



## In this together – why cooperation is the only way forward for global economy

As we usher in the new year, we find ourselves in a world fraught with uncertainty and challenges. On the surface, global macroeconomic indicators remain favourable, but they mask underlying risks and imbalances. The global trade disputes are intensifying, monetary policies are shifting and climate risks threaten to undo decades of development gains. These are just some of the factors that endanger not only our current economic activity but could also negatively impact longer-term development.

What is more, economic growth is uneven, often not reaching the people that need it the most. In many countries, per capita income is continuing to decline and poverty rates remain high. If we want to achieve the ambitious goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we have to look past the headline economic figures and build growth on sustainable foundations. The world is in urgent need of concrete and effective policy action to support growth in the future.

“We must act urgently and – even more importantly – we must act collectively,” says Elliott Harris, UN Chief Economist and Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development. “Opting out of the global economy is not an option. For better or for worse, we are all in it together and only together can we find the solutions to the problems that blight our world. We need our multilateral system now more than ever.”

His call for more international cooperation comes at a time when the multilateral approach to global policy-making is facing significant headwinds.

Whether in international trade or environmental sustainability, truly global problems require truly global policy approaches. The sooner the global actors commit to that reality, the faster will we be able to grapple with the challenges that face our generation.

On 22 January, UN DESA will launch the *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019*, providing a detailed analysis of the driving forces behind the global economic growth. The report, a joint effort of UN DESA, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the five UN Regional Commissions, with contributions from other UN agencies, is expected to issue a clarion call to safeguard and build on the multilateral policy framework. Our future – not only in economic terms – will depend on our ability to work together at this critical juncture.

Watch the launch live on 22 January at 11 am EST: [UN Web TV](#)

For more information: [World Economic Situation and Prospects](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS



### Staying on-track to realize the Sustainable Development Goals

2019 will be a critical year for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN DESA will be fully engaged in the preparation of the two High-level Political Forums, one in July under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), completing its first cycle, and one in September at the summit level under the auspices of the General Assembly. We must seize the momentum to implement the 2030 Agenda and use this opportune year to

assess progress and to strengthen our political will to act to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in all regions.

Many countries are aligning their national policies and institutions behind the Goals to improve people's lives. Businesses are taking action to invest in new technologies, opening up new markets, and building the sustainable and inclusive economy of the 21st century. Civil society organizations and other stakeholders are also using these Goals to drive change at the local, subnational and national levels and holding their Governments accountable.

Even though progress is being made, gaps are evident. The world remains on a trajectory of increasing inequality, and it is facing armed conflicts, humanitarian and environmental crises, as well as economic, financial and climate challenges.

Moreover, the scale and pace of change in public and private investment in sustainable development remain alarmingly insufficient. We, therefore, urgently need a surge in financing, investments and technological innovation.

In 2019, UN DESA will launch the Global Sustainable Development Report, an analysis by an independent group of scientists undertaken every four years to assess where we stand. Additionally, over the next months, the department will release several other analytical reports to assess progress made towards the SDGs to provide context to this year's high-level discussions.

This spring, UN DESA and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will also co-facilitate a conference, seeking to amplify the interlinkages between climate action and the broader 2030 Agenda and share best practices on attracting financing for both.

## High-level Political Forum in July

The HLPF will be convened under the auspices of ECOSOC from 9 to 18 July 2019. It will address the theme “*Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*”. Fifty-one countries, both developed and developing, will present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)— sharing their national experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learnt, in implementing the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

At the same time, the July HLPF will review progress in the thematic areas of quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), climate action (SDG 13), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16), and partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17). UN DESA is coordinating a series of Expert Group Meetings on each goal to prepare and inform the thematic discussions at HLPF.

## High-level Political Forum in September – SDG Summit

The HLPF under the auspices of the General Assembly will take place at the summit level on 24 and 25 September 2019. Heads of State and Governments, joined by leaders from civil society organizations, foundations, the business sector and other stakeholders, will focus on the overall implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Areas of progress towards the SDGs will be identified. Actions for scaling up will be considered. A political declaration of Heads of State and Government is expected to give guidance on how to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. The SDG Summit will complement the Secretary-General’s Climate Summit, to be held the day before.

UN DESA has launched a call to receive good practices and success stories in SDG implementation by all stakeholders through its [SDG Good Practices portal](#). The main findings of this evidence-based stocktaking will be highlighted and showcase in the lead-up to, and during the Summit.

A series of side events and special events will also be organized to complement the July HLPF and the SDG Summit, aiming to engage and mobilize partners around the SDGs. The special events will include the SDG Business Forum, Partnership Exchange, SDG Film Festival, Chief Sustainability Officers event, Major Groups and Other Stakeholders meeting, an event with universities and higher education institutions, and Local and Regional Governments Forum, which will convene mayors from the world’s major cities to focus on ways to localize the 2030 Agenda.

## Other related events

In 2019, four years after the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), we will also have the opportunity to review progress on its commitments and the current state of play on the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum and SDG Investment Fair in April 2019 will be critical junctures for building momentum in response to emerging risks to the economic outlook and potential opportunities. These will feed into the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in September 2019.

In September 2019, the UN General Assembly will also hold a one-day high level review of the progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States (SIDS) through the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The high-level review will result in a concise, action-oriented and inter-governmentally agreed political declaration.

As the United Nations Secretariat entity responsible for economic, social and environmental issues, UN DESA leads the work from the Secretariat side, preparing for

and ensuring the success of the 2019 HLPF in July, the SDG Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development (FFD), and the SAMOA Pathway high-level meeting to review progress in September at the beginning of the 74th session of the General Assembly, as well as all other related side and special events.

For more information: [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS



### Making every drop count – a decade for action

Access to clean water and sanitation is a basic human right that affects our health and our safety. We need safe water to drink every day, and we need adequate sanitation facilities to ensure that everyone has the ability to attend school or work, and is protected against sexual assault. And, we need to manage the flow of wastewater safely to protect our fragile ecosystems. But we have a long way to go.

Today, about 4.5 billion people lack safely managed sanitation services, and about 2.5 billion people—36 percent of the world’s population—live in water-scarce regions. More than two billion people must drink contaminated water, resulting in a child dying every minute. Globally, 80 per cent of wastewater flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused, and droughts and floods are increasing in severity as a result of our changing climate.

The [Water Action Decade](#), launched on World Water Day last March, is working to halt this growing water crisis. The “[International Decade \(2018–2028\) for Action – Water for Sustainable Development](#),” as it is known in its unanimous General Assembly resolution, serves as a platform for countries to share some of their major water challenges and possible solutions. The Decade puts greater focus on sustainable development and an integrated management of water resources to achieve social, economic and environmental objectives.

“The Water Action Decade provides a unique framework to support efforts to overcome these challenges by energizing the implementation and promotion of programmes and projects on integrated and sustainable management of water and sanitation,” said Liu Zhenmin, UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General. “It further provides an exceptional opportunity to strengthen cooperation and partnership at all levels to help achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 and other water-related goals and targets.”

UN Secretary-General António Guterres, with the support of [UN-Water](#), has drawn up a plan for the Decade, which will be active until 20 March 2028. In it, the Secretary-General calls for the energized implementation of existing water programmes and projects, and mobilized action for water as a tool for sustainable development.

Countries and organizations around the world are already implementing this plan by sharing their experiences with water and sanitation projects on a new website for the decade – [www.wateractiondecade.org](http://www.wateractiondecade.org).



Additionally, the Government of Tajikistan, with the support of the UN system, organized the High-level International Conference of the Decade in Dushanbe from 20 to 22 June under the theme “Promoting Action for Policy Dialogue.” The Conference was attended by high-level delegations and representatives from 120 countries, including heads of state and government, and provided valuable opportunities for Member States and other stakeholders to promote actions, partnerships and policy dialogue to support internationally agreed water goals and targets.

On 28 November, the General Assembly’s Second Committee adopted a resolution by consensus, calling for a United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the Decade, to take place on 22-24 March 2023 in New York.

Furthermore, Member States requested the President of the General Assembly, to convene a one-day high-level meeting to promote the implementation of the water-related Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda in New York in 2021.

All of these different actions are in line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Water, which in its outcome document, “Making Every Drop Count,” emphasized the need to convene UN meetings on water at the highest possible level to spur commitments of global leaders.

For more information:

[Water Action Decade](#)

## GET INVOLVED



Are you an SDG changemaker? Share your good practices!

Three years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, governments, UN entities, civil society organizations and companies around the world are taking unprecedented steps to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and build a better world for all. To achieve the 17 global goals by 2030, we need even more action, faster.

To help stakeholders working toward the SDGs, UN DESA’s Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) has launched a call for submissions of good practices, success stories and lessons learned in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Submissions to the [SDG Good Practices platform](#) will be analyzed by a dedicated inter-agency team coordinated by UN DESA, and the results will be made available online for easy access and broad dissemination. Where applicable, the submissions can serve as inputs to thematic preparations for the 2019 sessions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

The SDG Good Practices platform seeks to answer the questions:

- Where do we stand?
- Are we on track?
- What are the inspiring breakthroughs and success stories that are showing results and impacts?
- What are the good practices that can be replicated and scaled up?
- What are the gaps and constraints and how should we address them?
- Looking ahead, what steps should we take to accelerate progress?

An event will be organized in the lead-up to the SDG Summit in September 2019 to showcase a selection of the success stories and to present the main findings of the evidence-based stock-taking. We hope that the submission, collection, analysis and dissemination of good practices, success stories and lessons learned will help galvanize the momentum for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Now, though, we need your input to make this analysis meaningful! Submissions can be made now through 28 February 2019 through DSDG's [web-based portal](#). All are encouraged to follow the template to the extent possible. Please find more information in all of the six UN languages [here](#). Have a question? Please email [DSDG@un.org](mailto:DSDG@un.org).

## EXPERT VOICES



### Diving into the blue economy

Can humans use the ocean as a tool for lifting people out of poverty, all the while protecting its valuable ecosystems? Certainly, say proponents of the growing sustainable blue economy movement. The first-ever Sustainable Blue Economy Conference, held in Kenya in November 2018, brought together thousands of ocean experts and activists to discuss how to sustainably use our ocean.

The concept is gaining momentum, including at the highest levels of decision making. In September, 12 heads of state from around the world and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, Peter Thomson, launched the High-level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy to catalyse bold solutions for ocean health and wealth. We asked Madhushree Chatterjee, Chief of the Natural Resources and Interlinkages Branch of UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development Goals to give us her impressions of this growing movement.

#### What do we mean by a "blue economy"?

"The blue economy comprises a range of economic sectors and related policies that together determine whether the use of ocean resources is sustainable. An important challenge of the blue economy is to understand and better manage the many aspects of oceanic sustainability, ranging from sustainable fisheries to ecosystem health to preventing pollution. Secondly, the blue economy challenges us to realize that the sustainable management of ocean resources will require collaboration across borders and sectors through a variety of partnerships, and on a scale that has not been previously achieved. This is a tall order, particularly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) who face significant limitations."

## How can building a blue economy help us achieve the SDGs?

“The blue economy concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion and preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability—all issues integral to the 2030 Agenda. So, to build a blue economy, we will need to put sustainability at its centre. This will require careful attention to all decisions and their cross-sectoral implications. We will need to ensure that policies do not undermine each other and that interlinkages are leveraged for the benefit of people, planet and prosperity.”

## Why is a healthy ocean so important for current and future generations?

“The world’s oceans – their temperature, chemistry, currents and life – drive global systems that make the earth habitable for humankind. Our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, medicines and even the oxygen in the air we breathe, are all provided and regulated by the sea. Living oceans absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and reduce climate change impacts. The oceans also provide convenient transport routes for everything from food and fuel to construction materials, chemicals and household items. Moreover, UN Environment estimates the cumulative economic impact of poor ocean management practices is at least \$200 billion per year.”

## What can we do to improve our ocean’s health?

“The declining health of our ocean shows that the world is simply not doing enough. However, as part of the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, a diverse range of stakeholders, from local grassroots organizations to governments, NGOs and the private sector, committed to reversing the decline of ocean health through saving our mangroves, alleviating the impacts of ocean acidification, halting plastic pollution and more. Those 1,400+ commitments are now grouped into nine [Communities of Ocean Action](#), and UN DESA is providing a platform for them to work together. Now, it is time to ramp up the implementation of such initiatives, identify gaps, exchange ideas, find creative solutions, scale up where possible and, most importantly, to work together to implement Sustainable Development Goal 14 – life under water.”

## What did the recent Sustainable Blue Economy Conference achieve?

“As Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta said in his remarks at the Conference, it provided an international forum for advancing global conversation on the two important pillars of the Blue Economy: on one hand, sustainability, climate change and controlling pollution; on the other, production, accelerated economic growth, jobs and poverty alleviation. Discussions at the conference emphasized how oceans, seas, lakes and rivers can help us achieve our common objective of sustainable economic growth, thereby contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. With about 18,000 participants, 184 countries, and more than 300 events and 200 speakers, the conference proved to be an important stepping stone towards the next anticipated UN Ocean Conference in 2020.”

For more information:

[UN DESA's Sustainable Knowledge Platform](#)



## History made as UN Conference adopts landmark migration compact

On 10 December 2018, over 160 countries adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration during a two-day intergovernmental conference, held in Marrakesh, Morocco. Grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Global

Compact took more than two years to prepare, including negotiations, thematic and regional consultations as well as hearings with civil society, the private sector, diaspora groups and academics.

The Global Compact's 23 objectives reflect a unique, 360-degree approach to migration, focusing on conditions in origin countries, preparations for departure, the migration process, border management, conditions in destination countries, contributions of migrants to development and migrant return and reintegration. The Global Compact prioritizes the collection and use of data as a basis for evidence-based policies and considers international cooperation as a cross-cutting issue.

The conference also included two dialogues, on action on the Global Compact commitments and on partnerships and innovative initiatives. On the eve of the conference, Secretary-General António Guterres announced the creation of the United Nations network on migration, which, under the leadership of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), will leverage all relevant entities of the UN system to support Member States in implementing the Compact.

Following endorsement of the Global Compact by the General Assembly on 19 December, implementation will take centre stage. The Global Compact establishes a capacity building mechanism with three elements: a "connection hub" to process requests for implementation, a start-up fund providing seed funding for specific projects, and a knowledge platform to serve as repository for data, evidence and good practices.

The Global Compact invites countries to prepare national implementation plans, which will be reviewed every four years at the regional level, starting in 2020. At the global level, Member States will assess progress every four years at the International Migration Review Forum, starting 2022.

For more information: [Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration](#)



## Follow our efforts for the SDGs in 2019!



As 2018 came full circle, we look back at yet another busy year, where pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been front and center of our efforts.

We've gathered young people, civil society, businesses as well as innovators from around the world to share ideas and solutions to help make the global goals a reality on the ground. At the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the world honed in on goals 6, 7, 11, 12, 15 and 17 and 46 nations presented their efforts to realize the goals.

To tackle the global water crisis and make a difference for the 4.5 billion people who currently lack safely managed sanitation services, a decade for action was launched in connection with World Water Day.

Seeking innovative solutions to secure funding for the goals was also high on the agenda, and in addition to the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development, the Secretary-General convened the High-level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the UN High-level week.

The latest data on SDGs progress was also released during the year, showcasing where we're making progress and where we need to step up efforts. The Second UN World Data Forum was also held, bringing together data experts to collaborate on tackling data gaps and challenges, launching new initiatives and identifying mechanisms to increase financing and support for better data for sustainable development.

Throughout the year, UN DESA has also kept a close eye on global economy trends, issuing its flagship report the World Economic Situation and Prospects, as well as monthly briefings with continues updates. The department also took a stand for climate action at COP24.

The year concluded with the launch of the first-ever report on persons with disabilities and the SDGs, followed by the adoption of a milestone compact – the Marrakesh

Compact – to ensure the safety and dignity for the 258 million international migrants in the world.

Continue following our efforts in 2019 via our [website](#), via [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). To get a snapshot of our upcoming efforts for the global goals in 2019, check out this [highlight article](#).

## Giving NGOs a voice at the UN



The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) will hold its 2019 regular session from 21 to 30 January 2019. One of the Committee's main tasks is to review applications for consultative status by NGOs and to recommend granting status to them. The final decision on the granting of status is taken by the Economic and Social Council, to which the Committee on NGOs reports.

Recognizing the crucial role of civil society in elaborating and implementing development policies, the consultative status allows non-governmental organizations to take part in a high number of UN meetings: those of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, such as the Commission on Social Policy and Development, the Commission on the Status of Women or the Population Commission, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Human Rights Council and other UN processes and events opened to civil society.

At its coming session, the Committee will consider 288 new applications for consultative status and 233 applications deferred from previous sessions. It will also review the quadrennial reports submitted by NGOs, an obligation for those in status to inform on their activities and contribution to the UN's work. The Committee meets for eight working days in January and seven additional days in May. Its increased workload over the recent years testifies to the strong interest by civil society actors to engage with the UN in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other major endeavors of the organization.

For more information: [The Committee on NGOs](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| 21-30 January,<br>New York | 2019 regular session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations                     |
| 22 January                 | Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019                                   |
| 23-25 January,<br>Nairobi  | Expert Group Meeting on Conservation and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples                   |
| 30 January,                | Launch of the World Youth Report on “Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” |

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