate on international migration and development, and to promote concrete actions to improve the lives of migrants and to enhance the benefits of migration for countries of origin and destination.”

Overall, the Division is hopeful that the 2013 High-level Dialogue will mark the beginning of a new era of dialogue, cooperation and partnerships on migration and development coupled with concrete policy recommendations and follow-up actions.

Related information

- [Report of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development](#)
- [Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision](#)
- [Summary of the Informal Interactive Hearings of the United Nations General Assembly](#)
- [Towards the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development](#)

Global Dialogue on Development

Impact of world financial and economic crisis on development

The sixth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development will be held on 7 and 8 October at UN Headquarters, on the overall theme “The Monterrey Consensus, Doha Declaration on Financing for Development and related outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits: status of implementation and tasks ahead”.

The two-day event will include a series of plenary meetings chaired by the President of the General Assembly, at which ministers and high-level officials will be able to make formal statements, three interactive multi-stakeholder round tables and an informal interactive dialogue, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. The themes of the three round tables and the interactive dialogue will be as follows:

- **Round table 1:** “The impact of the world financial and economic crisis on the reform of the international monetary and financial system and its implications for development”;
- **Round table 2:** “Mobilization of public and private financing, including foreign direct investment and other private flows, and fostering international trade and sustainable debt financing, in the context of financing for development”;
- **Round table 3:** “The role of financial and technical development cooperation, including innovative sources of development finance, in leveraging the mobilization of domestic and international financial resources for sustainable development”;
- **Informal interactive dialogue:** “The link between financing for development and achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015”.

At the closing, the President of the General Assembly will make concluding remarks summarizing the main points of discussions. Full summary by the President will be issued as an official UN document.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/hld/HLD2013/index.htm>

The future older persons want

The NGO Committee on Ageing is celebrating the 2013 International Day of Older Persons on 9 October at UN Headquarters.

This year, in commemoration of the International Day of Older Persons (1 October), the theme “The future we want: what older persons are saying” has been chosen to draw attention to the efforts of older persons, civil society organisations, United Nations organizations and Member States to place the issue of ageing on the international development agenda.

For more information:

<http://undesadspd.org/Ageing/InternationalDayofOlderPersons.aspx>

Employment, MDGs and inequality at the Second Committee

The Second Committee is expected to start its work on 9 October 2013 at UN Headquarters, with an opening address by UN DESA Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo and a keynote address by a prominent economist.

The UN DESA Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (OESC) will coordinate the organization of several special events, subject to the approval of the incoming bureau. Proposed events include joint Second Committee/ECOSOC events on the future of employment; finding a path to delivering the MDGs; and inequality and the global outlook, with the participation of experts from Project LINK. Other proposed events are a briefing on the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity, which was mandated by the Second Committee, as well as a panel discussion on strengthening vulnerability resilience of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), in preparation of the Third International Conference on SIDS.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/index.shtml>

No discrimination for people in extreme poverty

The 2013 Commemoration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) will be held on 17 October at UN Headquarters, focusing on the theme “Working together towards a world without discrimination: Building on the experience and knowledge of people in extreme poverty”.

This year’s event is organized in partnership with the International Movement ATD Fourth World, the NGO Sub-

committee for the Eradication of Poverty and UN DESA, supported by the Missions of France and Burkina Faso to the United Nations.

In addition to the Commemoration in New York, celebrations of the Day are being organized worldwide. Through resolution A/RES/47/196 adopted on 22 December 1992, the General Assembly invited all States to devote the Day to presenting and promoting concrete activities with regard to the eradication of poverty and destitution.

For more information:

<http://undesadspd.org/Poverty/InternationalDayfortheEradicationofPoverty/2013.aspx>

Development cooperation in the post-2015 setting

To advance the dialogue on development cooperation, the Government of Switzerland and the UN DESA are organizing a High-Level Symposium of the UN Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) on “Development cooperation in a post-2015 era: sustainable development for all”. It will take place in Montreux, Switzerland, from 24-25 October 2013

The international community is preparing for a post-2015 development agenda. The environmental and social challenges of today show that a holistic approach to sustainable development is urgently needed. Silos between the economic, social and environmental spheres have to be broken down to ensure integrated action on all three aspects. What does this mean for development cooperation? And how can development cooperation help to achieve sustainable development for all?

Building a unified and universal agenda

Significant progress has been made on many of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), yet major challenges remain. The global development agenda beyond 2015 will not only have to complete any unfinished business of the MDGs. It will also have to put the world on a more sustainable development path.

Climate change and environmental degradation are threatening to reverse gains made in developing countries and are also affecting developed countries. This shows the need for an agenda not only unified in its thematic focus but also universal in its applicability to all countries. At Rio+20, world leaders agreed on the need to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social – in the post-2015 development agenda.

Implications for development cooperation

Effective development cooperation will be critical to the success of the post-2015 development agenda. This means development cooperation will have to evolve. Instruments, channels and division of labour among partners will have to adapt. Additional resources – public and private, domestic and international – will also be required to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, including addressing climate change and other global challenges.

It will be important to ensure that a greater focus on sustainable development is truly an integrated approach and does not detract attention and resources from poverty eradication. More, development cooperation should be geared to help to break down the silos between the environmental, social and economic strands of work streams.

There is need to assess the use of all available forms of financing for sustainable development, including public and private, cross-border and domestic sources. This will give some countries more room to manoeuvre, as they find themselves exposed to a more diverse range of stakeholders to work with. Other countries, may find traditional funding reduced. There is an urgent need to ensure that resources are equitably distributed and reach the poorest countries and people.

Launching this dialogue in Switzerland

To advance the dialogue on these issues, the Government of Switzerland and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs are together organizing the High-Level Symposium of the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) on “Development cooperation in a post-2015 era: sustainable development for all”. The second in the series of preparatory symposiums for the July 2014 DCF, the symposium will take place in Montreux, Switzerland from 24-25 October 2013. With its multi-stakeholder character, the DCF can bring together a plurality of actors. High-level representatives from governments in developing and developed countries, Southern partners, the private sector, academia, civil society and international organizations will all participate.

Bringing together the environmental and development portfolios

Given its focus, this symposium is a great opportunity to bring ministers from the environmental, economic and development portfolios together to discuss the challenges a renewed global partnership for development will have to address in the post-2015 era and to assess how development cooperation will have to evolve to best help to advance this future agenda.

The symposium will further examine the potential implications of a post-2015 development agenda for the allocation of different types of resources, both among and within countries and sectors. It will focus on how development cooperation can be used to mobilize additional public and private resource to finance sustainable development and how coherence in approaches to different types of financing and accessibility of funding can be ensured. It will also look at how global monitoring of and accountability for development cooperation would have to change in the post-2015 setting.

The 2014 Development Cooperation Forum

The 2014 Development Cooperation Forum of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, taking place in July 2014 in New York, will help to advance the global dialogue on the future of development cooperation in the post-2015 agenda.

To support the preparations for the 2014 DCF, UNDESA is organizing three High-Level Symposia in partnership with UN member States and a number of high-level preparatory meetings focusing on thematic aspects such as gender, South-South Cooperation or philanthropic engagement in development cooperation. Ethiopia hosted the first High-Level Symposium in June 2013, with a focus on the renewed global partnership for development. In March 2014, Germany will host the concluding High-Level Symposium in the cycle, examining global accountability and effective development cooperation in the post-2015 era.

For more information, please visit the DCF website at: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/dcfswitzerland.shtml>

Task Team to develop QCPR Monitoring Framework begin discussions

In response to the ECOSOC resolution on the progress in the implementation of resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR), a Task Team consisting of DESA, DOCO and other UNDG representatives has commenced work to refine the QCPR monitoring and indicator framework.

The objective of the Task Team is to merge UN DESA's preliminary QCPR monitoring and indicator framework with UNDG's QCPR Action Plan to produce a single coherent, concise and comprehensive QCPR monitoring framework. The Task Team will also develop a clear and simplified methodology for data collection that minimizes transaction costs while capturing the depth and breadth of the work of the UN system to inform the SG's report to ECOSOC on QCPR implementation. The Team is expected to complete these objectives by the end of October.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/2012qcpr.htm>

Small Islands Developing States need partnerships

The world has the opportunity to use the Third Conference on Small Island Developing States in Apia, Samoa, next year to forge partnerships to address critical issues concerning sustainability in small islands, according to world leaders who met in the margins of the UN General Assembly on 25 September.

The conference – to be held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa – will focus global attention on the small island developing states that remain a special case for sustainable development because of their unique and particular vulnerabilities.

It will also serve as an important opportunity to galvanize partnerships for action on sustainable development in small island developing States, including on issues such as climate change, oceans, waste, sustainable tourism, and disaster risk reduction.

The island states have adopted the theme for the Conference, proposed by Samoa, of “sustainable development of small island states through genuine and durable partnerships.”

“We need to bring more attention to the problems that small island developing states face, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the leaders. “Many of your countries are isolated. Your markets are too small to realize economies of scale. All small island developing states are exposed to high risks from environmental threats, especially climate change.”

But he said the world has not paid enough attention to the issues that the islanders, often on the frontlines, have had to face alone.

Involve more actors through social media

“If we are honest, we have to acknowledge that the 1994 Conference on small island developing states did not attract much international attention.” The difference now, he said, is that there are many more actors involved on the climate issue now than there were in 1994, and communications have grown more inclusive and participative with the rise of social media.

UN General Assembly President John Ashe said the theme of partnerships not only applies to small island developing states, but also to “the effective delivery of all our broader development goals, which will require empowered partnerships based upon mutual trust, equality, respect, and accountability.”

He said partnerships can play a key role in addressing specific areas of concern, including climate change, disaster resilience, energy, oceans and seas, waste management, sustainable tourism, and environmental audits and indicator systems.

“The primary benefit of partnership,” he said, “is that it builds on skills, efforts, shared vision, expertise and comparative advantages of different committed actors while offering something greater than one part; partnerships widen the circle of possibilities and opportunities. That is why we look to them – look to each other – in achieving our goals. For SIDS countries, and indeed all countries, they will become increasingly important as our global interconnection continues to deepen and expand.”

Samoa Prime Minister Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi said Samoa wants to use the Conference strengthen partnerships. “Partnerships must be encouraged at all levels, national, regional and international, including among SIDS.” But he added that the measure of success for the Conference was not the quantity of the resources mobilized or the number of initiatives launched, but ultimately, it was their quality in benefiting the people of the small island developing States.

The road to Samoa will not be easy

Barbados Minister of Foreign Affairs & Trade Maxine McClean said, “The Road to Samoa will not be easy. But we have provided ourselves with the right tools to ensure that we will navigate all challenges and have a successful outcome.”

She added that the first International Year of SIDS will help. “We have an unprecedented moment throughout 2014 to elevate our voices, and embark on new development collaborations and partnerships with the UN System, Major Groups and the wider international community. While we seek to highlight our vulnerabilities, 2014 will also give us the opportunity to showcase our culture and or technological achievements.”

Other speakers included the European Union’s President Joao Manuel Barroso, New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, Foreign Minister José García-Margallo of Spain, Environment Minister Andrea Orlando of Italy, Development Minister Cevdet Yilmaz of Turkey, who all reaffirmed their commitment to continue supporting SIDS development efforts as well as the Conference itself, through genuine and durable partnerships.

For more information: <http://www.sids2014.org/>

Commission on Sustainable Development holds final session

After promoting sustainable development for two decades, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) held its last session on Friday, 20th September. The concluding meeting took place just before the inaugural session of the High-level Political Forum on sustainable development on Tuesday, 24 September, which has replaced the CSD.



Bektas Mukhamedzhanov, chairperson of the final session of CSD, gives his impressions after the last Commission: <http://youtu.be/zfxZHtVQieY>

A bold and new idea that emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit, the CSD was the first UN body established to promote and monitor the implementation of sustainable development. It broke new ground by including an array of participants from civil society in its deliberations. The CSD also served as the launching pad for a range of new initiatives, treaties, and organizations aimed at addressing particular issues within the sustainable development agenda.

But over time, participants expressed concern that progress in implementing sustainable development was lagging and that the issue needed to be addressed at a higher level. Therefore, in the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future We Want,” Member States called for the creation of the High-Level Political Forum to ensure that sustainable development tops the agenda of the highest levels of government and is embraced by all actors.

CSD taught us many lessons

The Chairperson of the final CSD session, Bektas Mukhamedzhanov, Kazakh Vice-Minister of Environment Protection, said “the CSD played a critical role to maintain the momentum on sustainable development. CSD taught us many lessons on how the Forum can deliver on this responsibility.”

“We are entering a new period in history,” said UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Wu Hongbo. “There is a realization that sustainable development—the integration of policies and actions that promote economic and social well-being that also protect the environment—has to have a prominent place on the international agenda at the highest levels. The Commission on Sustainable Development has served us well, yet we have to recognize that we need to

urgently accelerate action. The High Level Political Forum will help us do just that.”

Former CSD Chair Gerda Verburg, the only woman to chair the Commission in its history, said that what we need from the HLPF is an “integrated and result-oriented approach, without dogmas and a fixation on talks and negotiation. It is our generation that can and has to make the difference”.

A platform for inspiring action

The CSD has been credited with helping countries share ideas and best practices and many believe that it provided a platform for inspiring action. The work of the Commission led to the establishment of the UN Forum on Forests, which has advanced progress on sustainable forestry through the adoption of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests in 2007. A recommendation of the Commission led to the process that established the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, as well as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

The Commission has also advanced progress in the areas of oceans, water and energy, among others, and has worked to promote sustainable development in small island developing states.

According to a report of the UN Secretary-General on the lessons learned from the Commission, the contributions achieved by the CSD were also accompanied by a number of shortcomings. The report pointed to shortcomings in fully integrating the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and in its review and impact on the implementation of sustainable development.

The new High-Level Political Forum will be shaped with these useful lessons in mind and its first session revealed an optimism and determination that bodes well for the future.

For more information, including a video summarizing the CSD’s history and video messages from two of its Chairs, please see: <http://bit.ly/18XacL9>. A short video on the HLPF can be found here: <http://bit.ly/18cx3p1>

A step forward in sustainable development

With the goal of reinvigorating sustainable development efforts, world leaders gathered at the UN Headquarters on 24 September for the inaugural session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The convening of this new Forum represents a major step forward in the follow-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). The forum was born from the realization that there had been insufficient progress in implementing sustainable development — and in promoting prosperity and social well-being while protecting the environment — at a time when many global challenges threaten to roll back the successes achieved in fighting poverty.

In the outcome document of Rio+20, “The Future We Want”, Member States accordingly decided to create a high-level political forum to ensure that sustainable development tops the agenda at the highest levels of Government and is embraced by all actors.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said “The Forum is a key platform for examining today’s challenges in a holistic and integrated manner. It can be the catalyst for a strengthened global partnership for sustainable development, providing political leadership grounded in solid science.” He announced the creation of a Scientific Advisory Board to strengthen the science-policy interface. Addressing the Major Groups, the Secretary-General said “We need your ideas, expertise and leadership.” He added that the forum would engage the full range of sustainable development actors.

General Assembly President John Ashe said that the meeting had confirmed world leaders’ readiness to put poverty eradication and sustainable development at the core of the post-2015 development agenda. He highlighted that the HLPF will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in the elaboration and the implementation of this agenda. “It should be the home for concrete guidance in the review of the sustainable development goals, their implementation and monitoring, as well as integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development by all actors. It will, if properly used, become the tool for embedding or mainstreaming sustainable development at all levels”.

The GA President also emphasized that the Forum has been afforded the rare opportunity to get things right from the start, because a new institution is a clean slate. “The slate of the HLPF waits for us to write in its purpose and its future. We have the opportunity to set the tone, tenor, scope of action, level of engagement, achievement and productivity for which this Forum will become known. Through our efforts in this Forum we can and must offer our citizens new hope and new solutions,” he said.

Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Wu Hongbo stressed the importance of grounding the work of the forum in science and scientific findings. He presented the summary of the prototype Global Sustainable Development Report aimed at making this happen. He called for a new

initiative to improve the quality and quantity of data on sustainable development.

The Forum has a novel institutional structure, bringing Heads of State and Government together every four years, under the auspices of the General Assembly. Their deliberations will translate into an inter-governmentally agreed declaration. The Forum will also meet annually, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at the ministerial level. In both formats, the forum will aim to promote implementation of sustainable development and address new challenges.

Starting in 2016, the Forum will include reviews on the implementation of sustainable development by all countries and the United Nations system, which should allow greater accountability and focus on action on the ground.

The President of Brazil and the Prime Minister of Italy spoke at the opening of the forum. ECOSOC President Néstor Osorio, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, and International Monetary Fund Chairperson Christine Lagarde were also among those addressing the Forum. The opening was followed by a series of “Leaders Dialogues” that explored the role of the forum in translating the vision of Rio+20 into action, the global partnerships that create jobs and improve sustainable lifestyles and mapping the way forward for poverty eradication. 18 Heads of State or Government and 30 Ministers spoke. Representatives from civil society participated in all the discussions.

The Forum replaces the Commission on Sustainable Development, which concluded its work on 20 September after 20 years of promoting sustainable development.

More information:

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1649>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVIqaVQ7eF8>

Including the disabled in Sustainable Development Goals



As the General Assembly adopted a landmark outcome document aimed at promoting disability-inclusive development, during its first-ever high-level meeting on that topic, which took place on 23 September, its President underlined the text's significance as the instrument to guide efforts towards the creation of a fully inclusive society through 2015 and beyond.

Our video about the HLMDD day:

http://youtu.be/E82PzJXO_G8

“Given the size of such a marginalized group, the onus is on us all to ensure that any future sustainable development goals include the disabled,” Assembly President John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) stressed, pointing out the absence of any reference to people with disabilities in all eight Millennium Development Goals. The international community had now realized that it would be impossible to meet development targets, including the Millennium Goals, without incorporating the rights, well-being and perspective of persons with disabilities.

By the text adopted today, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their resolve to work together for disability-inclusive development and for the international community's commitment to advancing the rights of all persons with disabilities, which was deeply rooted in the goals of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

More ambitious disability-inclusive development strategies

World leaders also underlined the need for urgent action by all relevant stakeholders towards the adoption and implementation of more ambitious disability-inclusive national development strategies, while expressing their resolve to undertake various commitments to address barriers, including those relating to education, health care, employment, legislation, societal attitudes, as well as the physical environment and information and communications technology.

The text urged the United Nations system as well as Member States to stay engaged in efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development targets for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond. It encouraged the international community to seize every opportunity to include disability as a cross-cutting issue on the global development agenda, including the emerging post-2015 United Nations development framework.

The world's largest minority

Assembly President Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), noting that some had labeled the disabled “differently able”, emphasized that people with physical, sensory, mental and intellectual disabilities were “the world's largest minority”, numbering more than 1 billion. “They are a diverse and varied group, each with unique gifts and abilities, and each with unique challenges,” he said. “They teach us not only lessons about love and respect, but also about persevering against the odds.”

Turning to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the Assembly in 2006, he noted that 134 countries had ratified or acceded to the treaty, which had been envisaged from inception as both a human rights and a development instrument.

Lastly, he said international efforts should be focused on providing critical leadership with a view to mobilizing action and support for specific policy commitments in national and regional environments, and to harnessing best practices, experiences and resources from effective multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said 80 per cent of persons with disabilities were of working age, and the same percentage lived in developing countries. Too many of them lived in poverty, suffered from social exclusion, and lacked access to education, employment, health care as well as social and legal support systems. Women and girls with disabilities often experienced double discrimination, and it was therefore necessary to emphasize the gender dimension of a disability-inclusive development agenda. Quoting International Labour Organization (ILO) statistics, he warned that excluding disabled persons could cost economies as much as 7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). “Together let us turn a new page in the history of the United Nations by giving full meaning to the outcome document of this meeting,” he said.

Also speaking this morning were Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Yannis Vardakastanis, President of the European Disability Forum; and Stevie Wonder, award-winning musician and United Nations Messenger of Peace.

20 per cent of the world’s poorest people have disabilities

Ms. Reyes said the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was the “lighthouse” that should guide engagement with disabled people in the new century. It was important to ask how their rights could be improved, looking not merely at the disadvantages they faced, but also at how they dealt with barriers and limitations on their actions. Noting that 20 per cent of the world’s poorest people had disabilities, she said it was clear that their ability to exercise human rights and fundamental freedoms was closely related to the exercise of socioeconomic rights.

She said her Committee foresaw the full reflection of the Convention in today’s outcome document. It should prioritize equality and non-discrimination, and include women, girls and boys, older people, indigenous peoples, people in rural areas and those living under humanitarian threats. States must comply with the commitments they had made.

Mr. Vardakastanis said 1 billion people with disabilities were looking to decision-makers nationally and internationally to tackle the exclusion, discrimination and poverty they faced. There was minimal acknowledgement of their rights in international law, despite the Convention’s adoption and ratification. The Millennium Development Goals contained no reference to people with disabilities, a situation that could not be tolerated in the post-2015 development agenda. Disability rights needed mainstreaming

under the principles of “inclusion, non-discrimination and equity”, he emphasized.

A world with no limits for persons with disabilities

Mr. Wonder described the Meeting as “historic”, recalling that in his capacity as a Messenger for Peace since 2009, he had been advocating for the fundamental goals of peace, development and human rights for all. As “a man of dreams and hope”, he had sought to create a world with no limits for persons with disabilities who could contribute their talents to society.

He went on to point out that less than 5 per cent of millions of publications were available in a format accessible to the visually impaired, adding that the rate was even lower in the developing world. Braille, large prints and audio books could make a real difference in the lives of more than 300 million visually impaired persons, he said, stressing the need to reflect the voices of the disabled in every effort, whether for peace or development. “Let us all be messengers of peace,” he added, recalling that his mother had allowed him to discover the world, which in turn had led to the discovery of his own talent as a gospel singer and eventually to a recording contract with Motown.

Following the opening segment, the Assembly held two round-table discussions, on the first on “International and regional cooperation and partnerships for disability inclusive development”, and the second on “The post-2015 development agenda and inclusive development for persons with disabilities”.

Press release:

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2013/ga11420.doc.htm>

Nominations started for UN Public Service Awards

The United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA) has now started to accept nominations for the award. The UNPSA rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions that lead to a more effective, innovative and responsive public administration in countries worldwide.

Nominations can be submitted online at www.unpan.org/applyunpsa2014 from 18 September 2013 and the closing date is 18 December 2013.

The 2014 UNPSA consists the following categories:

1. Improving the Delivery of Public Services;
2. Fostering Participation in Policy-Making Decisions through Innovative Mechanisms;
3. Promoting Whole-of-Government Approaches in the Information Age;
4. Promoting Gender Responsive Delivery of Public Services.

Trends and Analysis

Screening of Forests Short Film Festival

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat is holding the first screening of the 5 winning films of the Forests Short Films Contest “Forest for People” at UN Headquarters on 1 October. They feature stories of forests and people from Peru to South Africa.

The UNFF Secretariat partnered with the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival to honor the creative efforts of film makers who capture dynamic and unique relationship between forests and the people who depend on them. This year’s Film Festival was for short films of five minutes or less. The winning films present a vision of forests through the eyes of Amazonian animals, young children and veteran charcoal burners.

In total, 128 entries from 38 countries competed to win at the prestigious Festival. Each entry shared a unique story of how forests inspire and contribute to our lives. An international jury, consisting of lauded practitioners and UN experts awarded 5 films.

As discussions of the priorities of the next development agenda take root, the International Forests Short Film Festival hopes to serve as inspiration for transformational change with Sustainable Development at its heart.

The screening will take place in UN Headquarters, room S-2723, from 1:15-2:15 pm. Seats are limited. To attend, please RSVP by sending an e-mail to forests@un.org

For more information: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/film/>

MDG Monitoring in the UN system

DESA’s Statistics Division will convene the 24th meeting of Interagency and Expert Group Meeting on MDG indicators (IAEG-MDG), in Geneva, Switzerland, from 16 to 19 October 2013.

The IAEG-MDG has been responsible for data development, compilation and analysis for the assessment of trends in MDG indicators. The Group includes the UN Secretariat, a number of UN agencies, as well as national experts from statistical offices concerned with the development of data for MDGs. The 24th meeting will review the on-going and planned activities related to MDG monitoring by various UN agencies, and discuss the plans for the upcoming MDG reports. The group will also explore the

lessons learned from MDG monitoring at national and regional levels.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

International Cooperation in Tax Matters

The ninth session of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters will be held from 21 to 25 October at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The meeting will discuss, inter alia, issues related to the next update of the *United Nations Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries*, including various issues related to the concept of “permanent establishment” (Article 5), the meaning of “auxiliary activities” under Article 8 (Transportation), the “force of attraction” principle in Article 7, the Commentary to Article 9 (Associated Enterprises), Article 12 on Royalties, and Exchange of Information (Article 26). The Committee will also discuss cross-cutting issues under the UN Model, such as taxation of services and interaction of the Model with climate change mechanisms.

Other issues on the agenda of the session include work towards the next update of the *United Nations Practical Manual on Transfer Pricing for Developing Countries*, foreign direct investment issues and corporate taxation, including resource taxation issues for developing countries, and capacity development.

As this will be the first session of the new Membership of the Committee, a Chairperson and other Officers will be elected at the beginning of the session. Establishment of Subcommittees and appointment of their Coordinators will also be decided on during the course of the session.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/tax/ninthsession/index.htm>

Conducting population and housing censuses

DESA’s Statistics Division is organising the UN Expert Group Meeting on Revising the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses. It will be held from 29 October – 1 November in New York.

The main purpose of the meeting is to lay down the framework for the revised set of international principles and

recommendations for population and housing censuses in the 2020 round censuses, that will take place from 2015 to 2024. The experts will take stock of the experiences in conducting population and housing censuses in the 2010 round and adopt an outline for the revision, as well as distributing specific tasks related to the preparation of the content of the recommendations among themselves. The revised Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses: the 2020 Round will be the major international statistical standard guiding the work on population and housing censuses in 2020 round.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

What kind of high income country can China become

Wednesday, Sept 4 the Development Strategy and Policy Analysis (DSP) unit of UN DESA-DPAD organised a seminar in the Development Policy Seminar series, during which Mr. Syed Nazrul Islam, PhD Harvard, Senior Economic Affairs Officer with DSP, presented a recent paper on China.

The paper asked whether or not China can successfully overcome the ‘middle-income trap’. Mr Pingfan Hong, the Acting Director of UN DESA-DPAD was the discussant and Mr. Willem van der Geest, Chief of DSP moderated.

With per capita income of \$ 5445 in 2011 China has confirmed its place among the middle income group of countries with ranges from \$1,026 to \$12,475 in 2011. Some analysts have expressed a concern that factors like the high level of income inequality, China’s household registration system known as “Hukou” and others may ‘trap’ China from transcending from the middle income category. Mr. Islam discussed different perspectives on the middle income trap. He contrasted Kharas and Kohli’s (2011) perspectives with that of Lin (2012) and noted that these authors agree on the necessity of a more equitable income distribution as a pre-condition for avoidance of the middle income trap.

Mr. Islam also contrasted China’s record regarding inequality with that of Japan, South Korea, and others. Mr. Islam further questioned whether, “Is it the only thing we want from China – to follow the route of previously developed countries? Should we be so hung up on this middle- to high-income transition or should we apply to a different paradigm?” In his discussion Mr. Hong pointed out the need to explore further the causes of the high income inequality in China. He observed the heterogeneity of the countries in the middle income group – some natural resource rich, others with large labour resources. He noted the technology gap. For China, he emphasised the importance of continued economic, social and institutional reforms as well as making sure that the price of environmental resources reflect their true costs.

Capacity development

Infrastructure to implement System of National Accounts

On the request of Qatar Statistics Authority, DESA's Statistics Division provides technical assistance, in terms of a resource person, to conduct a workshop on "Building the basic for 2008 SNA implementation" for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries from 30 September to 4 October in Doha, Qatar.

The workshop will discuss statistical infrastructure required by countries for implementation of the 2008 System of National Accounts (2008 SNA) and supporting statistics namely, NSDS, business register, data sources, integrated industrial surveys and changes in classifications of economic activities. In addition main changes in the 2008 SNA and global implementation strategy will also be presented to the participants. It is expected that the workshop will strengthen the statistical capacity of the GCC countries and help them prepare a national statement of strategy for implementation of SNA and supporting statistics as first step for change over to 2008 SNA.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Compiling environmental-economic accounts in Malaysia

DESA's Statistics Division and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), is organizing a technical assistance mission to conduct an assisted national assessment for implementation of the UN System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) from 30 September to 1 October in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

The purpose of the assessment mission is to evaluate current situation in compiling environmental-economic accounts in Malaysia, giving policy priorities and available data, and providing some initial recommendations to the Malaysian government to develop an implementation strategy for the SEEA Central Framework in line with national policy priority.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Making trade and tourism statistics comparable

An International Seminar on Trade and Tourism Statistic, organised jointly by UN DESA's Statistics Division, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretariat, will take place 7-10 October in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The services sector accounts for the largest share of business activity, employment, and economic growth in most economies, yet the role of services trade, particularly in designing policies and negotiating regional agreements, continues to be poorly understood. A major reason for this disconnect is the absence of abundant, high-quality data on trade in services that is comparable across economies – making it difficult to measure the impact of services trade on the economy and provide useful information for negotiators and policy makers in coming up with market access or policy tools that could facilitate trade in services.

Recent developments in Asia also point to travel and tourism as two of the main drivers of economic growth are seen as tools for development and change in the region. Therefore, the agenda closely covers the data collection and compilation of travel and tourism statistics. The Seminar will take advantage of the draft versions of the compilers guide for the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services (MSITS) 2010 and the compilation guide for Tourism Statistics, which are both in their final stages of completion. Specific topics, which are discussed at this seminar, are enterprise and establishment surveys; surveys of persons and households; transportation statistics; manufacturing services on inputs owned by others; statistics on Foreign affiliate trade statistics (FATS), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and multi-national enterprises; and linking trade, FDI and FATS with the business register. This Seminar is hosted by Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS-Statistics Indonesia).

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Staff exchange visit to Eurostat

A UN DESA Statistics Division's staff member from the Economic Statistics Branch will visit Eurostat in Luxembourg on 14-18 October for training on compilation of short-term economic indicators including the business cycle composite indicators and rapid estimates.

Eurostat is the leading organisation in methodological development in this area and is currently preparing handbooks for compilation and reporting of internationally comparable short-term statistics. The handbooks are mandated by the UN Statistical Commission to provide guidance, best practices and harmonised principles to Member States. Involvement in the preparation of the handbooks will enhance

the technical expertise in the area of collection and compilation of short-term economic statistics.

For more information:

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/>

The way forward for forests

The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) will hold a workshop on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) from 22-23 October in Vienna, Austria. The meeting will facilitate a knowledge-based discussion on the future of multilateral policies and institutions related to forests.

In addition to reviewing policies and institutions related to forests, the workshop will also explore ways to elevate the profile of forests in ongoing intergovernmental consultations related to the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the sustainable development goals. Participants are expected from more than fifty countries, major groups, intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders.

“After over 20 years of demonstrating the vital importance of forests and the many benefits they provide, the challenge now is to determine the best way forward – one that sustains both the forests and the people who depend on them,” said Jan McAlpine, Director of the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat.

The Vienna workshop is one of several key preparatory meetings taking place in the lead up for the next session of the United Nations Forum on Forests which will take place from 4 to 15 May 2015 in UNHQ, New York. The 2015 session has an overall theme of “Forests: progress, challenges and the way forward for the international arrangement”.

The Forum is the only subsidiary body of ECOSOC with universal membership, and has a mandate to address all issues related to forests, and to promote conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and trees outside forests.

The 2015 session of the Forum will have far-reaching impact, as Members will decide on the future of the Forum, as well as the policies for promoting sustainable management of forests worldwide. These discussions may also include an agreement on developing a legally binding global treaty on forests, as well as a global forest fund.

For more information: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/IAF-workshop.html>

Improving government accountability worldwide

Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA will deliver, on behalf of the Secretary-General, a statement at the opening ceremony of the 21st International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions (XXI INCOSAI), which will take place from 22 to 26 October in Beijing, China.

The International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions (INCOSAI) is a triennial congress of members of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). Chaired by the hosting Supreme Audit Institution (SAI), the congress offers INTOSAI Members an opportunity to share experience, discuss priority issues, and adopt resolutions and recommendations to improve government auditing and accountability worldwide. At the invitation of the National Audit Office of China, Mr Wu will also address the theme of National Audit and National Governance at a plenary session of the event.

The United Nations has been working with INTOSAI members for more than forty years to support capacity development in external auditing, through promoting professionalization and standard setting, particularly in developing countries. Every two years, DESA co-organizes a UN/INTOSAI capacity building seminar for SAIs of developing countries. Most recently, DESA co-organized a panel on Safeguarding Financing for Sustainable Development with the Permanent Mission of Austria where the Secretary-General of INTOSAI made a key presentation.

The XXI INCOSAI will also provide the opportunity to launch a joint publication “A UN-INTOSAI Joint Project: Collection of Important Literature on Strengthening Capacities of Supreme Audit Institutions on the Fight against Corruption” which is an outcome of the Platform of Cooperation between INTOSAI and the UN, an initiative which is chaired by the Board of Audit and Inspection of Korea.

Finally, another publication will be launched at the Congress, namely the “Compendium of Innovative Practices of Citizen Engagement for Public Accountability through Supreme Audit Institutions”, which provides an overview of successful examples and innovations in the engagement of citizen in public accountability processes through Supreme Audit Institutions, and is based on the salient features of the deliberations at the 21st UN/INTOSAI Symposium on ‘Effective practices of cooperation between Supreme Audit Institutions and citizens to enhance public accountability’, and the responses of SAIs to the questionnaire which formed the technical basis for the deliberations.

For more information: <http://www.incosai2013.org/main.htm>

Publications and Websites

Technical reports



The MDG Gap Task Force Report 2013

The report, entitled, “The Global Partnership for Development: The Challenge We Face,” tracks delivery on commitments listed under Millennium Development Goal 8—the global partnership for development— including aid, trade, debt relief, access to essential medicines and access to new technologies.

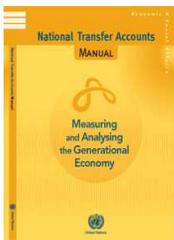
“The picture is mixed,” Mr. Ban said. “We can do better. The best way to prepare for the post-2015 era is to demonstrate that when the international community commits to a global partnership for development, it means it and directs its resources to where they are most needed.”

To deepen the global partnership of UN Member States, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and others, the report makes many recommendations, including for stopping tax evasion, strengthening manufacturing safety standards, dealing with unsustainable debt and improving financial regulation and the rules for global trade, while also asking all partners to live up to their commitments already made in support of achieving the MDGs.

To download:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/mdg_gap/index.shtml

National Transfer Accounts (NTA)



The publication provides a coherent accounting framework of economic flows from one age group or generation to another, typically for a national population in a given calendar year. This manual presents the concepts, methods and estimation procedures to measure these flows over the life-cycle. The NTA estimates are useful to understand and analyse the

implications of changing age structures for the fiscal sustainability of social programs, the accumulation of physical and human capital, economic growth, and familial support for children, youth and older persons.

National Transfer Accounts are consistent with the System of National Accounts (SNA), and provide measures by single years of age of the sources of income (labour, assets, receipt of public and

private transfers), and the uses of income (final private and public consumption, transfer payments of individuals to their families and the government, and saving). The manual builds on work carried out for more than a decade by members of the NTA global network, reflected in the book *Population Aging and the Generational Economy* (Lee and Mason, editors and main authors, 2011).

This manual, produced as part of a UN Development Account project (ROA167), is meant to support capacity development efforts, assisting researchers from countries all over the world to construct National Transfer Accounts, and to interpret and analyse them for relevant policy issues.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/development/NTA_Manual.shtml

Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision

The publication launched by UN DESA’s Population Division consists of global estimates of the number of international migrants for 232 countries or areas of the world. The estimates cover the years 1990, 2000, 2010 and 2013 and are disaggregated by age, sex and country of origin and destination. The publication is available as an online database. A website on www.unmigration.org, dedicated to the launch of this publication, also displays a wall chart, three fact sheets focusing on different aspect of the new estimates, and a press release, video and statement of the Director from a press briefing.

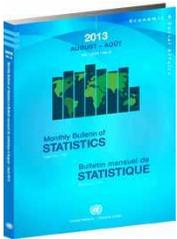
Overall, the estimates show that more people than ever are living abroad. The number of international migrants worldwide has reached 232 million in 2013, up from 154 million in 1990. About 6 out of every 10 international migrants are living in the developed regions, or the global North. Although international migrants account for a small share of the total population (about 3 per cent), the effects of migration are much broader, since it affects migrants and non-migrants alike in countries of origin, destination and transit. Most international migrants are of working age and roughly half of them are women. The data also reveal that South-to-South movements were the most common form of migration around 1990. Since 2000, migration from South to North has become as common as migration between countries of the global South. In 2013, about 82.3 million international migrants who were born in the South are living as migrants in other countries of the South. About 81.9 million international migrants who originated in the South are now living in the North.

United Nations Member States and other stakeholders have made repeated calls for an improved evidence base on international migration. The Population Division has worked hard to respond to these requests and is hopeful that these new estimates will inform the High-level Dialogue in October and contribute to evidence-based policy-making and informed public debate.

For more information:

<http://esa.un.org/unmigration/wallchart2013.htm>

Statistical compilations



Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online

The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics presents current economic and social statistics for more than 200 countries and territories of the world. It contains over 50 tables of monthly and/or

bimonthly, quarterly and annual data on a variety of subjects illustrating important economic trends and developments, including population, prices, employment and earnings, energy, manufacturing, transport, construction, international merchandise trade and finance.

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In addition to the regular recurrent monthly tables, this issue includes the quarterly and bimonthly tables: Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials; Earnings in manufacturing, by sex; Total exports and imports by regions: volume and unit value indices and terms of trade.

For more information: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mbs>

Outreach material

Sustainable Development in Action – Issue 7, Volume 8

The latest newsletter, published by UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development, aims to highlight the work carried out by Member States, the UN, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing sustainable development and leading the way to the Future We Want.

Read full issue:

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1672>

DESA NGO News

The September issue published by UN DESA's NGO Branch, provides the most up-to-date information on news and upcoming events of interest to civil society at UN headquarters in New York, Geneva and elsewhere.

Read full issue: <http://csonet.org/index.php?menu=109>

Youth Flash Newsletter

August issue features an article on “**Young people celebrate International Youth Day 2013**”. The newsletter is published by UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development Focal Point on Youth to keep the public informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. It is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, and from youth organizations around the world.

Read full issue at:

<http://undesadspd.org/Youth/YouthFlashNewsletter/2013/August.aspx>

Comings and Goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in September:

Patricia Lim, Budget & Finance Officer, Executive Office

Loreley Juanita Sanchez, Administrative Assistant, Population Division

Abdulla Gozalov, Statistician, Statistics Division

Linda Marie Hooper, Statistician, Statistics Division

Irma Perez Rito, Staff Assistant, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Phyllis M. Roberts, Senior Staff Assistant, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Fathimath Thowfeequ, Social Affairs Officer, Division for Social Policy and Development

Goings

The following staff member retired in September:

Bruce Shearouse, Administrative Officer, Executive Office

Calendar

October

International Day of Older Persons

1 October

<http://undesadspd.org/Ageing/InternationalDayofOlderPersons.aspx>

Screening of Forests Short Film Festival

1 October, New York

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/film/>

International Seminar on Trade and Tourism Statistic

7-10 October, Jakarta

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Sixth High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development

7-8 October, New York

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/hld/HLD2013/index.htm>

Second Committee of the General Assembly

9 October 2013, New York

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/index.shtml>

24th Meeting of Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting on MDG indicators (IAEG-MDG)

16-19 October, Geneva

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17 October

<http://undesadspd.org/Poverty/InternationalDayfortheEradicationofPoverty/2013.aspx>

Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, 9th session

21-25 October, Geneva

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/tax/index.htm>

21st International Congress of Supreme Audit Institutions (XXI INCOSAI)

22-26 October, Beijing, China

Workshop on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF)

22-23 October, Vienna

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/IAF-workshop.html>

Expert Group Meeting on Revising the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses

29 October – 1 November, New York

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Technical Assistance mission to Qatar

27 September – 4 October, Doha, Qatar

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Country assessment on the SEEA Implementation in Malaysia

30 September -1 October, Putrajaya, Malaysia

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

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