



Turning the tide to save our ocean

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"The state of our ocean is worrying," said Mr. Wu, describing marine pollution, overfishing and other challenges threatening the state of our global waters which cover 72 per cent of the Earth's surface and is home to between 500,000 and 10 million marine species. "The carrying capacity of our ocean has reached its limit."

It is against this backdrop that the United Nations is organizing the Ocean Conference under the theme “Our oceans, our future: partnering for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14” from 5 to 9 June, bringing together thousands of participants from the international community.

Oceans and seas play vital role for our survival

Healthy oceans are critical for sustaining life, eliminating poverty and promoting prosperity. Taking care of them will save both lives and money. During our discussion, Mr. Wu mentioned several areas in which oceans and seas play a vital role in our daily lives. They provide the food we eat and the nutrition we need. They are also crucial for economic and social development, for communications, transportation and for creating job opportunities.

“But that is not all. Oceans and seas are the largest carbon dioxide sink,” Mr. Wu explained, referring to their role in slowing the rate of climate change by absorbing about 30 per cent of human emissions of carbon dioxide.

Mr. Wu also highlighted the fact that they produce half of the oxygen we breathe and serve as stabilizer of the Earth’s temperature. “So imagine if we do not have this ocean, if we have it all polluted, we will be in serious trouble, not only us, but the generations to come.”

“We have to know where the threats come from”

But despite their importance, our oceans and seas continue to be negatively affected by human activities. Every year, more than 8 million tonnes of plastic enter the oceans. This is equal to dumping a garbage truck of plastic every minute.

“You know people are joking, if you drop a plastic bottle on this side of the Atlantic, it may be picked up by the other side of the Pacific. All the plastic waste thrown into the sea, not only makes it dirty, but it is very harmful to all the inhabitants in the sea and also very harmful to our environment,” said Mr. Wu.

Indeed, it is estimated that plastic waste alone kills up to one million sea birds, a hundred thousand sea mammals and countless fish each year.

These challenges are affecting vulnerable groups and coastal communities. They are also impacting countries with a high dependency on the oceans and their marine resources, as well as the threats that the changes to our climate pose. “Climate change actually produces the adverse effect on oceans and seas. The melting of ice bergs would raise the sea level,” he said, affecting low-lying islands and coastal areas. “That would be natural disasters for many, many inhabitants on land.”

“We have to be fully aware, where the dangers come from, where the threats come from. Then we can take actions accordingly.”

Taking action now is critical

Mr. Wu stressed the need for urgent action, also expressing optimism for what the Ocean Conference will be able to accomplish. “We are going to have a very important and very large conference,” Mr. Wu said, highlighting the expected large turn-out in terms of Member States as well as NGOs gathering at UN Headquarters in New York.

“The Conference will not only serve as a place to raise awareness of the state of the oceans, but will produce a global call for action and generate new dialogues and partnerships aimed at implementing solutions. In addition, many participants will announce new voluntary commitments to address ocean challenges,” said Mr. Wu.

The main outcomes of the Conference will be a negotiated document, a “Call for Action”, with a concrete plan towards a more sustainable future for our oceans; a report featuring the co-chairs’ summary of the seven partnership dialogues; and voluntary commitments.

These pledges for ocean action have also been picking up pace in advance of the event. As of 26 May, 310 voluntary commitments have been registered on the Conference website. “We have seen a surge in new commitments to address the very real concerns that our oceans are facing,” Mr. Wu said. “We hope the pace will pick up even further.”

Helping our ocean will help our future

As we were about to wrap up our interview, we turned to the question of what people around the globe can do to help turn the tide towards healthy oceans and seas. “As ordinary citizens I think we should love our oceans, love our cities. With our love, we are going to protect them, just like with our own family.”

“As for the specific actions, it varies from place to place,” said Mr. Wu. “You have to identify the local problems in your area. For instance, in some areas and in some countries, the ocean pollution is the number one challenge. Then go to the local community and government officials to see what you can do, to help to remove all this rubbish, dumped into the sea, to clean the environment, to solve the pollution problem.”

“If it is the challenge of overfishing, then you may help the government authorities or local communities, to try to stop these overfishing activities. And of course everybody should get themselves mobilized to fight against climate change,” Mr. Wu said.

“As ordinary citizens we can do a lot. Let’s join forces with others in the community to take action immediately to help our oceans help our future,” concluded Mr. Wu.

For more information: [The Ocean Conference](#)



Beginning a second decade to advance the rights of persons with disabilities

With over 1 billion people living with some form of disability in the world today, they are the world's largest minority. As the world is moving forward with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community has made a commitment to include everyone in society and development; which includes mobilizing support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

The Conference of States Parties (COSP) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is one of the largest and most diverse international disability meetings in the world. The 10th session of the COSP, held from 13 to 15 June 2017 at UN Headquarters in New York, takes place as States embark on the second decade in the implementation of the CRPD. States continue to take action to affect improvements in their national legislation, and are adopting and implementing policies and practices that work towards an inclusive and sustainable society that leaves no one behind.

The United Nations and its Member States recognize the central role that persons with disabilities must play in multi-stakeholder partnerships for achieving the SDGs and implementing the CRPD. This year's main theme is "The Second Decade of the CRPD: Inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations in the implementation of the Convention".

The themes of the COSP's round table discussions will focus on; addressing the impact of multiple discrimination on persons with disabilities and promoting their participation and multi-stakeholder partnerships for achieving the SDGs in line with the CRPD; the inclusion and full participation of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action; and promoting inclusive urban development and implementation of the New Urban Agenda – Habitat III. At this year's COSP, high-level representation includes over 40 ministerial-level participants who will speak in the general debate and other thematic discussions during the session.

In conjunction with the session, over 75 parallel side-events will be conducted by Governments, UN agencies and civil society organizations, including organizations of persons with disabilities, national human rights institutions, disability rights organizations, service providers and the private sector.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has said that making global development inclusive of people with disabilities "must be an enhanced priority". The ultimate goal of this COSP is to explore ways and means of creating enabling conditions for inclusive development and to make a difference in the lives of over a billion persons with disabilities on the ground.

More information: [10th session of the Conference of States Parties to the CRPD](#)



Promoting public service innovation for sustainable development

From effective delivery of health services, to quality education and decent jobs, and to climate change responses, strong public institutions with effective public service delivery play an essential role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leaving no one behind.

“The 2030 Agenda is as transformative as it is ambitious. Governments have the lead role in its implementation. Realizing the SDGs requires a well-functioning and innovative government. It also requires highly qualified, well-equipped and committed civil servants,” said Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, during a recent briefing to Member States.

Putting a spotlight on public service excellence across the globe, the United Nations Public Service Forum, a global knowledge sharing platform on public service innovations, will take place on 22-23 June in The Hague, Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Accelerating public service innovation for Agenda 2030

As countries implement the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Forum will provide a platform for decision-makers to share strategies, innovative approaches and lessons learned on how to rally public institutions and public servants to realize the SDGs.

Over 500 participants from around the world are expected to attend, including high-level personalities, ministers, senior government officials, and representatives from civil society, academia, the private sector, and international and regional organizations.

“We should encourage civil servants to be innovative. Many of the fundamental challenges the Agenda addresses, such as hunger, poverty and inequality, have been around a long time. They are not new problems, but they require new solutions,” said Mr. Wu Hongbo during last year’s UN Public Service Day celebration, “the innovative efforts and creativity of public institutions and civil servants has never been more important.”

The Forum will place a focus on public service innovations in key SDGs areas such as health and energy and share lessons learned on how to promote leadership and capacities for innovative government; strengthen transparent, accountable and participatory institutions; overcome challenges through technology and enhance

policy coherence and integration as well as promote transparency, and accountability for sustainable development.

An international innovation market showcasing good practices from around the world will be held during the Forum. Government officials, experts, as well as private sector and civil society representatives will have the opportunity to learn from each other, network and identify future trends and actions.

Honoring Public Service Awards winners

The ceremony on the UN Public Service Awards (UNPSA), which honors innovation and excellence in public service, will take place on 23 June. Winners of the 2017 UNPSA will be presented at the Awards Ceremony.

The 2017 UNPSA will be given in three categories: 1) Reaching the poorest and most vulnerable through inclusive services and participation; 2) promoting transparency, accountability and integrity in public service; and 3) innovation and excellence in delivery health services.

The Forum is organized by the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands and UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM).

For more information:

2017 UN Public Service Forum: The Future is Now – Accelerating Public Service Innovation for Agenda 2030



Join Thomas Gass in Twitter chat on the SDGs

For the third year in a row, Thomas Gass, UN DESA's Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, invites the online community to join him in a Twitter chat to discuss the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their potential of addressing some of the most pressing global challenges, making our world a better place. Join him on 28 June from 9:30 to 10:30 am

EDT and share your questions and comments using #SDGsChat!

“We are at a crucial moment in our collective effort to build sustainable, equitable and inclusive societies,” said Thomas Gass. “Billions of people continue to live in poverty and are denied a life of dignity. There are enormous disparities of opportunity, wealth and power, and an alarming number of people who suffer in ways that others do not.”

But the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 transformative Sustainable Development Goals bring hope and determination within the international community that with collective action, we can transform our world and make it better for everyone.

“A most significant change in paradigm brought about by the 2030 Agenda is the commitment to leave no one behind,” said Mr. Gass. “We are well beyond measuring poverty only in GDP terms. In a manner of speaking, the 169 targets underpinning the SDGs are 169 ways of explaining how no one is to be left behind.”

“I look forward to discuss with the online community what this means,” said Thomas Gass ahead of the Twitter chat.

The chat event takes place in the lead up to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which kicks off on 10 July under the theme “Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world”. The chat offers an opportunity for participants to learn more about the Forum, the apex body for countries to review and follow up on SDGs implementation.

“For two years now, I have held Twitter chats to discuss the SDGs and their realization,” said Thomas Gass. “It is very inspiring to connect with so many people from across the world, to discuss what matters most to them and ways that they can take action within their own communities. I look forward to a new opportunity for dialogue on 28 June!”

To share questions or comments with Thomas Gass, join the chat on Wednesday, 28 June from 9:30 to 10:30 am EDT and tweet to [@ThomasGass](#) using #SDGsChat. Questions can also be shared in advance with the event hashtag #SDGsChat.

Follow Thomas Gass on Twitter.



Improving migration data in the context of the 2030 Agenda

Why is it so important that migration data is accurately tracked in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how will these efforts help benefit people on the move? Ahead of an Expert Group Meeting on Improving Migration Data in the Context of the 2030 Agenda on 20-22 June, UN DESA Voice asked Haoyi Chen, Statistician in the

Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of UN DESA's Statistics Division.

Can you share with our UN DESA Voice readers the work you carry out to improve migration data?

“The work of the Statistics Division on international migration statistics revolves around 3 main pillars.

First, the Division has been collecting regularly statistics on the stock and flows of migrants from national statistical offices around the world since the early 1950s. The data collected have been widely disseminated through the UN Demographic Yearbooks and the UNdata portal.

The second area of work is the production of recommendations and guidelines with regard to concepts of migration and methods for measurement. The recommendations and guidelines are developed to improve the quality of data on international migration and to promote the application of common definitions and concepts by countries to enhance the comparability of data at the international level.

The third area of work of the Division on migration statistics is on capacity building. Since 2014, the Division has conducted a number of workshops for countries in Africa and Asia in collaboration with key partners. The workshops are aimed at strengthening the technical capacity of government officials to produce and analyse migration data from all relevant sources and to use migration data in the formulation of national migration policies and development plans.”

Why is it so important that migration data is accurately tracked in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

“The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/70/1), adopted by the General Assembly in September 2015, for the first time, includes the topic of migration in the global development agenda. SDG target 10.7, the sole target dealing exclusively with migration, calls on countries to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and mobility and to implement well-managed migration policies.

The Agenda also includes several migration-related targets, addressing issues such as human trafficking, labour standards for migrant workers, health workforce development, student migration and the transfer costs of remittances. Furthermore,

the pledge of the 2030 Agenda to “leave no one left behind” requires disaggregating relevant SDG indicators by migratory status, wherever relevant, in order to elucidate the vulnerability of migrants and certain types of mobility.

The new global development framework and the growing attention to migration as a global issue pose significant challenges for national statistical offices and the international statistical community, to meet the huge demands for migration and migration-related statistics. There is an urgent need to implement existing migration standards, refine new migration-related concepts, leverage traditional data sources and explore innovative means of data collection with a view to producing data needed for the SDG monitoring.”

With these efforts to enhance migration data; in what way do you hope it will benefit people on the move?

“Reliable and timely data on international migration are essential for policy that facilitates orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, enhances migrant integration and reinforces the positive impact of migration on development.

For example, according to the International Labour Organization’s General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment, no recruitment fees or related costs should be charged to, or otherwise borne by, recruited workers and job seekers. However data from pilot surveys in a number of countries showed that the total recruitment cost for migrants may be as high as 10 times of their monthly earnings. Such data can serve to develop more targeted country-level policy recommendations to reduce recruitment cost (Indicator 10.7.1).

Another example is associated with the effort in reducing the cost of sending money from migrants to their families back home. In 2015, about 550 billion total personal remittances were received and a global average remittances cost of 7.4% in 2015 means that 41 billion is “lost” in processing the service. Linking data on transaction costs of remittances with government policies that encourage competition, remove legal barriers and enhance payment-system infrastructure can help reducing remittances costs and increasing the amount of money that reaches migrant families.

The last example that I would like to point out is related to the integration and inclusion of migrants in countries of destination. In the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Head of States committed to take on the bold SDG target 10.7, the sole target dealing exclusively with migration.

The target calls on countries to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and orderly migration and mobility and to implement well-managed migration policies, to improve the integration and inclusion of migrants, with particular reference to access to education, health care, justice and language training. Data collected on migrant and non-migrant population in a country disaggregated by key characteristics such as sex, age, education, labour force status and year of arrival help assessing the level of migrant integration and formulating well-targeted policies to improve their integration in the host society.”

For more information:

UN DESA’s Statistics Division
UN DESA’s Population Division – International Migration
The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants
Together – Respect, Safety and Dignity for All



Reaching out through first ever Indigenous Media Zone

At the 16th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum, the UN together with indigenous media groups hosted the first-ever Indigenous Media Zone at UN Headquarters in New York from 24 to 28 April 2017.

The programme featured live interviews, press conferences, workspaces for indigenous media and discussions with human rights defenders and indigenous experts.

2017 marks the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration), which many of the media interviews focused at.

“This is my 40th year on the Declaration,” Willie Littlechild, an indigenous expert from Canada said in one of the panel discussions, which were broadcast live on DESA’s Facebook page. “I think the biggest lesson I learned is that you can never give up. I think many times we felt that it’s of no use and we can’t succeed but we kept going.”

The goal behind the 5-day Indigenous Media Zone was to provide a space for indigenous and mainstream media to cover the Sixteenth session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues through their own media channels, languages and perspectives.

Within the UN system, the Permanent Forum is mandated to deal with indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.

To promote this, indigenous media representatives, journalists, bloggers as well as non-indigenous media including UN correspondents were invited to cover the press conference and interviews.

But the milestone of reaching the UN Declaration’s adoption 10 years ago was just the beginning.

“It’s important to recognize that while these instruments are there to help us to achieve our dream of autonomy and of full recognition of our rights of our land and resources, the problem comes to the implementation,” indigenous expert Christina Coc of Ketchi Maya in Belize, said in the panel discussion focusing on the struggle over indigenous lands and territories.

And indeed, indigenous peoples from all parts of the world have been the driving force of their own future. Since 2007, there has been progress in some countries in terms of taking constitutional and legislative measures to recognize the rights and

identity of indigenous peoples. But more needs to be done at the national and local levels.

“The Declaration is such a milestone if you look historically,” Aasa Larsson-Blind, indigenous expert and Vice President of the Saami Council in Sweden, said during one of the panel discussions. “Now it’s about getting it implemented so we can finally see change in ordinary lives around the world.

“We’re not there yet, but we have something to live up to.”

In addition to discussions on the UN Declaration and indigenous lands and territories, panels also elaborated on indigenous youth and their challenge of walking between two worlds, indigenous Members of Parliament and indigenous rights in Mexico City’s Constitution.

The live broadcasts via UN DESA’s Facebook page can be accessed via the main website of the 16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (check under “Indigenous Media Zone”), which comes full circle on 5 May.

For more information:

16th Session of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

MORE FROM UNDESA



World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2017

Growth in the global economy has picked up in the last six months in line with expectations, but in many regions, growth remains below the levels needed for rapid progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, according to the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2017 report, launched on 16 May at UN Headquarters.

The report identifies a tentative recovery in world industrial production, along with reviving global trade, driven primarily by rising import demand from East Asia. World gross product is expected to expand by 2.7 per cent in 2017 and 2.9 per cent in 2018, unchanged from UN forecasts released in January this year. This marks a notable acceleration compared to just 2.3 per cent in 2016.

In a statement on the report, Mr. Lenni Montiel, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, underscored the “need to reinvigorate global commitments to international policy coordination to achieve a balanced and sustained revival of global growth, ensuring that no regions are left behind.”

According to the report, underpinning global economic recovery is firmer growth in many developed economies and economies in transition, with East and South Asia remaining the world's most dynamic regions. However, economic recovery in South America is emerging more slowly than anticipated, and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is declining or stagnant in several parts of Africa.

Forecasts for GDP growth in some of the least developed countries (LDCs) have been revised downward since January, with growth in the group as a whole projected to remain well below the Sustainable Development Goals target of at least 7 per cent. The report notes that under the current growth trajectory and assuming no decline in income inequality, nearly 35 per cent of the population in LDCs may remain in extreme poverty by 2030. Additional policy efforts are needed to foster an environment that will accelerate medium-term growth and tackle poverty through policies that address inequalities in income and opportunity.

The report points to a combination of short-term policies to support consumption among the most deprived and longer-term policies, such as improving access to healthcare and education and investment in rural infrastructure.

The report states that inflation dynamics in developed economies have reached a turning point, and risks of prolonged deflation have largely dissipated. By contrast, inflationary pressures have eased in many large emerging markets, allowing interest rates to come down.

The report further stresses heightened uncertainty over international policy, which will hinder a strong rebound in private investment globally. Corporate sectors in many emerging economies are vulnerable to sudden changes in financial conditions and destabilizing capital outflows, which could be triggered by faster-than-expected interest rate hikes in the United States.

The report highlights some positive developments related to environmental sustainability. The level of global carbon emissions has stalled for three consecutive years. This reflects growing renewable power generation, improvements in energy efficiency, transition from coal to natural gas, and also slower economic growth in some major emitters. But, the report also warns against waning commitments going forward.

Looking ahead, the report advocates for renewed global commitments to deeper international policy coordination in key areas, including aligning the multilateral trading system with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; expanding official development aid; supporting climate finance and clean technology transfer; and addressing the challenges posed by large movements of refugees and migrants.

For more information:

World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2017

Find out who are making pledges to
#SaveOurOcean!



Are you taking action to #SaveOurOcean?

Join the commitments registry!
oceanconference.un.org/commitments

 **THE OCEAN CONFERENCE**

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK,
5-9 JUNE 2017

#SaveOurOcean
oceanconference.un.org

Over 320 Voluntary Commitments for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 to #SaveOurOcean have been registered as of 30 May 2017. The distribution of commitments among the entities include Governments (74); UN entities (51); IGO's (24); NGOs (83); Civil Society (16); Academic Institutions (22); Scientific Community (5); Private Sector (23); Philanthropic Organizations (8); Partnerships (17); and Other relevant actors (3).

Examples of commitments from governments include one from Australia for Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific (COSPPac), from the Government of Algeria to decrease impacts of ocean acidification, and from the Government of Peru to establish programs of formalization of fisheries for the strengthening of artisanal fisheries.

Iceland is committing to reduce marine litter in its waters and Austria to reducing nutrient and hazardous substances discharge in Austrian rivers and lakes. In total, governments have been making the following number of commitments: Albania (1); Algeria (1); Australia (2); Austria (4); Belgium (6); Chile (1); Fiji (1); France (4); Germany (8); Grenada (5); Iceland (1); Indonesia (6); Madagascar (3); Maldives (2); Monaco (4); Nigeria (1); Pakistan (1); Palau (1); Panama (2); Peru (1); Republic of Korea (2); Samoa (2); Seychelles (1); Spain (1) and Sweden (1).

Examples of commitments from UN entities include one from UNDP to strengthen capacity for international cooperation in the ecosystem-based management of the

Antarctic Large Marine Ecosystem, one from the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to promote standards for sustainable fisheries management and traceability of fish products on a global scale, and one for Mapping the Blue Economy of Africa to support decision-making, investment and governance of activities undertaken on the continental shelf and in adjacent international seabed areas from the International Seabed Authority.

The breakdown of commitments by UN system entities is as follows: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (1); Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (1); Economic Commission for Europe (2); Global Environment Facility (1); International Labour Organization (1); International Maritime Organization (4); Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2); UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (5); United Nations Development Programme (13); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (3); United Nations Environment (11); United Nations Information Centre (1) and World Meteorological Organization (3).

Examples of commitments by IGOs include one from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea to develop a science basis to support ecosystem based management and one from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme to establish a Partnership on Ocean Acidification.

The breakdown of commitments by IGOs is: Association of Caribbean States (1); Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (1); Commonwealth Secretariat (1); International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (2); International Hydrographic Organization (2); International Seabed Authority (2); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (5); Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (1); South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (1); Southern African Development Community (1).

In addition, several other stakeholders from civil society, research institutions, academia and the private sector have also made voluntary commitments.

For a complete list and to register a new commitment:
<https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

5-9 June, New York	The Ocean Conference
7-9 June, New York	ECOSOC Coordination and Management Meeting
13-15 June, New York	10th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
21-23 June, Geneva	ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
23 June	UN Public Service Day

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