



## Youth: The fuel driving forward sustainable development

*As the annual Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum kicks off on 1 February, youth takes centre stage at UN headquarters in New York. In a two-day event, young leaders from around the world will discuss concrete commitments and actions to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the national, regional and global levels. "Young people's energy is palpable. This energy is the fuel driving us forward in our 15 year journey together," said UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo.*

With the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this year's ECOSOC Youth Forum is the most important yet. The new Agenda is a global plan that guides development priorities for the next 15 years. The SDGs will shape our common future and the decisions we make today will influence the generations of tomorrow. With half of the world being under the age of 30, it is crucial that we recognize the power of youth in making the world a better place.

### Youth taking action to implement the 2030 Agenda

The SDGs will only be successful with the active and inclusive participation of today's youth. Over the next 15 years, today's young people will be hugely impacted by the performance of the SDGs and as such have a vested interest in ensuring its successful implementation. This can only be done if young people are actively involved in the process at all levels.

We have 17 goals, 169 targets and 15 years to transform the state of the world. With the energy, imagination and ambition of young people, these goals can lead to actions and hence to success. Youth can be the driving force in moving from commitments to results. They are eager to ensure the realization of the 2030 Agenda and invest in the future they will live.

## UN's platform for young people

The annual forum provides a platform for young people to engage with Member States and other young people. This year the event will see a record number of Government Ministers, young leaders, and youth-led organizations from around the world discussing the role of young people in implementing the SDGs.

Participants will take part in inter-active breakout sessions on education, climate change, employment, health, poverty, peaceful and inclusive societies, and gender equality as well as a plenary session on innovative partnerships involving youth.

A particular highlight of the Forum is the launch of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. The Initiative will be presented by the International Labour Organization on behalf of the UN system. The initiative is a response to the 2030 Agenda, specifically goal 8; "sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all". The Initiative's main aim is to scale up action at the county-level and to increase impact through effective, innovative and evidence-based interventions.

## Communicating the new Agenda

Today's generation of young people are active stakeholders in the implementation of the new Agenda. They are key partners and ambassadors in communicating the SDGs and their importance for everyone, which will be crucial for successful implementation.

Bolstered by broader connectivity and innovative use of social media, young people can help to mobilise their peers and communities at the local level, as well as across regions and countries.

"Young people are a key part of the solution to all aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," said the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ahmad Alhendawi. "The 5th ECOSOC Youth Forum offers a major platform for youth participation at the United Nations and is a vital mechanism for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda."

The event can be followed live via UN Web TV and the online community is also encouraged to share questions and stories on efforts to make the new sustainable development goals a reality using the hashtag #Youth2030.

For more information:  
2016 ECOSOC Youth Forum  
Follow live broadcast via UN Web TV

## Putting people at the center of the new development agenda



“A development framework that is people-centered can only succeed if it embraces the social dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is because people are, and must remain, the focus of the global, regional and local development efforts,” said Amina Smaila, Vice-chair of the UN Commission for Social Development, ahead of its 54th session which kicks off in New York on 3 February.

Under the priority theme, “Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World”, the Commission for Social Development (CsocD54) will meet from 3 to 12 February at UN Headquarters in New York. This session will conclude the Commission’s 2015-2016 review and policy cycle.

Meeting just a few months after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Commission will focus on the critical role of social policy and development in achieving people-centered, inclusive, just, and socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable development for all.

Deliberations will be held through high-level panel discussions as well as general discussions amongst the Members of the Commission and other stakeholders. A large number of side-events will also take place to enhance and enrich discussions of the priority theme.

Preceding the event, the Civil Society Forum will take place on 1- 2 February, supporting participants in refining their understanding of the relationship between CsocD54 and Agenda 2030, and outlining concrete recommendations for the Commission.

### Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world

The Secretary-General’s report on the priority theme identifies forward-looking strategies for strengthening the social dimension of sustainable development. This report will also guide a high-level panel discussion on the priority theme– drawing upon the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the deliberation of the Commission at its previous session.

## Moving from commitments to results for achieving social development

CSocD54 will address current issues affecting social development that require urgent consideration or new cross-cutting issues in the context of evolving global challenges under this item. This session will provide the Commission with an open exchange of ideas that are strategically important for social development.

The importance of data, for example, was highlighted by Andreas Glossner, Vice-chair of the Bureau of the Commission. “Successful social development policies need to be evidence-based and data-driven,” Mr. Glossner said, stressing the importance of tracking development data in a meaningful way.

While the “one-size-fits-all” policy is not the best solution, “there are always best practices and good examples that policy makers should observe and adopt,” said Mohammada Hassani Nejad Pirkouhi, a Vice-chair of the Bureau.

## Implementing the 2030 Agenda in light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

A multi-stakeholder panel will discuss the recent progress in the disability-inclusion in the 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. The discussion will explore how the UN can contribute to strengthening the mainstreaming of disability, enhance awareness and improve cooperation to advance the implementation of the SDGs in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and discuss the possibility of establishing a new monitoring mechanism for disability in development for the CSocD54.

The new Agenda puts poverty and sustainable development at its core and emphasizes a people-centred, unified and coherent approach. The fundamental role of social development in realizing the SDGs need to be highlighted. This gives renewed energy as well as a stronger sense of urgency to the work of the Commission.

For more information:

Commission for Social Development (CsocD54)

### HIGHLIGHTS



## Supporting country-level implementation of the 2030 Agenda

*“If 2015 was a year of global sustainable development action, 2016 must be a year of national SDG traction,” said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at a briefing to the General Assembly on 14 January. UN-DESA’s Division*

*for Sustainable Development is engaged in a number of activities that seek to help the national-level rollout of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including direct capacity development assistance to the pilot countries Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Honduras, Jordan, Togo, Uganda, and Viet Nam.*

UN DESA's activities seek to assist these countries in translating the 2030 Agenda into local circumstances while maintaining the common core essence and ambition of the global Agenda. Support is provided for policy coherence across sectors and across policy domains to ensure that sustainable development is advanced in its social, economic and environmental dimensions in an integrated manner.

Assistance also aims at improving coordination and breaking down silos between different national institutions involved in the Agenda's implementation. Support for creating civil society and multi-stakeholder engagement and ownership, and mobilizing these actors for implementation, is a further objective, as is capacity development on SDGs monitoring.

## 2030 Agenda workshop in Costa Rica

DSC03995 225Capacity development workshops that focus on various aspects of the pilot countries' national sustainable development strategies will be held throughout 2016. The next one will take place in Costa Rica from 24 to 25 February.

“The workshop is expected to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda among a broad range of national policy stakeholders, but also nurture their engagement to put in place institutions and mechanisms that will deliver the SDGs and report on their process and achievements,” said François Fortier, Interregional Adviser on Sustainable Development Policy and Planning at UN DESA, who is involved in the organization of the workshop.



The workshop is organized by the host country's Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy and UN-DESA. It will target staff from government, UN agencies, and Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS), who will be briefed on the 2030 Agenda. It will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences with the implementation process, address sustainable development integration issues and linkages between national plans and the SDGs, and discuss next steps in implementing the SDGs.

The workshop will also involve the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), which is the principal training arm of the United Nations and has developed a national briefing package for sustainable development.

For more information:

Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform of UN DESA





## Providing a platform for civil society

As the world transitions from the eight Millennium Development Goals to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it has become apparent that civil society and non-governmental organizations are absolutely vital in making sure that the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is realized for all of the world's people.

In the post-2015 era there is increasing reliance on the diverse stakeholders who comprise civil society to contribute to, monitor, review and ensure transparency and accountability for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Today, the United Nations, through the NGO Branch of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, in UN DESA, promotes the inclusion and contribution of nearly 4,200 non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and the many other organizations active in the development field.

Increasingly, NGOs in consultative status are taking advantage of a variety of opportunities to have their voices heard in the United Nations, be it high level meetings, consultations, thematic debates, or briefings. The Open Working Group on the SDGs was the most inclusive process in the history of the United Nations: a systematic process to solicit substantive contributions from all stakeholders to shape and fine tune the 2030 Agenda that culminated in incorporating a multitude of views.

Another recent and noteworthy event was the consultation that the Second Committee organized with NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC in October 2015 for the first time in its 70-year history. This was a concerted effort to enable NGOs to offer concrete suggestions on ways to rationalize the agendas of the Second and Third Committee of the General Assembly and of ECOSOC, and to better reflect the priorities of the SDGs. The success of the event prompted the Chairman to declare that this event had set a precedent for other Committees to engage in similar manner with non-governmental organizations.

In addition to supporting the work of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, the NGO Branch facilitates the active engagement of civil society in the myriad of formal and informal activities of the UN System and continues to look for innovative ways to enhance further the substantive participation and contribution of civil society to the work of ECOSOC, specifically and the United Nations, in general.

The Committee on NGOs has now also kicked off its regular session. Running through 3 February, this session is expected to consider 275 new NGO applications for ECOSOC status. It will also review the quadrennial reports of NGOs in general or special consultative status.

For more information:  
UN DESA's NGO Branch  
Committee on NGOs

## EXPERT VOICES



### Tracking international trade and economic globalization

During the last week of January, UN DESA's Statistics Division organized the Expert Group Meeting on International Trade and Economic Globalization Statistics, drawing participants from 20 countries and seven agencies to UN headquarters in New York. We asked Ronald Jansen and Ivo Havinga, Assistant Directors of the division, to share their insights in economic

globalization, as well as comment on the new handbook that will serve as a measurement framework for international trade and economic globalization.

#### Looking at current data, what is the state of economic globalization?

“Economic globalization is the increasing economic integration and interdependence of economies across the world through an intensification of cross-border movement of goods, services, technologies and capital. A very rough indicator of involvement of countries in the global market is merchandise trade (imports plus exports) as percentage of GDP.

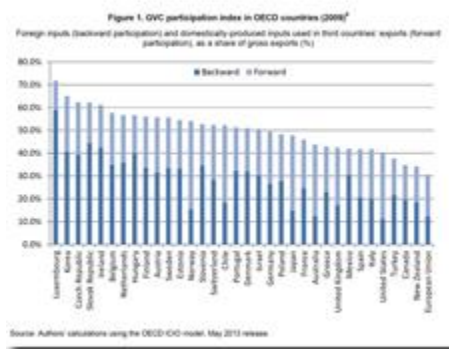
A better indication of economic interdependencies however, requires a better understanding of the so-called global value chains (GVCs), which consist of the full range of activities that firms and workers perform to bring a product from its conception to end use and beyond. This includes activities such as design, production, marketing, distribution and support to the final consumer. In the context of globalization, these activities are performed in multiple countries either within one multi-national enterprise or within a network of enterprises, governed by a lead firm, which can be a buyer firm as in the textiles and clothing GVCs or a producer firm as in the motor vehicles manufacturing GVCs.

In recent years, indicators have been developed for a country's participation in GVCs, which is defined in terms of the origin of the value added embodied in exports both looking backward and forward from a reference country: backward when it comes to foreign value added embodied in exports, and forward when it refers to domestic value added which is used as inputs to produce exports in the destination country. The trade in value-added (TiVA) database maintained by OECD contains such estimates for backward and forward participation in GVCs. For G20 countries these estimates are roughly in the order of 10-30% for both backward participation and forward participation.”

#### Why is it so crucial to measure and document economic globalization patterns?

“The financial crisis in 2008-2009 caused a free fall in world trade volumes from the end of 2008 up to the second quarter of 2009, triggered especially by collapsing import demand in developed countries. Countries are economically connected (and

vulnerable) through global value chains. Therefore, a good understanding of a country's economic dependency within a particular global value chain – be it a GVC for the textile and apparel, the automotive, or even the coffee sector – is needed to make informed decisions on national economic policies, including improvement of international competitiveness, attracting new activities and upgrading of skills.



The increasing fragmentation of production processes offers developing countries new trading opportunities, but also presents risks. Virtually all international agencies have published in the last two or three years about the opportunities and risks of participation of developing countries in GVCs.”

**How do we measure international trade and economic globalization?**

“The Statistics Division of UN DESA maintains the most comprehensive international trade statistics database in the world, known as UN Comtrade. It contains detailed imports and exports statistics by commodity and trading partner for about every country both annually and monthly.

The statistical community has a long tradition of providing a comprehensive overview of the economic performance of a country through the system of national accounts. In some regions, like East Asia, national accounts of several countries were combined to so-called regional input-output tables, which show the economic integration of a region.

By extension, world input-output tables were starting to be built through initiatives in the academic community. A first version of the World Input-Output Database (WIOD), funded by the European Commission, was officially launched in 2012 at a high-level conference on “Competitiveness, trade, environment and jobs in Europe”. WIOD provides indicators such as foreign value added shares in final output of manufactures. In the same year, OECD and WTO started their trade in value-added initiative leading to the TiVA database containing indicators on GVC participation as mentioned earlier.”

**There is a new handbook being developed, how is this intended to guide the international community?**

“The new handbook will systematically explain and describe how global input-output tables need to be built, what the requisites and the main assumptions are and how to ensure the quality of these tables. It will provide background information to better understand the valuable work which was done by WIOD and for the TiVA database, and the handbook will in that way support the ongoing efforts to increase the quality of the indicators derived from those databases.

In addition, the handbook will attempt to make a direct link between the firm-level studies on global value chains and the macro-accounts.”

**In the larger development context, how do these figures play a role?**

“For decades or even centuries trade was seen as an important driver for economic development. Within the last 10 years, the policy debate has shifted from trade to participation and upgrading in global value chains as driver for economic growth. As mentioned, WTO links its “Aid for Trade” initiative directly to participation of developing countries in global value chains. The World Bank promotes the same as an opportunity for economic growth for the low-income developing countries.



In the just released 2016 World Economic Situation and Prospects, UN DESA states that Africa could grow economically by tapping more in the potential of the global value chains. For example, Africa accounts for 16 per cent of global raw cotton exports, but still imports far more cotton fabrics than it exports. The potential to establish regional value chains (RVCs) in the textiles or agriculture sectors is still largely untapped, as less than 10 per cent of intermediates are imported from the region. African countries should thus develop and strengthen RVCs, as intra-African trade represents a promising avenue to support industrialization.

Better data are needed to support these economic policies for upgrading of developing countries in regional and global value chains and the new handbook will help develop those data.”

For more information:

1st meeting of the Expert Group on International Trade and Economic Globalization Statistics

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



## Protecting languages, preserving cultures

The world’s indigenous languages are under threat of disappearing, with one language dying every two weeks and many more at risk. To address the question on how to maintain the roughly 6000 indigenous languages, UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD), Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on

Indigenous Issues, organised an expert group meeting on indigenous languages on 19-21 January in New York.

Ms. Daniela Bas, Director of DSPD, referred to the newly adopted Sustainable Development Agenda which aims at leaving no one behind, emphasising that it is also critical to not leave any language behind. The revitalisation of indigenous languages is essential for ensuring the continuation and transmission of culture, customs and history, but it is also important to address biodiversity loss and climate change. “Saving indigenous languages is crucial to ensure the protection of the cultural identity and dignity of indigenous peoples and safeguard their traditional heritage,” said Professor Megan Davis, Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

A wide range of linguistic experts, indigenous peoples, representatives from Member States, the United Nations and other stakeholders gathered at the meeting. They shared numerous examples of good practices to keep languages alive, highlighting the crucial function of intergenerational transmission, the particular role of indigenous women, and the importance of mother tongue education.

“The language represents the way of thinking of a people,” said Francisco Cali Tzay, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). The meeting especially focused on indigenous peoples’ initiatives to revitalize indigenous

languages through information and communication technologies, such as using WhatsApp, online karaoke songs, social media, web tools in indigenous languages.

The importance of languages cannot be undervalued. “It is the preservation of invaluable wisdom, traditional knowledge and expressions of art and beauty, and we have to make sure that we do not lose this”, Lenni Montiel, UN DESA’s Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development concluded in the closing remarks highlighting the urgency to act.

The final report and recommendations from the meeting will be presented to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at its May 2016 session.

For more information:

International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Languages

## PUBLICATIONS & MORE



## Overview of the Report on the World Social Situation 2016

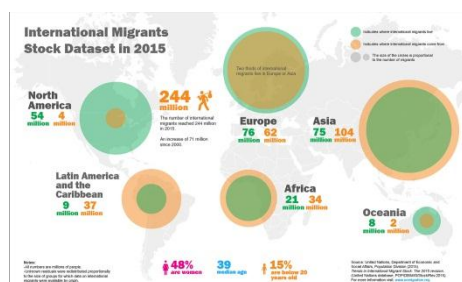
In adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, world leaders committed themselves to leaving no one behind in pursuit of the eradication of extreme poverty and protection of the planet. Through concerted efforts galvanized by the MDGs, the world has made progress in reducing poverty, but social exclusion persists in both developed and developing countries. At the same time, some countries have been able to effectively promote inclusion even at low levels

of income and development.

This volume of the Report on the World Social Situation (RWSS) will focus on social inclusion. In particular, it will examine patterns of social exclusion and will assess whether growth and development processes have been inclusive, paying particular attention to the links between poverty and inequality trends, changes in the world of work and inclusion –or exclusion. The report will also highlight policy options to promote inclusive development through social and macroeconomic policies and institutional transformation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

For more information:

Overview of the Report on the World Social Situation 2016



## International Migrants Stock Dataset in 2015

The dataset presents estimates of international migrant by age, sex and origin. Estimates are presented for 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 and are available for all countries and areas of the world. The estimates are based on official statistics on the foreign-born or the foreign population.

For more information:  
International Migrants Stock Dataset in 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- 1-2 February** Youth Taking Action to Implement the 2030 Agenda - ECOSOC Youth Forum, New York
- 3-12 February** 54th Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD54), New York
- 7-10 February** Joint GCC-STAT/UNSD Regional Workshop on International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Muscat, Oman
- 16 February** Committee on NGOs, regular session, New York
- 22-25 February** Seminar in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in the Pacific Islands : Standards, Best Practice and Lessons Learnt, Noumea, New Caledonia
- 23-26 February** Regional workshop within the UN Development Account project “Supporting Developing Countries Measure Progress Towards Achieving a Green Economy”

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