



## SDG indicators: The last missing piece of the 2030 Agenda

“Sustainable Development Goal indicators are the last missing piece to complete the architecture of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda,” explained Stefan Schweinfest, Director of UN DESA’s Statistics Division, ahead of the 47th Session of the UN Statistical Commission, which takes place at UN Headquarters on 8-11 March. At this annual meeting, Chief Statisticians will gather from all corners of the world to discuss statistical standards that will help generate better data for better lives.

In this year’s session, the Commission will continue its regular work, which covers all kinds of new areas such as refugees, climate change and big data. However, a special focus will be on the presentation of the global indicator framework for the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Commission is invited to agree on the SDG indicators and endorse a provisional workplan for the indicators that will require refinement as well as a proposed workplan for their implementation.

### Developing a set of global indicators

The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs), established by the Statistical Commission at its 46th session, has been tasked to develop the first ever indicator set for the post-2015 development agenda at the global level, and to support its implementation. Throughout this process, the

views of all stakeholders were taken into account and their suggestions were reviewed and considered by the IAEG-SDGs.

“I am impressed by the level of consultation, involvement and participation that the process of setting these new universal indicators has involved and I would even dare to say that for the statistical community this is an unprecedented process. There has never been in the history of the world such an agreement,” said Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development Lenni Montiel.

The IAEG members tried to ensure that the indicator selected best measured the target and that the indicator was not reinterpreting the target. “The most important job an indicator has to do, is to inform decision making and then ultimately change policies and behaviours and it can only do that if it is solid and credible and that is what we are striving for to build an information system at all levels that will do just that,” said Stefan Schweinfest.

## Global indicator framework as a starting point

“There is a continuous need and a continuous willingness to engage and also to refine the tools”, continued Mr. Schweinfest. The global indicators will be complemented by indicators at the regional and national levels to be developed by Member States.

“The national statisticians are really driving the process. They have contributed to the discussion on the global indicators, but at the same time they are looking at their own national circumstances and deciding what they want to use at the national level. In some cases they come up with their own ideas and own proposals,” emphasized Francesca Perucci, Assistant Director and Chief of the Statistical Service Branch in UN DESA’s Statistics Division.

193 countries will have to compile the data for the indicators. National statistical offices will need the support of their own governments and the international communities to build capacities.

## Leaving no one behind

Member States have pledged that no one would be left behind. In order to ensure that, the IAEG-SDG Members have agreed that indicators should cover the specific groups of population and other disaggregation elements specified in the targets. Furthermore, the Statistical Commission has created a mechanism through a High-level Group, which will provide strategic guidance to capacity building efforts and which will support countries with implementation of the SDG indicators.

“The future of the statistics in the world does not depend only on the UN, there is a larger set of organizations, groups and professionals that are all interconnected and positively interacting with the UN in different ways,” said Lenni Montiel.

New forms of collaboration ensure that we are moving in the right direction and if necessary adjust the tools and policies in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

For more information:

47th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

## Forest and water – sustain life and livelihoods

To increase awareness of the vital, symbiotic relationship between forests and water, UN-Water and the UN Forum on Forests are combining forces for a joint celebration of the International Day of Forests and World Water Day on Monday, 21 March at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.



“Forests cover 30.6 % of the world’s land area and more than 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests for food, water, medicines and fuel, as well as their jobs and livelihoods,”

Manoel Sobral Filho, Director of the UN Forum on Forests, said, putting the importance of forests in perspective.

“Throughout history, as populations increase, forest land has been converted to agriculture and other uses. The world’s population is predicted to reach 8.4 billion people within the next 15 years – with most of the growth in Africa and Asia – and the demand for forest goods and services will increase proportionally.”

Forests are especially crucial for some of the world’s largest cities such as Durban, Jakarta, Rio de Janeiro, Bogotá, New York, and Madrid, as they draw a significant portion of their drinking water from forested areas.

“75 per cent of freshwater used for household, agricultural and industrial needs worldwide is provided through forested catchments,” Sobral said.



Field CoverageForests and water also play an important role in national and global economies. Sectors with heavily water-dependent jobs include forestry, along with jobs in agriculture and industry. The 2016 World Water Development Report (WWDR), to be launched on World Water Day, estimates that more than 1.4 billion jobs, or 42% of the world’s total active workforce, are heavily water-dependent. The formal forestry sector (roundwood production, wood processing and pulp and paper) accounts for nearly 1 per cent

of total global GDP, and it is estimated that the informal forest sector is far larger.

The significance of forests in the livelihoods of so many, however, has not limited the number of threats that humanity inflicts on them.

“There are many threats to forests and water, from unsustainable use and pollution, to climate change and natural disasters. Every year, 7 million hectares of natural forest are lost, and this is mostly due to illegal deforestation.”

“In the case of forests and water, one way that some countries are addressing this is through payments for watershed services schemes/programs that include forest conservation and regeneration. This provides an incentive to upstream land users to adopt sustainable practices that ensure the supply of environmental services to downstream land users.”

Through forward-looking policy and dedicated action, societies can actively contribute to maintain and restore the health of many of our forests.”

“Planted forests, when well managed, can help meet the need for forest goods, while helping reduce the pressure on natural forests,” Sobral said. “This is particularly relevant when you consider that energy from wood is our single most important source of renewable energy, representing 9 percent of the total primary renewable energy supply worldwide.”

To better preserve their forests and water sources, natural resources have to be managed in a way that we can meet the needs of the current and future generations, according to Sobral.

For more information:  
International Day of Forests – 21 March  
World Water Day – 22 March

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Tackling production in least developed countries



At Leather Wings, a small shoe-making outfit based in central Kathmandu, four women sit in a small room cutting up bright red cowhide imported from India. Next door a dozen of their colleagues stitch the shapes together on hand-powered sewing machines. The owner Samrat Dahal says the boots, designed by a German expat, sell via the Internet in India, China and Italy.

The company, founded in 1985, sums up some of the issues facing the Nepalese economy: entrepreneurial leaders at the helm of a committed workforce making a competitive and quality product for which there is ample overseas demand. The problem isn't

finding buyers; it's scaling up production enough to meet that demand. Exports by the handful of players in Nepal's shoe industry totalled only US\$20 million in 2014.

Nepal, in turn, characterizes the problems facing many other LDCs (Least Developed Countries). At the risk of over-simplification, they just don't produce enough.

The challenges of building productive capacity in LDCs like Nepal will be the main topic of discussion at this year's plenary of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) on 14-18 March. The CDP report to the UN Economic and Social Council, to be finalized by the 24 experts at the plenary, will discuss the ingredients needed to boost production in LDCs to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs), improving productivity in a process that economists call 'structural transformation'.

The report will argue that while some LDCs grew fast in recent decades, only a few managed to transform their economies. "Better access to foreign markets helped, but it wasn't enough," says CDP member Professor Diane Elson of Essex University.

For Leather Wings the bigger obstacles are finance, technology and the cost of inputs bought from abroad (Nepal has no tanning operation). Dahal would like to borrow enough money to invest in electric sewing machines. Mechanization would be more efficient and cut costs. But even basic technology is hard to come by, and banks are reluctant to lend.

LDCs need to tackle these issues and more, putting in place economic policies for growth as well as industrial policies that target and link specific sectors. "Ensuring that social outcomes match – and contribute to – economic progress means not only investing more in health and education, but also improving its quality and distribution," says Elson. More investment is needed in social protection and governance.

Building sustainable production will be essential in achieving the 2030 Agenda. SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 17 relate directly to productive capacity.

***Join CDP members Giovanni Andrea Cornia, Diane Elson, Stephan Klasen and Keith Nurse at a panel discussion on productive capacity and dynamic transformation for sustainable development from 1:15 pm to 2:45 pm EST on Wednesday 16 March in Conference room C. The event will be broadcast live via UN Web TV.***

During the plenary, the CDP will also review its work on the LDCs and define its work programme from 2016-2018, when several more countries are expected to approach graduation from the category. As part of its role in providing independent advice to ECOSOC on issues critical to the international development agenda, the penultimate day will feature a discussion on a proposed new categorization of aid known as Total Official Support for Sustainable Development, which for the first time considers private financial flows alongside government assistance.

***From 1:15 pm – 2:15 pm on Tuesday 15 March CDP members José Antonio Alonso, José Antonio Ocampo and Keun Lee will conduct a Facebook chat about their new research, Global Governance and Rules for the Post-2015 Era. Join the discussion here and to share comments and questions via Twitter, use #AskUNCDP.***

For more information:  
Committee for Development Policy



## Inequality – a defining challenge of our time

According to a recently released Oxfam report, 62 individuals currently own as much wealth as the poorest half of the global population. Income and wealth inequality are some of the more visible and discussed aspects of inequality in the 21st century, while other dimensions — unequal outcomes in education and health, for instance — continue

or in some cases worsen.

### A universal challenge and goal of the 2030 Agenda

On 30 March, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene a Special Meeting on Inequality, which has become one of the most pressing social, economic and political challenges of our time. As has become increasingly clear in recent years, inequality does not correspond with a specific stage of development or geography; it is a challenge faced by developing, middle-income and developed countries alike. At the global level, inequality between states remains a formidable challenge requiring policy action.

Given the multi-dimensional impact of inequality on economic, social and environmental dimensions, strategies for reducing inequality will need to draw on the contributions from all sectors of society. The commitment to fight inequality has been mainstreamed throughout the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both as a stand-alone goal to reduce inequalities within and among countries, and as a guiding principle for ensuring equal opportunity and reducing unequal development outcomes.

### A moral imperative and threat to peace and prosperity

Inequality is also a profound moral challenge, as economic inequalities as well as political and social exclusion represent a major impediment to achieving the vision to leave no one behind.

Inequality is closely linked to peace and security as unequal distribution of resources can foster conflict, war and displacement. Inequality can create vicious cycles of poverty that reinforce vulnerabilities and negatively affect those in greatest need, with the potential to create further instability and conflict.

### Providing a platform for policy solutions

The ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality will take stock of recent trends in inequality and propose inclusive and action-oriented policy solutions to tackle inequalities in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The meeting will discuss inequalities in a broad context, including horizontal and vertical

inequalities between groups and individuals within societies, as well as inequality between states.

ECOSOC will host this event drawing on its longstanding tradition of serving as a platform that engages all stakeholders, including representatives from civil society and the private sector. This is especially fitting given the role of civil society, academia and philanthropic organisations in pushing inequality to the forefront of international policy discussions. Similarly, the private sector — as a potential driving force for innovation and job creation — will also be central to the fight against inequality.

For more information:

[ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality](#)

## EXPERT VOICES



### Accountable public administration for sustainable development

Without an inclusive and accountable public administration, it is unlikely that the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development will be achieved. To share knowledge of innovative practices and lessons learned on how to build such an administration, UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) is hosting a

symposium in Cochamba, Bolivia on 16-17 March.

We asked Marion Barthelemy, Acting Director of DPADM, and Adriana Alberti, Senior Governance and Public Administration Officer of DPADM, to share their views on the role of public administration in sustainable development.

**How important is inclusive and accountable public administration for the achievement of sustainable development?**

“Public institutions will be directly responsible for translating the sustainable development goals into development strategies and action plans, and for keeping track of progress. Capable, inclusive and accountable state institutions are needed to ensure the quality and equitable access to public services, including education, health, sanitation, etc. They help ensure rule of law and shape an enabling environment for realizing the SDGs. But realizing the SDGs requires ensuring institutions with adequate skills and capacities to plan and implement policies, adopt whole of Government approaches, collect and use statistics and project the impact of policies. This also requires international cooperation.”

**How does the improvement of gender balance in public service and decision influence the process of sustainable development?**

“Finding innovative solutions will require women's full participation in the decisions that affect their own lives and those of their communities. Equal opportunities for

leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life will be central to more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable societies.”

**How can governments stimulate citizen engagement in public administration?**

“In the past, the general public was seen as passive receivers of services and governments were the main providers of ‘solutions’. Today we realize that, given the opportunity to actively participate in service design and delivery, people can contribute distinctive resources in terms of time, effort, ideas and expertise. Governments can utilize a host of innovative ways to engage citizens. The use of ICTs, including social media, has revolutionized the way governments inform, consult and involve people.”

**To what extent does corruption – both small and large scale – negatively impact sustainable development?**

“Corruption can seriously make institutions unable to deliver services effectively and equitably, to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups, and to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. It diverts vital resources, that can otherwise be allocated to tackling poverty eradication and promoting prosperity for all. There are many factors, but corruption thrives in the presence of weak public institutions, coupled with the private sector and civil society’s inability to keep governments accountable. Thus, preventing and combatting corruption requires a multipronged approach that systematically addresses its root causes.”

**How can the UN help Member States to improve their institutions and public services?**

“It is essential that governments have the capacity to ensure that institutions are equipped to support the implementation of the SDGs in an integrated, effective, accountable and inclusive fashion.

The UN can help Member States to learn from one another by exchanging ideas and knowledge about innovative practices, strategies and lessons learned on how to improve their institutions and public services. This is the purpose of the symposium we are organizing in Bolivia. It can help not only by allowing peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and innovative solutions but also by boosting cooperation.”

For more information: Symposium on the promotion of an inclusive and accountable public administration for sustainable development





## 2030 Agenda – an important tool for safe migration

In 2015, the number of international migrants reached 244 million, which equals an increase of 71 million compared to 2000. At the same time, millions of people are fleeing severe conditions at home to seek refuge and safety abroad. For the international community, it is critical that all efforts are rallied to ensure safe

and well-managed migration, where lives are saved and where the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees are protected.

“With the integration of migration and migrants in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2016 is an important turning point,” said Thomas Gass, UN DESA’s Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, as he opened the Fourteenth Annual Coordination Meeting on International Migration, organized by UN DESA’s Population Division.

“We not only have a target that promotes orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration,” Mr. Gass continued. “We also have targets to improve the working conditions of migrant workers; harness the benefits of migration for development; combat irregular migration; and reduce the costs of migration.”

At the well-attended opening of the meeting which ran from 25 through 26 February, Mr. Gass underscored the need to address the underlying reasons for involuntary migration. “This means that our attention should extend well beyond the migration-related targets,” he said.

Calling for “a set of commitments to reduce the vulnerabilities that all migrants face,” Peter Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Migration, also pointed to the fact that we now have robust institutions in place to tackle these different challenges. “Now we must realize their potential. There is no time to waste,” he said.

The two-day meeting saw a number of topics discussed including migration in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the priorities for the UN agenda on migration in 2016.

One of this year’s major events is the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugee and Migrants which will take place on 19 September. “The General Assembly has never before called for a discussion of this topic at such a high level,” said Karen Koning AbuZayd, appointed Special Adviser for this event.

Ms. Koning AbuZayd stressed the need to change the negative narrative now prevalent in many countries to “one that is based on facts and on the confidence that

practical solutions are within our common reach, if States opt to cooperate more effectively.”

As Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson presented the Secretary-General’s roadmap for responding to large movements of refugees and migrants, he also emphasized the need for a positive narrative which highlights the benefits of migration. “The World Bank has repeatedly underlined that managed migration could help bring an end to extreme poverty as well as increase global prosperity,” Mr. Eliasson said.

“In 2016, we must galvanize the political will to agree on a comprehensive approach to human mobility in the 21st century. This will make it possible for migrants, refugees, host communities and our nations to together help secure our common future.”

For more information:

Fourteenth Annual Coordination Meeting on International Migration  
VIDEO: UN Web TV recordings of the 14th Coordination Meeting on International Migration

## PUBLICATIONS & MORE

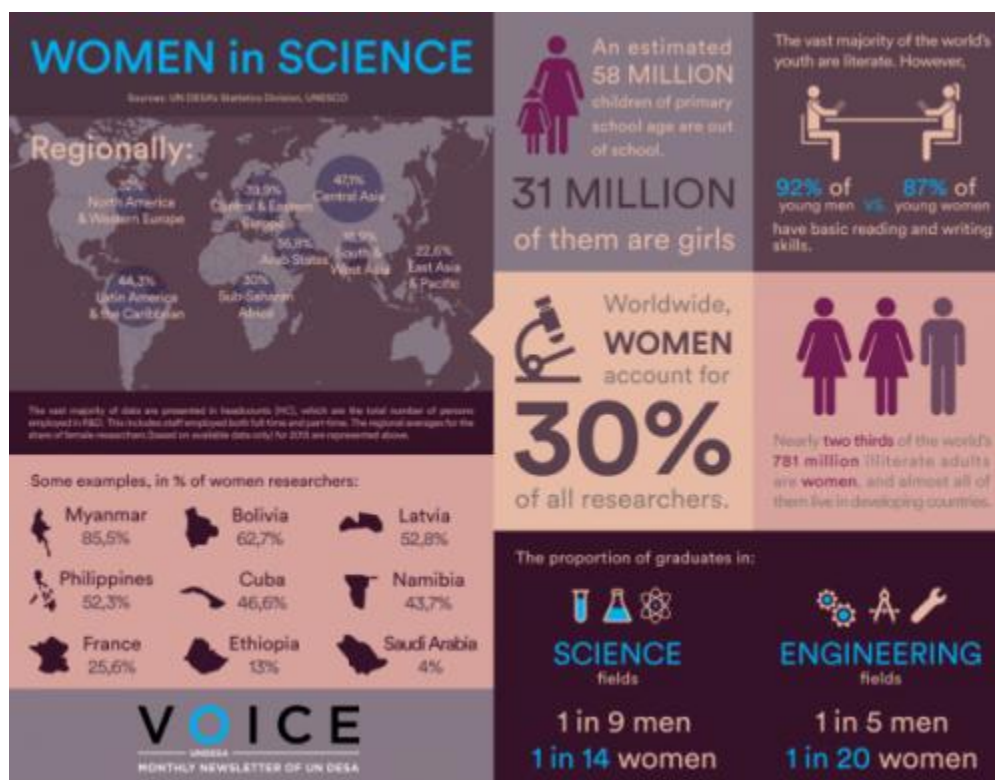


### World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015

The World Economic and Social Survey 2014/2015 reviews economic, social and environmental policies implemented at the national level and the institutional aspects that enabled them, bringing about significant progress towards achieving the MDGs. The Survey subsequently draws a set of useful policy lessons that Member States will find helpful in formulating strategies and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs.

For more information:  
World Economic and Social Survey

## Involving women in science, implementing the 2030 Agenda



Women and girls represent half of the world's population. Yet, they are not fully participating within the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), with a gender gap still remaining far too wide across the globe.

Indeed, women account for less than 30 per cent of all researchers in the world and where one in nine men graduate in the fields of science, the number for women is only one in fourteen.

In an effort to promote greater participation of women and girls within this area, and in line with the ambitions of the new 2030 Agenda, the United Nations celebrated the first ever International Day of Women and Girls in Science on 11 February.

"Too many girls all over the world cannot go to school just because they are girls. Being a girl or a boy shouldn't decide if you can go to school or not," said 11-year-old Rebecca Jekogian, who addressed the event, organized by the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT), in close collaboration with UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD).

For more information:

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

UN Web TV coverage from the event

UN DESA's Statistics Division report – The World's Women 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>8-11 March, New York</b>	47th session of the Statistical Commission
<b>14-18 March, New York</b>	Committee for Development Policy
<b>21 March</b>	International Day of Forests
<b>30 March, New York</b>	ECOSOC Special Meeting on Inequality
<b>30 March - 1 April, Mexico</b>	3rd Meeting of the Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals (IAEG-SDGs)
<b>31 March, New York</b>	ECOSOC Partnership Forum “From commitments to results: Leveraging partnerships for the 2030 Agenda”

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