



## Their own goals – migration driving sustainable development

Close to 190 countries are set to adopt the groundbreaking UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Among its many features, the Compact recognizes the contributions of migrants to the development of their host and origin countries. Migrant workers fill gaps in the labour market in host countries. The money that they send back home helps their families to achieve their own sustainable development goals.

Greg Balmes Jr. was punching the steering wheel and wiping off his tears on the way to the airport. He had just returned to the Philippines a month ago after seven years spent in Italy, working as an undocumented migrant. But with no economic prospects at home, it was time for him to go abroad again, and leave his wife and two children behind.

Sitting on the passenger seat next to Greg, his wife, Grace, decided she would not watch idly as her family breaks up anew. She would help her husband by starting her own business, using the money he had sent her from Italy. Through daily sacrifices and extraordinary self-discipline, supported by a financial literacy course, Grace had been able to set aside a small sum – just enough to open a small store and invest in a school van. The business thrived and, three years later, Grace was making enough money to allow Greg to leave his job in Italy and return home.

After ten years abroad, Greg is finally reunited with his family in the Philippines, working as a school van driver and helping Grace with her business. “I don’t want a big house like my neighbours, who had big houses, also from working in Italy, but no one was living there because they were all outside the country,” Grace says. “Now, our house, even if smaller than my neighbours’, is bigger, because we have a big, happy family living inside it.”

Across the world, over 800 million people like Grace depend on money sent by their loved ones abroad, according to data of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). These remittances are a vital lifeline that allows them to live in dignity and invest in such essentials as education for their children, healthcare and decent housing – all focus areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The money they receive also contributes to financial inclusion by providing seed capital and access to loans, helping migrants' families to start their own businesses, as was the case with Grace. Every year, international migrants send close to half a trillion dollars in remittances to developing countries – this is more than the gross domestic product of Norway and around three times the amount that developing countries receive in official aid.

Yet, for all their positive impact, transferring remittances back home has been a costly affair. According to the latest World Bank data, fees eat up, on average, seven per cent of the migrant remittance transfers. Considering that Grace was able to open her business by saving just five per cent of the remittances from her husband, this number is staggering. Considering the sacrifices that she, her husband and her children had to make, it is heartbreakingly high.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to limit the cost of remittances globally to an average of three per cent by 2030, but progress to hit that target has been slow so far. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, set to be adopted by close to 190 countries on 10 December, seeks to speed up the reduction of remittance transfer fees and to promote the productive use of these transfers.

A result of years of preparations and negotiations, with the support of UN DESA and numerous other partners, the Global Compact proposes numerous concrete actions to make sending money back home, faster, safer and cheaper. The Global Compact also aims to promote investments by diaspora groups in their countries of origin and to foster the financial inclusion of migrants and their families through improving their access to banking and including women in financial literacy training.

Delivering on the commitments of the Global Compact for Migration would radically improve the lives of millions of migrants and of hundreds of millions of their family members, lifting even more of them out of poverty. This global agreement could help unleash the full potential of migration to drive sustainable development, making success stories like that of Grace and Greg much more common.

For more information:

[The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#)

[Get latest data on international migration from UN DESA's Population Division](#)

[International Day of Family Remittances \(16 June\)](#)



### UN DESA shows commitment to climate action at COP24

From blistering heatwaves and high-intensity natural disasters to melting sea ice and biodiversity loss, the impacts of global warming are more visible than ever. The recent “Global Warming of 1.5°C” report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirms the need to strongly commit to the Paris Agreement’s aims of limiting global

warming to well below 2°C and, even better, limiting warming to 1.5°C. It is clear: All stakeholders must raise their ambition, take urgent action and make unprecedented transitions now to achieve a carbon-neutral world by mid-century.

To this end, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs is stepping up its presence at the annual [UN Climate Change Conference](#), to be held from 2 to 14 December in Katowice, Poland. The event, officially the 24th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24), will bring together more than 20,000 experts over the two weeks.

UN DESA will co-host the [SDG Pavilion](#) in the exposition hall with the [Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization \(GEIDCO\)](#), a non-governmental organization based in China. The [SDG Pavilion](#) will bring together stakeholders from governments, the UN system, the private sector, civil society and academia around the world for substantive discussions on the interlinkages between climate change and all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

“We must promote synergies between the [SDGs](#) and climate change to advance win-win solutions,” said UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin.

Such solutions to the climate challenge will be highlighted at the [SDG Pavilion](#), where the department’s [Division for Sustainable Development Goals](#) is coordinating with [GEIDCO](#) a robust 11-day programme of interactive dialogues, presentations and special events.

The [Pavilion](#) will offer opportunities for experts gathered in Poland to share experiences and ideas on how best to leverage policies, programmes, implementation mechanisms, multistakeholder action and partnerships to advance both the [SDGs](#) and climate action in ways that benefit all. A diversity of implementation experiences and perspectives will be explored on a wide range of issues including energy, water, ocean, forest, food, gender, jobs, health, technology and innovation.

Climate change is a major priority for Secretary-General António Guterres and UN DESA Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin, both of whom will attend COP24 during the high-level period that kicks off the conference.

Peter Thomson, the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the Ocean, will also be at COP24 to promote the ways that ocean conservation can be a solution to climate change, since the ocean produces half the world’s oxygen and absorbs 30 percent of carbon dioxide produced by humans each year.

Additionally, UN DESA's UN Forum on Forests Secretariat will look to promote the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2030, a global effort towards halting deforestation, forest degradation and expanding the world's forests, which serve as an important carbon sequestration mechanism. Poland, which holds the presidency of COP24, considers forests a priority issue and an integral part of implementing the Paris Agreement and achieving climate neutrality. A Ministerial Declaration on Forests for Climate is expected to be one of three such declarations to be adopted in Katowice.

For more information:

[UN Climate Change Conference](#)

[UN DESA at COP24](#)

## HIGHLIGHTS



### First report on persons with disabilities and the SDGs

“Societies will never achieve the SDGs without the full participation of everyone, including people with disabilities. We cannot afford to ignore or marginalize the contributions of 1.5 billion people,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres earlier this year. Yet, in many countries, essential services for persons with disabilities are unavailable, or of poor

quality. Data also show that poverty rates are on average 15 percentage points higher for persons with disabilities. These new numbers – connecting persons with disabilities with the 17 sustainable development goals – will be released by UN DESA in the first report of its kind, “Realizing the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities,” to be launched on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2018.

One billion people, or 15 per cent of the world's population, experience some form of disability. Many of them are still facing exclusions in today's society: lack of accessibility in physical and virtual environments, negative attitudes, stigma and discrimination, lack of access to energy, access to assistive technology and rehabilitation and lack of measures to promote independent living.

This situation is also corroborated by the findings of the new publication, which demonstrates that persons with disabilities are at a disadvantage regarding most SDGs. For instance, in addition to poverty rates being higher, persons with disabilities face drawbacks in many aspects of their daily lives – when it comes to job opportunities, wages, accessibility to the workplace, to businesses and public spaces and institutions, as well as access to sanitation facilities and new technologies.

If the international community wants to keep its promise of leaving no one behind in its pursuit of realizing the SDGs, these goals have to be realized for everyone – with or without disabilities – also in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities (CRPD), which was adopted in 2007 and which has so far been ratified by 177 States. Concrete actions are also needed to make the situation of persons with disabilities visible in policymaking.

Moreover, we need to recognize the potential of persons with disabilities as contributors to society and to enhance current efforts to mainstream their needs, rights and perspectives into the process of achieving the goals at all levels.

Highlighting many good practices and policy trends, the publication provides an overview of the progress towards the SDGs and the implementation of the CRPD. It also provides specific recommendations to advance inclusive development for all. The new publication will be launched during the commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December at UN Headquarters in New York.

For more information:

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3 December)

## GET INVOLVED



## Stand up for human rights and inclusive development!

Everyone is “entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized,” the UN Declaration on the Right to Development proclaimed in 1986.

The right to development belongs to everyone, individually and collectively, with no discrimination and with full participation. It improves “the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution”. Ahead of and beyond Human Rights Day on 10 December, stand up for human rights and inclusive development!

The right to development puts people at the centre of the development process, and embodies that the human rights principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability as well as international cooperation, can guide our responses to a series of contemporary issues and challenges.

All of us can promote inclusive development and defend human rights.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that affirms the basic rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being. It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.



As the international community is gearing up towards celebrating Human Rights Day on 10 December and the 70th year anniversary, here are some ways to get involved.

- **Commit to #standup4humanrights:** pledge to make the principles of the Universal Declaration a reality in your daily life and to always #standup4humanrights! Make the commitment [here](#).
- **Promote and engage:** raise awareness of what the [UN Declaration on Human Rights](#) means in everyday life and show how it empowers us all including vulnerable groups such as older persons, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples. For example, launch an advocacy campaign to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in your country!
- **Record your video:** record yourself reading one of the 30 articles of the Declaration in any of the 144 languages currently available on this site and share your video with your friends. Learn more and find video messages [here](#).
- **Spread the word on social media:** Help us give visibility to the fundamental principles of the right to inclusive development and human rights by sharing your posts and your stories. Use the hashtag #StandUp4HumanRights.

For more information:

[Human Rights Day](#)

[UN DESA's Division for Inclusive Development](#)

## EXPERT VOICES



### The water and energy challenge

The way we produce energy today requires water – a lot of it. Nearly all of the global electricity generation is considered water intense. With a rapidly growing world population, the demand for both water and electricity is set to increase dramatically. How can we ensure enough water for energy and enough energy to provide clean water?

That is the challenge that the new Global Network on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions is determined to tackle.

The Network, which will be launched by UN DESA, ITAIPU Binacional and other partners at the COP 24 climate conference this month, will promote integrated approaches to the water-energy nexus. We talked to Nicolas Franke, Sustainable Development Officer at UN DESA.

Why is the link between water and energy so important?

“Water and energy are highly interlinked, but these linkages are rarely recognized and often neglected. Our institutions tend to address the problems of energy and water separately, working in silos.

Meanwhile, water is essential for most energy production systems, with 90 per cent of global electricity generation having intense water requirements, and energy is essential to distribute, purify and recycle water.

Both resources depend highly on each other, and without integrated energy and water programs many synergies that support sustainable development cannot be realized.”

Can you give us some examples of such integrated approaches?

“The solutions that address the water-energy nexus will depend on geographical conditions and regional requirements. There are no silver bullets.

One good example is wastewater, which we can use to generate energy, not only increasing energy availability, but also reducing the pollution of our water resources.

We could also use residual heat from energy production for water treatment. This way the water required for cooling can be reused and lost energy regained.”

A growing population means a greater demand for water and energy while growing global temperatures mean less availability of water. Is there a way out of this vicious cycle?

“We have to learn how to live with nature and make use of our limited resources in an efficient, equitable and sustainable way. I believe that we need to create regenerative systems that would allow us to reduce the quantity of resources we use and of the waste we produce by closing the water cycle and narrowing the energy loop.

We have been hearing a lot about reusing, reducing and recycling, but we need to move from repeating the slogan to making real commitments, taking our words seriously and move faster to implement this concept if we want to cover the needs of current and future generations.”

This month, UN DESA will launch a new Sustainable Water and Energy Global Network. How will it make a difference?

“There are many actors out there who are working on integrated solutions for energy and water, but they have so far lacked a common space to exchange experiences and ideas and foster collaboration. The Network will be a global platform where stakeholders can come together to engage in promoting and implementing integrated approaches to water and energy that support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.”

For more information: [Sustainable water and energy solutions](#)



## Rule of law and global cooperation vital to address threats posed by new technology

The 13th Internet Governance Forum (IGF) concluded on 14 November in Paris, highlighting the importance of the rule of law and global cooperation to ensure a safe cyberspace.

“Digital solutions are transforming lives and can turbocharge our work to achieve

the SDGs,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his opening statement of the Forum, “but alongside the tremendous benefits that it can bring, new issues have emerged around cybersecurity, data and artificial intelligence. We see the Internet being used as a platform for hate speech, for repression, censorship, and control.”

More than 3,000 participants, including high-level government officials, civil society leaders, private sector and internet policy experts from 143 countries, attended the three-day Forum. Under the title ‘Internet of Trust’, the Forum facilitated discussions on how to promote positive impacts of new technologies and how they can realize their full social and economic potential while also looking at curbing the more insidious uses of the Internet.

“We are living in a true digital revolution which is considered as the greatest single enabler of sustainable development,” said UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin. “We should galvanise the momentum to mobilize technology and innovation for the service of people and not allow them to result in polarization and division.”

This annual Forum maximizes the opportunity for open and inclusive dialogue and the exchange of ideas on Internet governance (IG) related issues; creates opportunities to share best practices and experiences; identifies emerging issues and bring them to the attention of the relevant bodies and the public; and contributes to capacity building for Internet governance.

For more information:

Internet Governance Forum  
Address by the UN Secretary-General  
Speech by the French President  
Remarks by DESA USG  
Draft IGF 2018 Chair’s Summary  
IGF 2018 Key Messages



## New publication connects persons with disabilities and the SDGs



The Sustainable Development Goals belong to everyone – that includes persons with disabilities. It's time for empowerment and inclusion!

International Day of Persons with Disabilities  
3 DECEMBER

UNITED NATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

#IDPD #SDGs #GlobalGoals [www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities)

Mainstreaming disability into all of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be essential to achieve these goals. Persons with disabilities need urgently to be able to access social protection, education, employment, basic services, inclusive access to water and sanitation, including accessible toilets.

This is the conclusion from the findings and figures presented in the very first publication of its kind on “Realizing the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities,” produced by UN DESA, and which will be launched on 3 December during the commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

### Some of the key findings from the publication – which connects persons with disabilities with the 17 SDGs – reveal:

- That in many developing countries, households with **persons with disabilities are less likely to have access to electricity** than those without persons with disabilities.
- **That women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men with disabilities.**
- **Employed persons with disabilities tend to earn lower wages than persons without disabilities.** Wage gaps wider than 10 per cent have been reported. Lack of accessibility and reasonable accommodation can pose further obstacles. In eight developing countries, an average of 32 per cent of persons with disabilities report that their workplace is hindering or not accessible.
- **Among six developing countries, 46 per cent of persons with disabilities reported having experienced discrimination;** in two of those countries, 17 per cent of persons with disabilities reported being discriminated against in public services.
- Crowdsourced data, mostly from developed countries indicated that, **in 2017, 32 per cent of public transportation facilities were not accessible.** Businesses and public places can also be a challenge. In some countries, more than 25 per cent of persons with disabilities consider banks, shops and post offices hindering or not accessible.

- According to crowdsourced accessibility data, **out of over 20,000 public leisure facilities analyzed in various countries, mostly in developed regions, half were considered not accessible for persons with wheelchairs.**
- In five developing countries, on average, 30 per cent of persons with disabilities indicated that the **courts and police stations were not accessible.**
- **At least 120 out of 214 countries or areas that conducted a census during the 2010 round included a set of questions on disability,** a significant increase from the approximately 19 countries or areas that had included such questions during the 1970 census round.

The new publication will become available on the website of UN DESA's Division for Inclusive Social Development.

## Shifting the way the world powers economic growth?



As economic activity expands, the level of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is still rising. After three years of remaining flat, global energy-related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions increased by 1.5 per cent in 2017 and are estimated to have risen further in 2018. This puts even greater policy importance on the forthcoming 24th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is scheduled to be held on 3-14 December in Katowice, Poland. Implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate change requires a fundamental shift in the way the world powers economic growth, including rapid and far-reaching transitions in land, energy, industry, buildings, transport, and cities.

The latest *World Economic Situation and Prospects Monthly Briefing* reviews the role of fossil fuels, and coal in particular, in economic activity in different regions. Key findings include:

- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions expected to reach an historical high in 2018
- The low cost of coal relative to alternative energy sources is slowing progress towards energy transition in many regions
- Phasing out coal use requires a reliable and stable alternative energy supply, plus support to the economic and employment transition in regions dependent on coal production

The Monthly Briefing series can be accessed at: [bit.ly/wespbrief](http://bit.ly/wespbrief)

Join United Nations Chief Economist and Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development Elliott Harris on 15 January 2019 at the launch of UN DESA's flagship report on the world economy, the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019.

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>2-14 December,<br/>Katowice</b>   | 24th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) |
| <b>3 December</b>                    | International Day of Persons with Disabilities  |
| <b>3-5 December,<br/>Brussels</b>    | Expert Group Meeting on SDG 4: Thematic review  |
| <b>4 December,<br/>New York</b>      | UNGA High-level Meeting on Middle-income Countries and 2030 Agenda                      |
| <b>10-11 December,<br/>Marrakech</b> | Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration                        |

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