



## Mobilizing citizens of the world to achieve the 2030 Agenda

“We have to remember that we are citizens of a country but also citizens of the world. [...] What affects other people in the world also affects us,” said SDG Advocate and Academy Award-winning actor Forest Whitaker, during a discussion with Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in UN DESA, which took place in the Digital Media Zone at the High-Level Thematic Debate on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on 21 April.

Seeking to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the President of the UN General Assembly Mogens Lykketoft convened this event, bringing together global political leaders as well as high-level representatives from the business sector and from civil society organizations. Forest Whitaker was also one of the keynote speakers addressing the opening of this high-level event in the General Assembly Hall.

“In addition to advocating for these changes to the leaders and lawmakers in your countries, one of the most important things you can do in the service of these goals is to engage and inspire your fellow citizens to participate in this cause,” Mr. Whitaker said at the event, which also offered an opportunity to underscore the strong interlinkages between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which was signed the following day by 175 world leaders.

## Universality key to ensure that no one is left behind

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals adopted last September, aim at leaving no one behind and to provide economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

“It is now time to turn this agreement into policies and action, into laws and budget lines, and we need to ensure that people know what these goals promise, that people hold their leaders accountable and contribute to change,” said Thomas Gass during a press briefing with Forest Whitaker.

The universality and interconnectivity between the goals was a topic that came up frequently during the event. In her passionate address at the opening, SDG Advocate and Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee, Director of the Gbowee Peace Foundation, touched upon this and also raised other actions necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

“There is no way that we can [...] roll out these goals, make it effective for the rest of the world, if we do it in the way we’ve been doing the world, from an individualistic perspective,” Ms. Gbowee said. “The goals are interdependent, the goals are interlinked and the goals are showing us, the rest of the world, humanity, how we should conduct business. Conduct it in a way that says we are all connected,” she stressed.

## Making the goals real to people everywhere



The UN Headquarters was buzzing with events and activities, and in the Digital Media Zone the dialogue between Mr. Whitaker and Mr. Gass kicked off a series of intimate conversations and interviews between experts, politicians and SDG Advocates, who all zoomed in on the SDGs and how we can make them a reality for people everywhere.

“We need to take the goals seriously. That is why we are here today and tomorrow,” said Jeffrey Sachs, SDG Advocate and Director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University, as he discussed the goals with Cristina Gallach, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

“Don’t let them slip through your fingers, because it took three years to make these goals,” Mr. Sachs stressed. “Grab them, hold them and make them real,” he added, while stressing that we should all “look at the goals, understand them, and work together” by combining seriousness, planning and investment.

## “Failure is simply no option”

Jeffrey Sachs and Forest Whitaker both agree: the 2030 Agenda is neither too ambitious, nor too idealistic, it is achievable. This was also stressed when Forest Whitaker, joined by Thomas Gass, as well as SDG Advocate and Ambassador Dho Young-Shim, on 22 April gathered at the Bronx Center for Science and Mathematics, a public high-school in the Bronx. With more than 400 students, they discussed the promises of the SDGs and how to make them a reality for everyone.

The pledge of these goals to leave no one behind is continuously highlighted by many and it was also stressed several times by Mr. Whitaker when he addressed the high-level event on 21 April.

“Our collective commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is our most important defence in ensuring that the benefits of our modernizing world are shared among all nations and people, and not just by the privileged few,” Mr. Whitaker said.

While stressing that “governments are in the drivers’ seat”, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, who spoke on behalf of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, pointed out that this is the first year in our 15-year long and ambitious journey and that the UN system has already begun to support countries, both strategically and operationally, to implement the 2030 Agenda.

“We have a serious and noble mission which we must pursue for people today and for future generations,” Mr. Eliasson said. “This is our path to a better future for all. That is our duty, laid down in the UN Charter with its first three words “We the Peoples”. We are accountable to children and grandchildren all over the world – failure is simply no option.”

For more information:

High-level Thematic Debate on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals  
SDGs Advocates

VIDEO: UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo talks about progress and challenges for achieving Sustainable Development Goals

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Digital Media Zone

VIDEO: Press briefing with Forest Whitaker (SDG Advocate) and Thomas Gass (ASG, UN DESA) (21 April 2016)

## HIGHLIGHTS

# Implementing policy innovation and integration to achieve the 2030 Agenda



Innovative thinking has taken a central role in finding solutions for the world’s most pressing challenges, offering new solutions to old problems or paving the way to previously unattainable results. In the context of the 2030 Agenda, policy innovation and integration aim at creating sustainable well-being for the society as a whole, both in the short and long run.

The rapid development of new technology can provide innovative policy solutions for the issues faced by the international community to improve efficiency, enable partnerships, reach wider audiences and increase citizen participation.

Indeed, technology is evolving and the increasing global interconnectivity creates extraordinary opportunities for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and leave no one behind, the new normative framework has to be translated into national policies and strategies. Since sustainable development is recognized as multidimensional, goals have to be converted into actions, across economic, social and environmental dimensions.

How should policy making be pursued in the era of the 2030 Agenda? How can innovative and integrated policy solutions be applied at all levels to close gaps and break silos in sustainable development?

In order to address these issues, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is organizing its 2016 Integration Segment on the theme, “Implementing the 2030 Agenda through Policy Innovation and Integration” at the UN Headquarters in New York on 2-4 May 2016.

## Transformative nature

The Integration Segment will consider the transformative nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the inter-linkages within the 2030 Agenda. It will provide an opportunity for Member States, civil society, private sector, academia and other key actors to identify and discuss opportunities and challenges regarding innovative and integrated policy-making for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The implementation of the Agenda requires innovation in terms of how, where, when and with whom policy is developed and implemented.

The meeting will bring together the perspectives of Member States, the UN system, including ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, regional commissions and other relevant stakeholders, such as NGOs, Major Groups, academia and the private sector.

## Platform for dialogue

The Segment will serve as a platform for dialogue and exchange of views on lessons learnt and recommendations for ways forward in policy innovation and integration. It will aim to extract policy recommendations to guide the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Its proceedings will be available for consideration by Member States in the ECOSOC High-level Segment and as substantive input to the follow-up and review process to be carried out at the high-level political forum (HLPF) under the auspices of ECOSOC, to take place in July 2016.

For more information

2016 ECOSOC Integration Segment

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Indigenous peoples talk conflict, peace and resolution at this years' forum



Whether living in conflict areas or peaceful nations, indigenous peoples disproportionately find themselves at the center of conflict, arising from disputes over territory, resources, and the realization of economic and social rights. This year's session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues will address the role of indigenous peoples in conflict, peace and resolution.

One of the highlights of the year at the United Nations, the annual meeting of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, brings together indigenous peoples

from all corners of the world to hear their voices, concerns and suggestions in the global spotlight.

This year, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) meets for the 15th time – and it is expected that more than 1500 participants will join and that more than 100 side-events will be organised parallel to the official programme.

The session will take place from 9 to 20 May at UN Headquarters in New York. The UNPFII is an advisory body of the Economic and Social Council and has the mandate to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights. It was established by the Economic and Social Council in 2000.

### Indigenous Peoples: Conflict, Peace and Resolution

The special theme of the 15th session of the Permanent Forum (UNPFII) is “Indigenous Peoples: Conflict, Peace and Resolution”. Since its establishment, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has repeatedly raised the issue of conflict in all its manifestations before, during and after outbreak of violence and conflicts.

Participants have shared about the terrible impacts that conflicts have had on indigenous peoples, but also about indigenous peoples' role in conflict prevention, as well as their contributions to a durable and lasting peace.

The discussion of this topic by the UNPFII is particularly relevant considering that increasing numbers of indigenous peoples around the world are suffering from the consequences of protracted conflicts very often related to their lands, territories and resources – or their civil, political, social, economic or cultural rights and identity.



## The framework is there, but more action is needed

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted in 2007 recognizes that indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples. This Declaration – which was a result of decades of negotiations between indigenous peoples and Member States – is truly remarkable, as it embodies a global consensus on the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples.

It points to the root causes which, if unaddressed, can lead to conflicts. It provides for the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples – including the framework for dialogue and consultations with indigenous peoples based on free, prior and informed consent, which allows for peaceful solutions to potential conflicts.

The new 2030 Agenda's Goal 16 also calls for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies with access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions – which will be essential for indigenous peoples. Yet, often the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as other international Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law instruments are not adequately implemented to protect indigenous peoples' rights in conflict situations. This remains an issue that needs further attention and action – and the Permanent Forum has decided to take steps to address this.

## Providing clear recommendations for the way forward

The UNPFII's theme of indigenous peoples, conflict, peace and resolution relates to the key purposes of the United Nations, the maintenance of peace and security. It furthermore comes in a year of reflection and change, where new ways forward on peace and security are being considered as a follow up to the peace and security reviews in 2015, including the Global Study of the Implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

The interactive discussions at the Permanent Forum session will therefore contribute to a larger debate about peace and security – by adding a perspective on the particular challenges for indigenous peoples in conflict and peace processes.

The annual session comes to a close with the adoption of the report of the Permanent Forum to ECOSOC, including recommendations by the Forum to various stakeholders. ECOSOC then considers the report at its regular session in July.

### For more information

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 15th session  
DESA – Indigenous People  
UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples



## Families, healthy lives and sustainable Future

Families, in any shape of form provide the basis for most of our societies, making them an invaluable entity for policy makers to revolve their development strategies around. The Expert Group Meeting on ‘Family policies and 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda’ taking place on 12-13 May, will contribute to further analysis of the role of family policies in advancing broader development goals and a

number of SDG targets.

The meeting coincides with the annual observance of the International Day of Families, this year revolving around ‘Families, healthy lives and sustainable future’.

From a policy perspective, socio-economic policies supporting families have a potential to speed up the achievement of many targets focusing on individuals’ well-being. Among such policies are those supporting numerous functions that families already perform, such as caregiving for children, youth and older adults as well as those with diverse vulnerabilities, including disabilities. In families, decisions are made about children’s health and education. Empowering families to support their individual members’ health, education and overall well-being are bound to contribute to achieving of several SDG targets, such as improving access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, reduce maternal mortality, ending preventable death of newborns and children under 5.

Policies and programmes aiming at increasing family financial resources or improving caregiving behaviour help parents be better economic and emotional providers for their families. Work-family balance policies and programmes, such as parental leaves and flexible working arrangements promote children’s and parents’ well-being. Programmes promoting safe and stable family environment and positive parenting contribute to physical and emotional well-being of all family members as well.

In addition, with ageing population, better policies are needed to help families care for older adults or find alternative care arrangements in line with individual wishes and expectations. In this area, an extension of family leave to include care for other family members has a, so far largely untapped, potential to contribute to the well-being of older persons.

Another important area gradually gaining more attention from policy makers is supporting a greater role of men in families, in terms of sharing of household responsibilities and care obligations. Policies in this area have already been found to contribute to better health outcomes for children as well as gender equality gains.

The events around the International Day of Families will be live webcast on Thursday, 12 May. You can join the conversation on families, healthy lives and sustainable future by using the hashtags #GlobalGoals and #DayOfFamilies.

For more information:

2016 International Day of Families  
EGM on “Family policies and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda”  
UN Webcast

## EXPERT VOICES



### Indigenous youth: activism for equal rights

On 9 May, representatives of the world’s many indigenous communities will gather in New York for one of the most powerful platforms for dialogue on topics that affect indigenous peoples the most: the 15th session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

We asked Dali Angel, co-chair of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, about the specific issues that young indigenous people deal with in today’s society and how they are organizing themselves to get their voices heard.

**Youth and indigenous peoples are both relatively vulnerable groups in society. What are some of the main concerns for indigenous youth nowadays?**

“There are several concerns for indigenous youth worldwide, each in their own context and all equally important. Some of the concerns we have heard in various national/international forums and meetings are related to the access and the ability to remain in the educational system, the need for an educational system that incorporates our cultural, linguistic and social needs and the recovery of indigenous peoples’ historical memory, traditions, culture and traditional knowledge.

Another concern is the continued impunity for acts of violence against indigenous youth by the police or other law enforcement agencies. Most of the time these perpetrators are not prosecuted by the authorities or brought to justice.

Finally, there is a lack of protection of indigenous peoples’ human rights and a need for culturally appropriate reparations, as well as a lack of protection for indigenous resistance movements, experiencing harassment, displacement, criminalization and militarization of their territories.”

**The theme for this year’s forum on indigenous peoples is “Conflict, Peace and Resolution”. What role does indigenous youth play when it comes to conflict resolution in today’s world?**

“The role of indigenous youth varies depending on the type of conflict and the region they are in. However, I feel that indigenous youth are agents of social transformation and together with the support and guidance of our elders, we should aim to resume traditional and communal forms of organization that existed before the conflict.



To achieve this, indigenous youth who have been victims of violence should have access to medical care, psychological support and legal assistance. Actions should be coordinated with indigenous peoples, to provide culturally appropriate and effective services.”

Partnership is one of the 5 key elements of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. In what way does indigenous youth organize themselves to work together with non-indigenous youth groups and, on a larger scale, with policymakers, to get their concerns heard?

“It is important to highlight indigenous youth organizational processes at the community level to create greater visibility. In our particular case, as a network of indigenous youth, we have been able to create links and share experiences with non-indigenous youth rights activists, and created a space to share strategies and mechanisms for advocacy. We have also successfully collaborated with various feminist youth publications that have provided greater visibility for our demands and priorities.

Through UNDP’s online platform, “Youth Voices” (Juventud con Voz LAC), we have gained valuable and educational exchanges with other non-indigenous youth and were able to highlight our issues through international advocacy. Despite various obstacles and challenges, we were able to follow up on consultation processes of the 2030 Agenda and made links with other political actors and invited them to learn more about our own process.”

The international community saw the official adoption of the climate agreement last week. How do you see the future engagement of indigenous youth in the implementation of this agreement?

“As indigenous youth, we will continue to organize ourselves in line with the collective processes of our ancestors in defense of our lands, territories, transmission of our traditional knowledge and historical memory. We will continue our intergenerational dialogue and raise our voices against any injustice and violation of our individual and collective rights.”

For more information:

UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development  
UN and Indigenous Peoples  
Global Indigenous Youth Caucus



## Transforming public institutions for achieving the 2030 Agenda

Experts from 21 countries gathered in New York to discuss how to transform and equip public institutions to play their critical role in the implementation and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), during the 15th session of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), from 18 to 22 April 2016. The Session was

opened by H. E. Amb. Sven Jürgenson, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “The theme of the session is timely and important”, Mr. Wu noted, underscoring that the Committee met against the “backdrop of the milestone adoption of the SDGs” in September last year.

“Transforming public institutions is essential to support the type of inclusive and integrated policies needed to realize the sustainable development goals,” Mr. Wu said. “Making progress on one SDG requires making progress on the other SDGs. These interdependencies require an unprecedented level of policy integration among the various ministries, between central and local institutions and between governmental and non-governmental actors,” he said.

The discussion addressed policy integration as well as diversity, communications between government and society, oversight institutions and innovations, corruption, and transformative leadership.

The Committee also discussed how public institutions can ensure that no one is left behind, as a contribution to the ministerial declaration of the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development.

“Inequality at all stages of life affects the poor. There is no adequate infrastructure for the poor to become entrepreneurs; they lack education, capacities, tools, and technology. In a society, where less than 10 percent of population owns the majority of wealth, implementing an entrepreneurial culture is very difficult. What is most important is to ensure that the state acts to promote participation of all stakeholders,” said Prof. José Castelazo, Chairperson of CEPA.

The Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Sacha Sergio Llorentty Solíz, made a presentation on Mobilizing Public Institutions to Implement the 2030 Agenda. In addition, Assistant-Secretary-General for Economic Development Mr. Lenni Montiel briefed on the latest developments related to the follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda and implications for CEPA. Senior Statistician of UN DESA’s Statistics Division, Mr. Matthias Reister, provided an update as well on the indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda and on the work of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics.

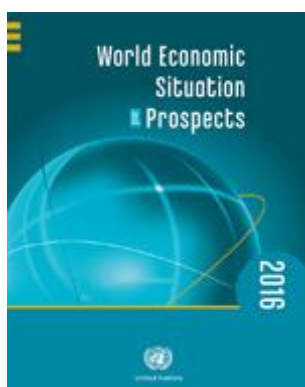
The Committee prepared a draft resolution for ECOSOC on the report of the 15th session. In this report, the Committee noted that there should be a clear framework for the sharing responsibilities between national and local government. The Committee also recognized that making government open, inclusive, accountable and participatory is critical for realizing the SDGs, for which ICT and other measures can play a critical role.

Furthermore, the Committee underscored that oversight and accountability must be exercised by multiple institutions and civil society organizations, which lack capacities in many countries. In the end, the Committee continues to strengthen the engagement of the United Nations system, civil society and other actors in its work in the spirit of openness and inclusion.

For more information:

[CEPA, 15th Session](#)

#### MORE FROM DESA



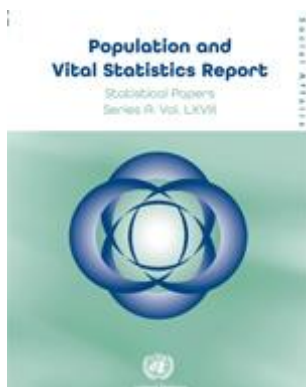
## World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2016

The World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2016 will be presented by Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Lenni Montiel, and Senior Economic Affairs Officer Dawn Holland, on Thursday, 12 May at 11 am EDT. The report is an update of the economic forecast released in January. Tune in to [webtv.un.org](http://webtv.un.org) for the press conference and find out the global growth prospects and regional economic outlook for 2016 and 2017.

The report is a joint product of UN DESA, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the five United Nations regional commissions (Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also contributed to the report.

For more information:

[World Economic Situation and Prospects](#)



## The Population and Vital Statistics Report (Series A, Vol. LXVIII)

The Population and Vital Statistics Report (Series A, Vol. LXVIII) with data accessible as of 1 January 2016 is now available in print. It includes data for countries or areas on population size (total, male, and female) from the latest available census, and the number and rate of vital events (live births, deaths, and infant deaths) for the latest available year. The numbers of vital events are accompanied by a code that denotes their completeness. The rates of vital events are computed only when the respective events are considered complete at the national level.

These data are presented as reported by national statistical authorities to the Demographic Yearbook of UN DESA's Statistics Division. In addition, this publication includes estimated mid-year population by major area and region for 2013 and 2014 prepared by the Population Division of UN DESA.

For more information:

Publications of UN DESA's Statistics Division

## Reducing risks of the El Niño phenomenon



Extreme weather can have profound implications for people's lives, health and livelihoods – in some cases, where communities are both exposed and vulnerable the impacts can be devastating and deadly. People whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, fisheries and livestock are particularly affected.

El Niño occurs on average every three to seven years. This phenomenon impacts not only South American region, but also parts of Africa and Asia. While it is predictable, its intensity has been increasing over the years and the 2015/16 El Niño is expected to be one of the strongest on record, affecting an estimated 60 million people including some of the most vulnerable in Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Pacific.

To address these challenges, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will convene a Special Meeting on “Impacts of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon: Reducing risks and capturing opportunities”. Organized by UN DESA in collaboration with UNISDR and WMO, the meeting will take place on 6 May at UN Headquarters in New York.

The event will be very timely to draw on the experiences of countries and the UN system to identify lessons-learned and recommendations for addressing the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon. It will also offer an opportunity to receive current updates on the phenomenon and its economic, social and environmental dimensions, and to discuss measures undertaken by countries to increase their resilience.

For more information:

Impacts of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon: Reducing risks and capturing opportunities

## UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>2-6 May, New York</b>	ECOSOC Integration Segment Symposium
<b>9-20 May, New York</b>	15th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII15)
<b>12 May, New York</b>	Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2016
<b>15 May</b>	International Day of Families
<b>23 May - 1 June, New York</b>	Committee on NGOs, resumed session

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