



Milestone achievements for a better world

“It was the first time in human history that we as human beings reached consensus on the future of development,” UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo said, commenting on the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an interview with UN DESA Voice. Mr. Wu shared his views on the many positive results achieved and on the work that now lies ahead.

Only a few months have passed since Heads of State and Government representatives of the 193 UN Member States gathered in New York for the UN Summit on Sustainable Development, to adopt the new, transformative and inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Determination to end poverty by 2030

“I thought this was a very exciting moment,” Mr. Wu said with a smile, standing once again in the majestic UN General Assembly Hall where history was made on 25 September 2015.

“It was the first time that we defined the clear meaning of sustainable development,” he explained, outlining its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental development.

Mr. Wu also emphasized that it was “the first time that we said loud and clear that we intend to end extreme poverty by the year of 2030.”

Defining moments during a year of global action

UN DESA has played a leading role in facilitating the work that resulted in two major outcomes during 2015: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“I feel extremely proud of the colleagues in my department,” Mr. Wu said. “We were there, each and every step with Member States in discussions and providing our own knowledge and expertise.”

Mr. Wu recounted the work of the Open Working Groups, the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and Member States negotiations, which eventually led to the adoption of the new agenda.

“That is a good gift we could provide for the 70th Birthday of the United Nations.”

Work transforming our world has only begun

Discussing the critical next steps involving the implementation; Mr. Wu expressed confidence given the preparatory actions already taken around the world. “I’m greatly encouraged [...] this is a stage that is more complicated and more challenging – to transform your words and plan into reality and actions,” he said, underlining the need of instituting the development agenda at the national level. “If you want them to be implemented in reality, you have to streamline them into the national plans.”

Regarding funding, Mr. Wu highlighted that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Ethiopia on 15 July, provides options for fundraising. “This is something we found missing with the MDGs.”

Inclusive SDGs process – a success story

Looking ahead towards the imminent process of realizing this ambitious development agenda, Mr. Wu said he already sees a clear difference in the ownership and level of commitment by Member States, compared to the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

“Member States started very slowly with the implementation of the MDGs because they did not feel like the owner, but this time it is totally different. Their involvement starts from the beginning. So that is a success story. We continue to engage all the multiple stakeholders in our future implementation.”

For more information:

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Addis Ababa Action Agenda

World economic growth falls below last forecast



The world economy stumbled in 2015 and only a modest progress is projected for the next two years as a number of cyclical and structural headwinds persist according to the first chapter of the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2016 report launched in December. The complete report featuring regional forecasts will be launched in multiple locations across the globe from 20 to 27 January.

Global growth is estimated at a mere 2.4 per cent in 2015, marking a downward revision by 0.4 percentage points from the UN DESA forecasts presented six months ago.

Amid lower commodity prices, large capital outflows and increased financial market volatility, growth in developing and transition economies has slowed to its weakest pace since the global financial crisis of 2008/2009.

“Stronger and more coordinated policy efforts are needed to ensure robust, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, which will be a key determinant for achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals,” noted Lenni Montiel, UN DESA’s Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development as the findings from the first chapter, the Global Economic Outlook were presented on 10 December.

Growth projected at 2.9 per cent in 2016

Regional Growth Rate	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change from May 2015 Forecast	
						2015	2016
World	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.9	3.2	-0.4	-0.2
Developed economies	1.0	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.3	-0.1	0.0
United States	1.5	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.8	-0.2	-0.1
Japan	1.6	-0.1	0.5	1.3	0.6	-0.5	0.2
European Union	0.2	1.4	1.9	2.0	2.2	0.0	-0.1
Economies in transition	2.2	0.8	-2.8	0.8	1.9	-0.9	-0.2
South-Eastern Europe	2.4	0.1	2.1	2.6	3.0	0.7	0.1
Commonwealth of Independent States and Georgia	2.2	0.8	-3.0	0.7	1.8	-0.9	-0.2
Russian Federation	1.3	0.6	-3.8	0.0	1.2	-0.8	-0.1
Developing economies	4.6	4.3	3.8	4.3	4.8	-0.6	-0.5
Africa	3.4	3.1	3.7	4.4	4.4	-0.3	-0.4
East Asia	6.3	6.1	5.6	5.6	5.6	-0.4	-0.4
China	7.7	7.3	6.8	6.4	6.5	-0.1	-0.4
South Asia	4.8	6.2	6.0	6.7	7.0	-0.6	-0.2
India	6.4	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.5	-0.4	-0.4
Western Asia	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.4	3.0	-1.0	-1.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.7	1.0	-0.5	0.7	2.7	-1.0	-1.0
Brazil	2.5	0.1	-2.8	-0.8	2.3	-1.7	-1.2
Least developed countries	5.4	5.1	4.5	5.6	5.6	-0.3	-0.1

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Given the anticipated slowdown in China and persistently weak economic performances in other large emerging economies, notably the Russian Federation and Brazil, the pivot of global growth is partially shifting again towards developed economies.

The world economy is projected to grow by 2.9 per cent in 2016 and 3.2 per cent in 2017, supported by generally less restrictive fiscal and still accommodative monetary policy stances worldwide.

The anticipated timing and pace of normalization of the US monetary policy stance is expected to reduce policy uncertainties and support a moderate pickup in investments and growth.

Five major headwinds for global economy

Five major headwinds for the global economy are identified: 1. persistent macroeconomic uncertainties; 2. low commodity prices and diminished trade flows; 3. rising volatility in exchange rates and capital flows; 4. stagnant investment and productivity growth; and 5. continued disconnect between finance and real sector activities.

The weakness in growth is also adversely impacting labour markets in many developing and transition economies, with unemployment on the rise.

Growth in developed economies will gain some momentum in 2016, surpassing the 2 per cent mark for the first time since 2010. Economic growth in developing and transition economies is expected to bottom out and gradually recover.



Economic growth and financial stability

The report underscores that monetary authorities would need to make concerted efforts to reduce uncertainty and financial volatility, striking a delicate balance between their economic growth and financial stability objectives.

“The expected timing and pace of normalization of the US monetary policy will help reduce some policy uncertainties and provide impetus to revive investment,” Hamid Rashid, Chief of the UN’s Global Economic Monitoring Unit added, while presenting the report.

Global growth, environmental sustainability and poverty reduction

Some positive recent trends in environmental sustainability are also revealed. Global energy-related carbon emissions experienced no growth in 2014 for the first time in 20 years, with the exception of 2009 when the global economy contracted.

At the same time, the report warns that the broad slowdown in economic growth in many developing economies could restrain progress in poverty reduction in the near term and derail long-term sustainable development. To avert such a scenario and stimulate inclusive growth, more effective policy coordination – at the national, regional and global level – is needed.

For more information:

[World Economic Situation and Prospects 2016: Global Economic Outlook](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

Happy 70th anniversary, UN ECOSOC!

“The Council has set global norms and standards in international development cooperation as well as humanitarian action,” ECOSOC President Mr. Oh Joon noted as the global community recently celebrated the 70th anniversary of the UN Charter. Time has now come to commemorate another milestone, 70 years of UN ECOSOC, taking actions to improve lives. On 22 January, the ECOSOC President will convene a special high-level meeting to mark this occasion.



The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) turns 70 in 2016 and that means 70 years of coordination, policy guidance and cooperation on international economic and social development. Established as one of the six principle organs of the United Nations in 1945, ECOSOC has grown not only in membership, but also in the scope of its work and impact in the last 70 years.

Central platform within the UN system

By the 2000s, ECOSOC had emerged as a central platform for the follow-up and review of progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As we just adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ECOSOC will build on its experience and will support countries with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Council is the United Nations main arena for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on economic, social and environmental issues. In cooperation with its partners from civil society, academia, philanthropy and business, it works on a balanced integration of these three dimensions of sustainable development.

Seven milestones in ECOSOC's history



The 70th anniversary is a historic moment to reflect on achievements and actions. In seven decades of its existence, ECOSOC can look retrospectively at seven major milestones: opening the door to civil society, making the connection between development and human rights, putting women at the heart of development efforts, creating a response to global HIV/AIDS epidemic, supporting transitions from conflict to peace, giving youth a seat at the UN, and reviewing the global Sustainable Development Goals.

ECOSOC has worked with its partners towards improving the lives of people, and it will continue to do so. The Council has given a voice to women, youth and civil society. It has drawn the international attention to important issues such as human rights and has a leading position, for instance, in the fight against the global AIDS epidemic and in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Civil society has always been crucial for the UN, but thanks to ECOSOC's engagement, the voice of civil society is stronger. Almost 4,200 NGOs with consultative status are currently present.

"It is important to note that ECOSOC is the only Charter body with a mandate to engage civil society, as established by article 71 of the Charter," explained Mr. Oh Joon.

Furthermore, ECOSOC has played the main role within the UN system for spotlighting women's rights. Among other initiatives, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), created by ECOSOC, was responsible for producing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).



Taking action to improve lives

The Council links sustainable development, humanitarian action and peace and supports the role of youth within the ECOSOC system. Looking at future challenges, ECOSOC also plays an indispensable role and has a clear vision for its future.

“The Economic and Social Council stands ready to deliver on the promise of sustainable development. We will pursue sustainable development as the world’s most important global challenge through integrated, coordinated and coherent strategies at all levels,” emphasized Mr. Oh Joon.

For more information:

United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNECOSOC)

GET INVOLVED

Be part of reviewing new sustainable development agenda

The successful adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals was the result of more than two years of intensive consultation and engagement of all stakeholders.

A robust follow-up and review mechanism for the implementation of the Goals and targets requires a solid framework of indicators. The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal (IAEG-SDGs) Indicators has been mandated with developing a global set of indicators.



Since the beginning, the Group has conducted its work in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, and engaged with stakeholders in various ways to contribute their expertise and specialized views on indicators, including through four rounds of open consultations, briefings and technical consultations.

An exceptional wealth of proposals and inputs have been provided by experts from civil society, academia and the private sector to the IAEG-SDGs throughout the process. For instance, over 4,000 comments were received during the November 3-day open consultation.

The IAEG-SDGs highly values the inputs received and has taken them into consideration during all stages of development of the global indicators, while balancing the technical feasibility and the ambition of the Goals and targets.

The Group will continue to actively engage with stakeholders in the development of the global indicator set. The set of global indicators will be complemented by indicators at the regional, national and sub-national levels, which will also require the support and involvement of all stakeholders.

To implement the indicator frameworks and ensure no one is left behind, a data revolution will be needed to ensure the availability of quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data. This will be a joint responsibility of governments,

international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector. Engagement by civil society and other stakeholders, especially at the national and local level, will be essential for this support.

For more information:
Sustainable Development Goal indicators website

EXPERT VOICES

“With the historic agreement in Paris last month, the world has committed to striving toward a future where the global temperature rises no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Now is the time for action and no climate action plan can be successful without inclusion of transport plans”.



Role of sustainable transportation to combat climate change

The UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport met on the margins of COP21 to discuss sustainable transport and climate change and its work plan for 2016. Here, the co-chairs, Carolina Toha, Mayor of Santiago, Chile and Martin Lundstedt, CEO of Volvo Group, share their views on the role of sustainable transport to combat climate change.

Q1. Why is sustainable transportation a key issue to combat climate change?

“With the historic agreement in Paris last month, the world has committed to striving toward a future where the global temperature rises no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Now is the time for action and no climate action plan can be successful without inclusion of transport plans.

In 2010, the transport sector was responsible for approximately 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions (23% of energy-related emissions). Emissions from transport are rising despite significant CO₂ reduction efforts by many equipment manufacturers and logistics management providers. The transportation sector’s reliance on fossil fuels must be addressed.

Low carbon transportation systems offer significant mitigation potential while also enhancing growth and development, providing connectivity and reducing economic, environmental and social costs. Actions advancing adaptation or enhancing the resilience of transport infrastructure and services are also critical, including through preparedness, protection, response, and recovery.”

Q2. How is sustainable transportation relevant to realize the 17 sustainable development goals?

“The sustainable development goals (SDGs) contain several targets directly related to sustainable transport, including a road safety target under SDG 3 on Health, and a target on access to sustainable public transport in the context of SDG 11 on Human Settlements.

Sustainable transport is integral as well to the targets on energy efficiency (SDG 7), resilient infrastructure (in SDG 9) and addressing fossil fuel subsidies to advance

sustainable consumption and production (in SDG 12). But because sustainable transport is a cross-cutting issue, it is in fact an important enabler for all the issues covered in the SDGs, from education and gender equality to food security and water and sanitation.”

Q3. What are some of the unique transport challenges faced by developing countries?

“Developing and transitioning countries face unique challenges in the implementation of sustainable transport, as many are undergoing rapid urbanization and rapid motorization at the same time.

The world’s poorest lack the transport they need to access jobs, markets, and health and education services, and the transport solutions that do exist in developing countries often carry significant costs for environmental and human health. Special consideration and support must be provided to these countries, in the form of capacity building, financing and other resources.”

Q4. Who are the major actors in the development of sustainable transportation methods and how can they mobilize action for sustainable initiatives?

“A successful sustainable transport agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. Inclusive partnerships—built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre—are needed at the global, regional, national and local level.

Q5. What will the future look like when sustainable transportation has been fully realized? What actions are needed to make this happen?

“Innovation defined broadly will unleash the full potential of sustainable transport. Innovation must include many elements: technology innovation (including both energy efficient equipment and alternative fuels); network innovation (including efficiently managed supply chains and infrastructure as well as the emerging development of ride and vehicle-sharing); and funding innovation (including both public and private investments in R&D and demonstration projects). “

The UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport works with Governments, transport providers, businesses, financial institutions, civil society and other stakeholders to promote sustainable transport systems and their integration into development strategies and policies, including in climate action.

For more information:

Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Growing old around the globe – latest trends on ageing revealed

The world’s population is ageing: virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in the number and proportion of older persons in their populations. Between 2015 and 2030, the number of older persons—those aged 60 years or over—in the world is projected to grow by 56 per cent, from 901 million to more than 1.4 billion.

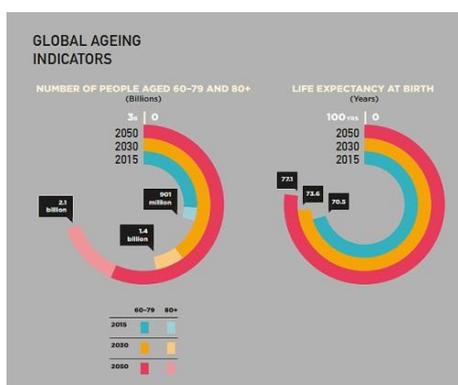
Globally, the number of older persons is growing faster than the numbers of people in any other age group. As a result, the share of older persons in the total population is increasing. Across the world's regions, the ageing process is most advanced in Europe and Northern America, where more than one in five people was aged 60 or over in 2015, but the share of older persons is increasing rapidly in other regions as well.



By 2030, older persons are expected to account for more than 25 per cent of the populations in Europe and in Northern America, 20 per cent in Oceania, 17 per cent in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 6 per cent in Africa.

The pace of population ageing in many developing countries today is substantially faster than has been observed in the past. Consequently, today's developing countries are having to adapt much more quickly to ageing populations, and often at much lower levels of national income compared to the past experience of many of the developed countries.

Preparing for an ageing population is integral to the achievement of many of the sustainable development goals, including eradicating poverty, ensuring healthy lives, promoting gender equality, achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, reducing inequality between and within countries, and creating sustainable human settlements.



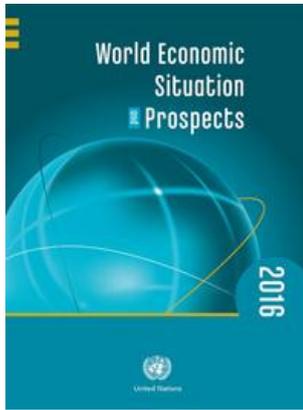
World Population Ageing 2015 summarizes the global, regional and country-level trends in population ageing drawn from the latest United Nations population estimates and projections, as published in *World Population Prospects: the 2015 Revision*. Focusing in particular on the period from 2015 to 2030, the report, as well as the accompanying database and infochart, identify key implications of trends in the number and share of older persons for sustainable development planning.

For more information:
[World Population Ageing 2015](#)

PUBLICATIONS & MORE

Latest global economy trends revealed in WESP 2016

The complete *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2016* will be launched in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva, Mexico, Moscow and New Delhi between 21 and 28 January, following the pre-release of its first chapter, the *Global Economic Outlook*, on 10 December at a press briefing held by UN DESA's ASG for Economic Development, Lenni Montiel, and Chief of the Economic Monitoring Unit of UN DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division, Hamid Rashid.

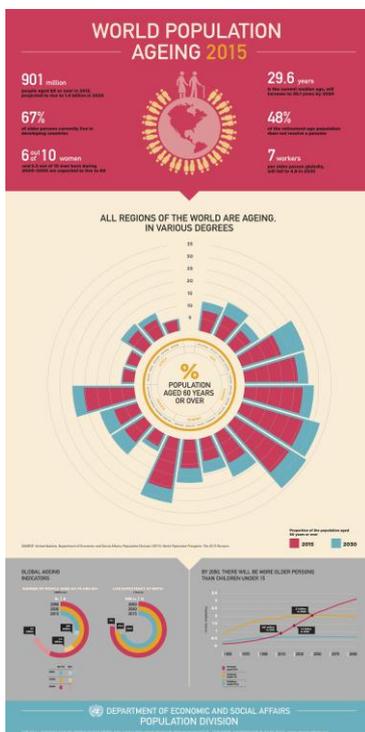


This sneak peek at the latest trends reveals that the world economy has fallen below forecasts of even six months ago and will grow only modestly over the next two years, with a 2.9 per cent growth projected for 2016 and a 3.2 per cent growth forecasted for 2017.

The chapter also revealed that global commodity prices have fallen with 20.6 per cent since July 2014; that oil prices also dropped with 59.8 per cent since July 2014. Global inflation is furthermore reported to be at its lowest level since 2009.

For more information:
[World Economic Situation and Prospects 2016](#)
[WESP 2016 fact sheet](#)

World Population Ageing 2015 infographic



Virtually every country in the world will experience growth in the number and share of older persons in the population over the next 15 years. This infochart conveys key messages on World Population Ageing, reflecting the latest estimates and projections from the *2015 Revision of World Population Prospects*.

For more information:
[World Population Ageing 2015](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 19-21 January** Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages, New York
- 22 January** 70th Anniversary of ECOSOC, New York
- 27-29 January** Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples, New York
- 1-2 February** Youth Taking Action to Implement the 2030 Agenda, New York
- 4-13 February** 53rd Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD), New York

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