



For a world on the move: The UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants

The world is on the move, and the number of international migrants today is higher than ever before. In 2015, 244 million people lived in a country other than where they were born, including more than 20 million refugees and asylum-seekers escaping violence or persecution in their home countries. People have always moved in search of sustenance, safety and opportunity. By crossing borders and residing in other lands, they have contributed to cultural diversity, economic and social development, and mutual understanding amongst people and nations.

The United Nations General Assembly will convene the Summit for Refugees and Migrants on 19 September 2016 to guide the development of a global approach to addressing large movements of persons across international borders. The political declaration adopted at the Summit will strengthen the commitment to ensuring the human rights, safety and dignity of all refugees and migrants, and will set in motion a process to create a more predictable, systematic and equitable way of managing international migration for the future.



“The Summit is a historic opportunity,” said Karen AbuZayd, the Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on the Summit, during a press briefing on 9 August to present the draft declaration for the Summit. The UN Member States reached agreement on the document in early August following five

months of intensive negotiation.

“The outcome document addresses [...] the issues we face now and prepares us for challenges of the future,” Ms. AbuZayd explained, also describing an atmosphere among stakeholders that reflected a genuine determination to act on the promises that have been made.

Policy responses supported by data

The Summit takes place at a time when many people are on the move, sometimes in the face of grave danger and uncertainty. The number of persons forcibly displaced from their homes due to war, violence and political oppression is higher than at any time since the Second World War: roughly 65 million at the end of 2015, according to data provided by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Although most remain in their own countries as “internally displaced persons” or IDPs, more than 20 million are living elsewhere as refugees or asylum-seekers.

The increasing trend is not limited to refugees and others who have been forced to migrate. The total number of international migrants has continued to grow as well. According to estimates prepared by UN DESA’s Population Division, this number increased from 173 million in 2000 to 244 million in 2015.

Recognizing the benefits of migration

“Migration is now widely recognized as a powerful force that contributes in multiple ways to sustainable development, for countries of origin and countries of destination alike,” said John Wilmoth, Director of the Population Division. Remittances are an important part of the economic impact of migration. In 2015, migrants sent \$432 billion to developing countries, which is more than triple the global total of ODA. Remittances help families in countries of origin to attend school, pay for medical care, save for the future and launch new business initiatives.

In his report written in preparation for the Summit, the Secretary-General expressed his “grave concern” about the recent rise of xenophobic and racist responses to refugees and migrants and announced his decision to initiate a campaign to counter xenophobia.

Toward a more humane and welcoming world

The Summit’s outcome, the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants*, includes measures to alleviate the risks faced by refugees and migrants through better coordination of the global response to crises, as well as measures to protect the human rights of all migrants. The Summit also aims to promote a better sharing of burdens and responsibilities through enhanced cooperation between UN Member States. The reality of today’s migratory movements is complex and constantly changing, and no single country has the means of meeting these challenges on its own.

The declaration includes a number of initiatives to address the most pressing needs and to hasten the international response to any future crises. For a deeper consideration of migration issues and to address long-term issues, the declaration calls for organizing an intergovernmental conference on international migration to be held in 2018. It is envisaged that the main outcome of the conference will be a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

“Let’s keep reaching out a helping hand to people in their time of need. Let’s never give in to the forces of fear and division,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in the lead-up to the Summit. “Let’s welcome people into their new communities as neighbours and friends. Let’s build bridges, not walls. We will all be stronger for it.”

For more information:

[UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants](#)

[Secretary-General’s Report, In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants](#)

[UN DESA’s Population Division – International migration](#)

[Trends in international migration](#)

HIGHLIGHTS



UN General Assembly kicks off 71st session

As the global community is witnessing an unprecedented level of human mobility, the issue of safety and dignity for refugees and migrants will take center stage at the UN General Assembly, as it kicks off its 71st Session. Gathering leaders from around the world, the upcoming session commencing on 13 September, will also feature events to mark the one year anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, meetings of the High-level Panel on Water, the SDG Advocates and more.

Under the leadership of its new President Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative of Fiji, the General Assembly will hone in on a large number of agenda items featured under overarching themes including on the promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development, maintenance of international peace and security, development of Africa, promotion of human rights and the effective coordination of humanitarian assistance efforts.

Some highlights during UNGA high-level week

But before Heads of State and Government take to the podium for the general debate on 20 September, they will focus their attention on a pressing global issue: large movements of refugees and migrants.

Described as a historic event, the General Assembly will on 19 September host the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, featuring two parallel plenary events and six round table sessions putting a spotlight on a number of important issues and challenges that the international community seeks to resolve. More information on the event can be found in our [main story](#).



Celebrating one year anniversary of SDGs adoption

On 20 September, prior to the opening of the general debate, some of the Secretary-General's Sustainable

Development Goals Advocates will participate in a special event to mark the one year anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Through an “SDG Moment” in the General Assembly Hall, the event will feature the screening of a video, highlighting the progress made on implementing the SDGs to date, also demonstrating the universal and interconnected nature of these goals, and celebrating key multilateral moments, including when the SDGs were adopted.

Access to clean water and sanitation

Today, more than 2.4 billion people lack access to improved sanitation and at least 663 million do not have access to safe drinking water. To mobilize effective action to accelerate the implementation of SDG 6, which focuses on ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, 10 Heads of State and Government were earlier this year appointed as Members of the High-level Panel on Water by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

The panel had its first meeting earlier in the spring and on 21 September; it is time for the panel to convene again to discuss the new action plan among other things. Covering three main areas – political leadership, mobilizing action, and identifying so called Lighthouse initiatives – the plan contains 41 proposed actions. If implemented, these actions are expected to have a major impact to address the challenges the global community is facing in this area.

UNGA Second and Third Committees

In the beginning of October, the work of the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee) and the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (Third Committee) are set to begin. Supported by UN DESA, these two committees will discuss the items on the agenda related to economic growth and development and social, humanitarian issues and human rights, respectively.

The Committees seek where possible to harmonize the various approaches of States, and present their recommendations, usually in the form of draft resolutions and decisions, to a plenary meeting of the Assembly for its consideration. The Assembly's Second Committee deals with the economic and financial aspects of development and its Third Committee addresses social, humanitarian and cultural matters.

For more information:

[UN General Assembly](#)

[UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development](#)

[Sustainable Development – 17 goals to transform our world](#)

[Sustainable Development Goals Advocates](#)

[High-level Panel on Water](#)

HIGHLIGHTS



Film night to celebrate indigenous peoples' cultures and identities in cities

On 13 September, the United Nations will open the doors to an indigenous film night, paying tribute to the many indigenous peoples, living and sustaining their cultures in the world's biggest cities far from their ancestral homes. Through Reagan Tarbell's documentary "To Brooklyn and Back: A Mohawk Journey" (2009), we will meet the courageous Mohawk women who sustained a vibrant community in Brooklyn, while Mohawk workers were helping build Manhattan's iconic skyscrapers in the 1920s to 1960s.

Decades later, the short film "Bronx Llaktamanta" (2016) tells the story of Segundo Angamarca, a Kichwa Kañari from Ecuador, who runs a radio station two blocks from Yankee Stadium to ensure the survival of Kichwa language and culture in New York.

The screenings will be followed by a discussion about indigenous peoples' identity, cultural survival and contributions to the world's cities today.

The event takes place on the day of the ninth commemoration of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the UN General Assembly in 2007. The adoption of the Declaration was a historic event which marked the beginning of a new partnership between indigenous peoples and Member States, who worked side by side to draft and negotiate the text.



The UN Declaration defines the minimum standards necessary for the survival, dignity and well-being of indigenous peoples around the world. It reflects global consensus on the rights of indigenous peoples, including their rights to self-determination, lands, territories, resources, education, culture and health.

Despite progress, indigenous peoples remain amongst the poorest in all regions of the world; they lack access to education, health and decent employment and often experience displacement from their lands and territories. Indigenous peoples everywhere continue to face discrimination, marginalization and exclusion, while their cultures, identities and existence are under threat.



Today, many indigenous peoples live in urban areas far from their ancestral homes. How to maintain their cultures, identity and traditions in these contexts is an additional challenge.

At the same time, indigenous peoples have much to contribute to cities in terms of their traditions and knowledge about sustainable living. With the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat 3) coming up in Quito, Ecuador from 17 to 20 October this year, the discussion about indigenous peoples' identity and cultures in urban areas is more pertinent than ever before.

EVENT DETAILS

Tuesday, 13 September 2016

6:15 – 8:00 pm, Conference Room 4
United Nations Headquarters, New York

Programme:

Film screening “To Brooklyn and Back: A Mohawk Journey” and “Bronx Llaktamanta”

Post-screening Q&A with:

Reaghan Tarbell, film maker, director of “To Brooklyn and Back” (Mohawk, Canada)

Doris Loayza, cultural producer, educator, producer of “Bronx Llaktamanta”
(Quechua, Peru)

Segundo Angamarca, founder of Radio Tambo Stereo (Kichwa Kanari, Ecuador)

To register for the event, please RSVP [here](#).

The event is organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information and the Secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Division for Social Policy and Development, UN DESA.

Photo credits: Mushkeg Media, Inc., Doris Loayza

For more information:

Film screenings: “To Brooklyn and Back: A Mohawk Journey” & “Bronx Laktamanta”

UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development – Indigenous Peoples

GET INVOLVED



Recognizing the status of refugees and migrants with disabilities

Around the world today, the number of people forcibly displaced from their homes due to war, violence and political oppression is higher than at any time since the Second World War. Although there is a current lack of comprehensive data, the [Women’s Refugee Commission](#) estimates that among them, roughly 6.7 million are persons with disabilities.

Those who live with a disability before, during or after events leading to forced displacement experience heightened risks and vulnerability. Migrants and refugees with disabilities face greater risks of experiencing violence, sexual and domestic abuse, exploitation, discrimination and exclusion from access to education, wage earning activity, legal documentation and other services than their non-disabled peers.

Additionally, displaced persons with disabilities are more likely to be overlooked during processes of humanitarian assistance due to physical, environmental, communication and societal barriers, according to UNHCR.

The international community has broadly recognized the importance of addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in the fields of human rights and development and has more recently extended this focus to persons with disabilities in the context of migration.

International frameworks, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, provide overarching guidance to respond to persons with disabilities in situations of forced displacement and protracted crises.

The recent World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 and the adoption of [a Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#) demonstrate strengthened commitment by Governments and humanitarian actors to effectively respond to the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities in forced displacement.

As protracted crises continue and intensify, it is essential that humanitarian and development actors develop systematic responses to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all relief and development policies, programmes and actions.

To get updates on the status of persons with disabilities around the world and to learn about the efforts of the UN in this area, sign up to receive the [UN Enable Newsletter](#). Stay informed and get involved, promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities!

Photo credit: UNICEF/UN012728/Georgiev

For more information:

Refugees and migrants with disabilities

UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development – Disability

EXPERT VOICES



Role of young people to achieve the SDGs

Following this year's International Youth Day celebration, we asked Nicola Shepherd, who heads the UN Focal Point on Youth/UN programme on Youth in the Social Integration Branch of UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development, why responsible consumption and production matter to young people and how they play a leading role in

achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reducing poverty and fostering sustainable growth.

This year's International Youth Day focused on the role of young people to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to eradicate poverty through responsible consumption and production. Why is the aspect of responsible consumption and production so important to the world? Why does it matter in particular to young people?

"Responsible consumption and production is very important to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has become increasingly clear that our current pattern of production and consumption is causing great environmental damage with huge social consequences. In order to protect people and planet, it is very important that we change our behavior and become more conscious of the impacts of our actions. Additionally, a growing global population, including the expected growth of the middle class over the next decades, will intensify demand for already limited natural resources.

All stakeholders, including youth, should contribute to changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns and adopt more efficient energy use. These changes are necessary to ensure sustainable development and can ultimately help developing countries leapfrog the often inefficient, expensive, and polluting paths many rich countries have taken to develop.

Sustainable Development Goal 12, on ensuring sustainable patterns of consumption and production, can result in substantial benefits for youth, as it endeavors to lessen

food waste, reduce the strain on natural resources and ensure access to information about sustainable development and lifestyles.

Young people's participation, energy and efforts in ensuring sustainable consumption and production are necessary to reduce the harmful impacts of unsustainable practices. Their contributions, as labourers in agriculture and industry, consumers of goods and services and as both innovators and entrepreneurs are vital to ensuring sustainability throughout the lifecycle of goods."

How can young people play a leading role in reducing poverty, fostering sustainable growth, and promoting sustainable consumption (SDG 12)?

"The meaningful participation of young people in all aspects of production and consumption is vital to the implementation and success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for poverty alleviation. As producers and consumers, they are important partners in meeting the targets of Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production. Young people are drivers of change.

They can create alternatives to present polluting technologies, lobby Governments and businesses for change and become conscious consumers, thereby using their purchasing power to consume goods and services that are sustainably produced.

Their innovation can create employment and grow economies and provide decent jobs for all. Many young people are already engaged in initiatives to educate their peers and their communities about sustainability. Youth can challenge existing systems including helping de-stigmatize the idea that sustainable actions are strange or difficult to implement."

Looking at all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, what are some of the actions that youth are taking around the world to help achieve them in their own communities?

"The implementation and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals is essential for the Agenda to emerge from words into action.

Young people are participating in translating the 17 Sustainable Development Goals into regional, national and local policies and are working closely with their governments to fulfill their commitments. They continue to assist in the creation of programmes to implement the agenda, both by civil society and governments, including on each of the goals, and about education of the Agenda more broadly.

For instance, some youth are raising awareness about the SDGs in schools, universities, and in their communities whereas others are involved in monitoring the policies their governments have instituted to implement the goals."

How can the UN system, Member States, civil society, and the private sector collaborate to provide youth with the resources they need to be the change they want to see in the world?

"All stakeholders have a role to play in ensuring that young people are empowered as change makers in their communities and beyond.

Education, including skills training, is an integral part of youth development and Member States must ensure its availability, accessibility and quality, to enable youth to increase their capabilities. Member States should also ensure that youth are able to acquire the information, knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, human rights and global citizenship.

Civil society is instrumental in providing opportunities for the civic engagement of youth within their communities, as well as capacity building opportunities for their personal and social development.

Inclusive policies and programmes, including by Member States and the UN system, for the international, regional and local participation of young people, are crucial to their involvement and civic engagement and allow for further occasions for them to carry out the changes they aspire to have realized.

The importance of funding and resources mobilization for youth programming and policies, including ensuring their participation and education, cannot be understated. Concrete financial and targeted budgets are necessary to ensure that commitments to youth empowerment go beyond abstract ideals.”

For more information:

International Youth Day 2016

UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development – Youth

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT



2016 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) wraps up

The world gathered for the 2016 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York in July. Participants at the two-day forum focused on the immense potential of development cooperation as a lever for achieving the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development.

“The DCF has helped give shape to our revitalized global partnership for sustainable development for mobilizing financing and other means of implementation,” ECOSOC President Oh Joon said in his opening remarks.

The DCF took place as part of the annual high-level segment of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and highlighted trends and progress in international development cooperation.

It is the culmination of two years’ worth of extensive preparatory work, including research and analysis; communication and outreach; and three symposia held in the Republic of Korea, Uganda and Belgium, to advance global dialogue on development cooperation in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By providing an interactive platform for nations and organizations, the DCF brings together a diverse group of stakeholders from government, research, civil society, business and multilateral organizations to identify challenges and exchange ideas on innovative practices for enhancing the impact of development cooperation for the new universal and integrated Agenda.

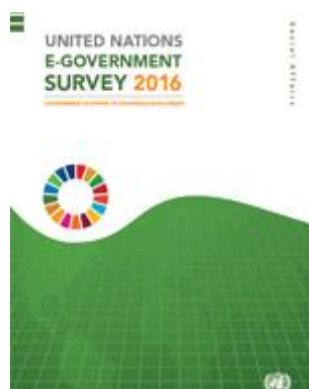
“By aligning priorities and Goals we can create opportunities for everyone to benefit from sustainable development, and not least – seeing the extremely high value of the interdependence between the Goals – the mutually reinforcing nature of the Goals,” Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson said during the opening session.

The 2016 DCF provided policymakers working at local, national, regional and international levels with renewed perspective and concrete policy guidance on implementation, financing and monitoring of SDG progress. The DCF will carry forward these deliberations in the months ahead as it continues to support a strong global partnership for development that leaves no one behind.

For more information:

2016 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF)

MORE FROM DESA



New global survey shows e-government emerging as a powerful tool for achieving the SDGs

More governments are embracing e-government to deliver services and to engage people in decision-making processes in all regions of the world, according to the 2016 UN E-Government Survey launched by UN DESA. It provides new evidence that e-government has the potential to help advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Survey highlights how opening up government data can promote effective, accountable and transparent institutions; how e-participation can strengthen participatory decision making and service delivery; and reports on progress made in the provision of electronic and mobile services focusing on the importance of bridging divides.

According to the Survey, e-government advancement has become one of development indicators and an aspiration in and of itself. However, it needs to be accompanied by the adequate policies to render more accountable and responsive services to meet people's needs.

The evolution of integrated one-stop platforms allowing access to a range of public services was also highlighted in the Survey. In 2003, only 45 of the 192 UN Member States, offered “one-stop-shop” portals; only 33 countries provided online transactions.

Fast forward to 2016, 90 countries offer such single-entry portals for public information and/or online services; 148 countries now provide at least one form of online transactional services. Many governments across the globe are opening up their data for public information.



E-participation is expanding, enabling countries to ensure that their policy decisions are more participatory. However, much effort is required to increase access to the Internet and ultimately provide universal and affordable access to those from the least developed countries as

called for by SDG 9. This needs to be in parallel with other advances in an integrated way to realize the 17 SDGs not to leave no one behind.

Top national and regional performers

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ranked first in global e-government for its continued development on e-government innovation.

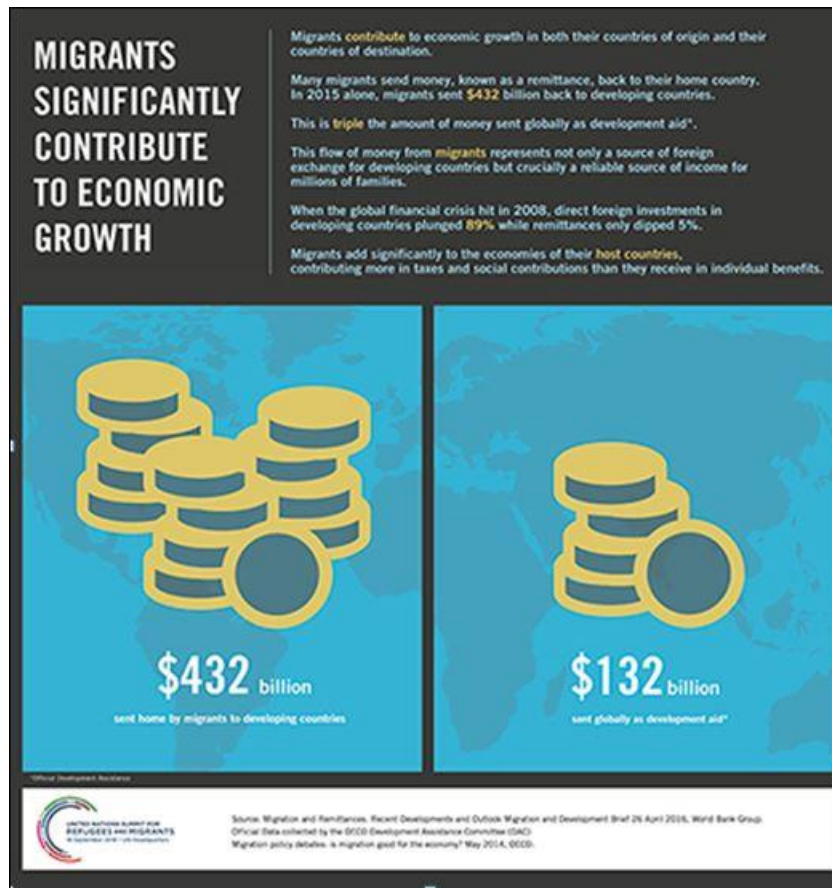
Australia and the Republic of Korea ranked second and third respectively. Both countries have established robust telecommunications infrastructure, invested in their human resources, expanded usage of e-government facilities and extended service delivery.

At the regional level, Europe was led by the United Kingdom. Oceania was led by Australia. Republic of Korea topped the list in Asia. The United States led countries in the Americas, and ranked twelfth overall. Mauritius was the top performer in Africa, and ranked 58th worldwide.

For more information:

Website of UN DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Migrants significantly contribute to economic growth



Migrants contribute to economic growth both in their countries of origin and their countries of destination.

Many migrants send money, known as a remittance, back to their home country. In 2015 alone, migrants sent **\$432 billion** back to developing countries. This is triple the amount of money sent globally as development aid.

This flow of money from migrants represents not only a source of foreign exchange for developing countries, but crucially a reliable source of income for millions of families.

When the global financial crisis hit in 2008, direct foreign investments in developing countries plunged 89 per cent, while remittances only dipped 5 per cent.

Migrants add significantly to the economies of their host countries, contributing more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in individual benefits.

For more information:

[Infographics on refugees and migrants](#)

[Global dataset on international migration](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 7-9
September,
Guilin, China | Global Preparatory Seminar for the UN World Data Forum |
| 13 September,
New York | 9th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples |
| 13 September,
December | General Assembly, Seventy-first session |
| 19 September,
New York | UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants |
| 1 October | International Day of Older Persons |

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