

VOICE

— UN DESA —

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Innovating for an accessible and equitable world

“Together, we have the tools to tackle the root causes of systemic marginalization of persons with disabilities in every corner of the world. Together, we can make sure that every person – no matter their circumstance – can fully participate in every aspect of life – social, economic, cultural, and political. Together, we can – and we will – advance our common future.”

These are the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres as he addressed the 15th session of the Conference of State Parties (COSP15) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) earlier this year.

With 185 ratifications since its adoption in 2006, the CRPD has successfully advanced the well-being of persons with disabilities. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international development frameworks are also contributing to this progress. But more work remains to be done.

Today, one billion people, or 15 per cent of the world's population, experience some form of disability. Most often, in moments of crises, people in vulnerable situations such as persons with disabilities are the most excluded and left behind. They are often not considered in employment due to negative perceptions regarding their ability to contribute or the cost of accommodating their disability. It is crucial for governments, public and private sectors to collaboratively find innovative solutions for and with persons with disabilities to make the world a more accessible and equitable place.

It is against this backdrop that UN DESA is commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) this year focusing on the theme "Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world".

The 2022 global observance to commemorate the IDPD on 5 December will be around the overarching theme of innovation and transformative solutions for inclusive development. There will be three interactive dialogues following thematic topics on innovation for disability inclusive development in employment (SDG8); reducing inequality (SDG10); and sports (SDG3). The interactive dialogue on sports illustrates how this sector connects innovation, employment and equity.

Together with different international actors, the UN is increasingly supporting interventions that are improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. Follow this year's observance of the IDPD at UN Headquarters in New York to learn more about these efforts. The event will be broadcast live via UN Web TV.

For more information: [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)



EXPERT VOICES



“International migrants are important agents of change”

Every year on 18 December, we pay tribute to the 281 million people around the world who are international migrants. What do we know about their current situation as the world is facing multiple crises? What role does migration play for the global goals? We spoke with UN DESA's Clare Menozzi to find out.

1. Our world is facing multiple crises: conflicts, war, hunger and an escalating climate emergency. How is this all affecting international migration?

“Every year, millions of people migrate across international borders in a safe, orderly and regular manner. However, unfavourable political, economic, social and environmental circumstances, combined with unrealistic perceptions of the opportunities available abroad and limited understanding of the risks and dangers can compel people to migrate even when they do not have access to safe and regular pathways.

Under such circumstances, migrants can become vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, can fall victim to human traffickers, and, in extreme cases, even lose their lives. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), since 2014, more than 4,000 fatalities have been recorded annually along migratory routes worldwide, with many more migrant deaths going unrecorded.

To reduce these risks, it is critical to create opportunities for people to migrate in a dignified, safe and orderly fashion, upholding and protecting the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status.

Addressing the adverse drivers and structural factors that hinder people from building and maintaining sustainable livelihoods in their own country can also reduce the pressure to migrate irregularly.

Ultimately, as stated in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration 'migration should never be an act of desperation.'"

2. What can you tell us about the average person on the move today? What trends do you foresee in the coming years?

"International migrants are an extremely diverse group of people. They hail from all continents and often have very different social and economic backgrounds and characteristics. It is not trivial, therefore, to identify who is a typical, "average" migrant.

Looking to the future, it is extremely difficult to predict how international migration trends will unfold. However, it is likely that the volume and complexity of international migration flows will continue to grow, influenced, in part, by other global trends, including climate change, population dynamics and urbanization.

Conflicts and crises, which have played a significant role in shaping migration trends in the past, are also likely to keep international migration at the centre of the global policy debate going forward. The number of refugees and asylum seekers forced to flee across international borders because of persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations rose in 2022 to the highest level in decades."

3. What role does migration play in our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals?

"International migrants are important agents of change, making positive contributions to sustainable development in communities of origin and destination. International migration can facilitate the achievement of many Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Conversely, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda can reduce the adverse drivers that compel people to move, making the option to remain in one's country a more viable choice.

International migrants, despite their many contributions, are also among the groups most vulnerable to being "left behind" in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. To maximise the benefits of migration and minimize its negative effects, it is critical to create opportunities for people to migrate in a safe, orderly and regular manner. Respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human all migrants, regardless of their migration status, also enhances the development potential of migration.

Visit this page to stay updated on the latest migration trends and data:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/content/international-migration-1>





6 things you should know about championing the SDGs in the face of intensified crises

It's been a busy year at UN DESA, and the UN DESA Annual Highlights 2021-2022 report presents some of the main impact

achieved. The report offers a peek into the important work to promote and advance the long-term goal of shared prosperity on a healthy planet. Here are six things you should know about UN DESA's efforts.

1. Addressing poverty and the root causes of inequality

With the COVID-19 pandemic driving one of the greatest social and economic crises in the history of the United Nations, and the war in the Ukraine causing a food, fuel and financing crisis, UN DESA continued to emphasize the importance of inclusive social and economic development. The Department promoted integrated long-term social policy frameworks addressing poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and inequalities, and partnered to bolster LDC advancement. UN DESA also paid critical attention to addressing the digital divide.

2. Guiding global action on our global goals

The Department helped stakeholders identify and share best practices of SDG implementation at all levels. A successful High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) brought more than 140 Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers together with other stakeholders to accelerate action on the SDGs.

3. Ensuring sustainable financing

Addressing the urgent issues of financing for sustainable development was high on UN DESA's agenda. The Department helped frame responses to the debt and liquidity crises exacerbated by COVID-19, the growing climate emergency and disruptions to the food and fuel markets.

4. Making data count

UN DESA helped put data to the task of effective decision-making. The Department monitored progress and gaps in global efforts to achieve the SDGs, highlighting the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and supported Member States' efforts to compile and disseminate crucial, innovative, detailed, disaggregated, and geo-referenced data on the pandemic's impact on society, economy, and government.

5. Protecting our planet

Through its support to the High-level Dialogue on Energy, the Second Global Sustainable Transport Conference, United Nations Ocean Conference and the UN Forum on Forests, among others, the Department moved forward the essential truth that the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement are closely interlinked, and they require multistakeholder partnership and collaboration to be implemented.

6. Framing the future of development

UN DESA helped Member States better understand the complex challenges created by recurrent crises by monitoring, analysing, and forecasting social, economic, and demographic trends.

By taking action on the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the international community can realize a stable and inclusive recovery, build resilience, and move the world towards sustainable development for all. In UN DESA, that remains the highest priority.

To get a glimpse into the Department's efforts during the past year, visit:

<https://www.un.org/en/desa/highlights-report-2021-2022>





The Sustainable Development Goals and a Longevity Agenda”

By Professor Andrew Scott, Department of Economics, London Business School and Research Fellow, Center for Economic and Policy Research

The world population has reached 8 billion, a fourfold increase since the early 20th century. Achieving long-run prosperity for all in the face of this increase has been a motivating force for the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

This 8 billion landmark marks a time of change for demographic trends. Population growth is expected to slow as declining fertility rates offset the impact of higher life expectancy. A number of countries are projected to see declining populations. Japan, for instance, is expected to end the 21st century with a population of 74 million, down from its 2010 peak of 128 million.

As population growth declines, changes in the population structure will become more important. Declining fertility rates and growing life expectancy are leading to a rising proportion of older people and fewer children – an ‘ageing society’. For the first time, those aged over 65 years exceed the number aged under 5. By 2050 they will outnumber the under 10s, and by 2100, the under 21s.

As reflected in the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, this shifting age structure requires shifting behaviours and policies if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be met. At the very least, this growing proportion of older people requires a greater share of resources. It is also essential to recognise that with two-thirds of those aged over 65 years living in low- and middle-income countries this is a global priority.

The prospect of an ageing society is often seen as a negative, with concerns of declining economic growth and public finance pressures. This negativity is a strange way to view one of the greatest of human achievements. An ageing society means mourning fewer infant deaths, fewer parents snatched away in midlife, and more grandparents meeting their grandchildren.

One reason for this negativity is that an ageing society emphasises changes in the population's age structure rather than changes in how we age. The latter is required because of remarkable increases in global life expectancy, which now stands at 73 years. That has the radical implication that the probability of the young becoming old has never been so high. That requires fundamental changes in the life course, reflecting the fact that everyone, regardless of age, now has more years ahead of them and so has to invest more in their future.

What an ageing society and increased longevity both demand is that individuals and society do not underestimate the capacity of later years. With more of our lives being spent at older ages and more of the population consisting of older people, it is crucial that we do not underestimate their potential or, through lack of investment, fail to realise it. A three-dimensional longevity dividend needs to be targeted – as lives become longer, they also must be healthier and productive for longer.

This focus on adapting to longer lives has important implications. The first is a significant change in health challenges. Increasingly age-related non-communicable diseases are the most important cause of death and disease globally. Tackling these requires a shift towards preventative health and focusing on maintaining health rather than treating disease.

The second is to recognise that healthy ageing isn't only about the needs of the current older population. It is also about ensuring that the current young become the healthiest ever generation of older people. To avoid intergenerational tensions, it is essential to recognise that the need to adapt to longer lives affects young and old alike.

This links to a third implication. Too often, the demands of an ageing society are mistakenly seen as a priority only for high-income countries. Currently, South Africa and India have only 6% and 7% of their population aged over 65, but by 2085 these will be 17% and 24% respectively – similar to Germany and the United States today. Those 65-year-olds in 2085 are currently infants. Healthy ageing requires supporting people when they are young and not just when they are old.

A final implication is to recognise the substantial contribution older people already make to society and the economy – through caring, community roles, and employment. Given the growing likelihood of the young becoming the old, greater investment needs to be made in health and skills to support working and being engaged for longer. All past health and education improvements have benefited the economy, and the same should hold for improvements at older years.

Because of these shifting demographic trends, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will increasingly be about supporting adaptations to longer lives. Individually and collectively, we need to avoid underestimating the capacity of these later years and ensure that they are healthy, productive and engaged ones for all.

** The views expressed in this blog are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of UN DESA.*



SDG 10 IN NUMBERS



5,895 MIGRANTS



**THE DEADLIEST YEAR SINCE
2017 FOR MIGRANTS**



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