



Video

Group of 77 is critical to overcome global crisis

At the handover ceremony of the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China on 23 January, Mr. Sha Zukang, Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs states that “DESA is directly involved in supporting the Secretary-General in addressing the challenge of climate change” and that the financial crisis is on top of DESA’s agenda. “The full and active participation and collaboration of the G77 and China is vital to forming meaningful outcomes on global challenges like these”, says Mr. Sha. that work.”

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/specialevents/2009/se090123am.rm?start=01:21:24&end=01:27:09> (6 minutes)

Statement of Mr. Sha:

http://www.un.org/esa/desa/ousg/statements/2009/20090123_Group77.html

Full coverage:

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/specialevents/2009/se090123am.rm> (3 hours 31 minutes)

Inside this issue

Reclaiming the earth

A renewed commitment to sustainable agriculture and rural development is essential to relieve the world from hunger and poverty, p. 1

A society for all: utopia or reality?

Poverty eradication, full employment and decent work for all in a society where everyone works together for the common good is the ultimate goal of social integration, p. 4

Global dialogue on development, p. 7

Trends and analysis, p. 11

Technical cooperation, p. 15

Publications and websites, p. 16

Comings and goings, p. 18

Calendar, p. 19

Feature articles

Reclaiming the earth

A renewed commitment to sustainable agriculture and rural development is essential to relieve the world from hunger and poverty

Fourteen years ago, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) affirmed the urgency of advancing sustainable agriculture and rural

development. Shortly thereafter, the World Food Summit of 1996 set the goal of halving the number of undernourished people in the world by 2015. Hunger was a serious concern then and it remains one today.

As CSD prepares for its 17th session in May of this year, countries are reaffirming their commitment to agriculture and rural development, as well as to the themes of land, drought, desertification and Africa, in tackling the challenges of the new millennium: global food price volatility, poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

CSD-17 chairperson Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands, believes it is high time to deliver concrete measures and actions. “The world has been shaken by social tensions that have demonstrated that food insecurity is an irrefutable reality,” she states. “It is a new reality to which global warming and declining natural resources are now adding an unprecedented sense of urgency.”

Behind the food crisis lurks a crisis of sustainable development. The world’s people, particularly those in rich countries, are using far more of our natural resources than our planet can regenerate. All nations will have to face these dilemmas, including the dilemma of competing claims for food and fuel, and not least of all, the competing claims on water. Indeed, the time is right, if not overdue, to take back the lands that have been left to waste and destruction. For many centuries, agriculture guaranteed abundance on our tables and in our pantries. Nonetheless, the world has unwisely neglected agriculture, particularly in recent years.

Yet the global food crisis which could lead to an additional 44 million malnourished people this year is not merely a crisis of crops. “It epitomizes the failure of the international community on several inter-related fronts,” explains DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang. “As global financial credit dries up, our natural capital – our life-supporting ecosystems – are under unprecedented assault from unsustainable consumption and production.”

This continuing erosion of the natural stocks of wealth poses a challenge to the global development agenda as daunting and urgent as the financial crisis. As a global community, we have not taken good care of the land and water that has nurtured our civilization. We have not invested sufficiently in agriculture. And we have failed to empower women, who more often than not, are the farmers who put meals on the tables.

With a significant portion of the world’s poor depending on agriculture as the main source of income as well as a motor for economic development in rural areas, agriculture remains a pillar of development in the 21st century.

Most countries, however, have made little progress in sustainable agriculture and rural development. Populations keep growing. United Nations population estimates suggest there would be 8.5 billion people in

the world by 2025, but the capacity of available resources and technologies to satisfy demands for food and other commodities is uncertain.

More decisive adjustments in agricultural, environmental and macroeconomic policy, both at national and international levels, in developed and developing countries, are critical to the survival not only of humankind but of planet Earth as well.

Sustainable agriculture promises food for centuries to come

The challenge with agriculture is in increasing production on land already in use and avoiding further encroachment on land that is unsuitable for cultivation. While increasing food production and enhancing food security are imperative, it must not be done at the expense of the environment.

Agricultural lands which show a higher potential for yield deserve priority in maintenance and improvement, however, this certainly does not mean conserving and rehabilitating natural resources in lower potential lands are unnecessary. In fact, lack of sustainable land management for far too long has resulted in land degradation and desertification.



It is more crucial than ever to integrate principles of sustainable development with agricultural policy in all countries. Land productivity can be improved in sustainable ways – investing in agriculture, more specifically in scientific, technological and institutional innovations, sharing of knowledge, technology transfer and capacity building would revitalize the richness of the earth.

Rural development sustains land and people

Deficient policies, lack of participation by key stakeholders, limited education and underdeveloped financial markets all constitute roadblocks to rural

development. As a consequence of uneven development, many segments of the rural sector itself have been left behind by efforts at development, and capacity-building is essential to getting them involved in the process.

The participation of all major groups is necessary – in particular women, youth, small farmers, indigenous people and local communities. They all share a right to use available lands, as well as equitable access to water and forest resources, to technologies, financing, marketing, processing and distribution. Likewise, everyone must also share the responsibility of developing the world's resources in a sustainable way.

Sustainable agriculture and rural development is a concerted effort

The common goal of sustainable agriculture and rural development is to increase food production without causing harm to the environment and ensuring food for present and future generations. Poverty eradication, food security and sustainable natural resource management are inter-linked. Rural people, national governments, the private sector and international communities must all work together to fulfil the potential of sustainable agriculture and rural development.

CSD-17 marks an important milestone on the route to 2015, the target year for reducing world hunger by 50 percent. At CSD-17, policymakers from around the world are expected to forge a common vision of a future where stable supplies of nutritionally adequate food are made accessible to all – including vulnerable groups. The bigger picture encompasses employment, steady income, and decent living and working conditions for the whole of society. Most importantly, CSD-17 will map out the policies needed to arrive at that vision.

Based on the message of Gerda Verburg, Chairperson of CSD-17, Agenda 21 - chapter 14, and the statement by Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary General, delivered on 27 October 2008

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>

A society for all: utopia or reality?

Poverty eradication, full employment and decent work for all in a society where everyone works together for the common good is the ultimate goal of social integration

The 21st century ushered in an era of rapid social change. Advancements in science and technology enhanced not only production but also our way of life. Communications became faster, in real time, which strengthened trade that opened new opportunities for economic growth and development.

These opportunities, however, did not extend to all groups of society. We are experiencing now a time of great prosperity, but also a time of immense poverty and hardship. Never has the world seen more disparity than it has at this age.

While economic and social inequality is at its worst, the state of the world at present is not entirely new. Poverty, unemployment and social disintegration had already made their way to crisis levels during the 1990s, when globalization was still at its early stages.



It was then that the United Nations, together with heads of State and Government, gathered for the first time in history for the World Summit for Social

Development. Held in 1995 at Copenhagen, the Summit committed to “a political, economic, ethical and spiritual vision for social development that is based on human dignity, human rights, equality, respect, peace, democracy, mutual responsibility and cooperation, and full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of people.”

The notion of social integration thus emerged from the World Summit as vital to realizing its vision of “a more stable, safe and just society for all”. Fourteen years later and after persistent collaborative studies, the 47th session of the Commission for Social Development renews the commitment to social integration in pursuit of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work for all.

Social integration may very well be seen as a goal and a process at the same time, but it is also the subject of continuing controversy among the UN Member States.

The contention arises from the term itself, because “social integration” may bring to mind assimilation of minorities. In this context, many believe that forced social integration may lead to the loss identity: cultural identity, ethnic identity, class identity or any other social identity. Indigenous groups for instance would lose a rich heritage if they were forced to assimilate into mainstream society.

Mr. Sergei Zelenev, Chief of the Social Integration Branch of DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development, offers “social inclusion” as a term which more readily captures the meaning of a society for all. Many groups, such as indigenous peoples mentioned above, would rather be included than “integrated”, he explains. The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Promoting Social Integration convened in July 2008 in Finland described social inclusion as “a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background, so that they can achieve their full potential in life”.

Social inclusion encourages and promotes socio-economic development. It supports participation and allows for the meaningful and effective engagement of all members of society in shaping a shared future.

Despite its propensity to misconceptions, UN parlance uses “social integration” as an agreed language in promoting social development, for the true spirit of social integration lies in the definition given by the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development. It is the “the process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic and political life on the basis of equality of rights, equity and dignity”.

Inclusion is actually one of the pillars of social integration, along with participation and justice. Policies designed to achieve a stable, safe and just society wherein every individual enjoys rights and

responsibilities, and has an active role to play, must be inclusive.

Here, we see how social integration and social inclusion are not at odds with each other. Experts believe social inclusion is an action governments can take to create more integrated societies.

The EGM established that it is essential in social inclusion to implement policies, actions and institutional arrangements that promote equal access to public services and that enhance citizens’ participation in the decision-making process – including the civil, social, economic and political activities that affect their lives.

Mr. Zelenev, in addition, stresses the importance of ensuring the issues of social inclusion are not lost within Government structures, which unfortunately happens often. For this reason, the report of the Secretary-General on promoting social integration stressed the need for Governments to consider establishing an institutional focal point tasked with promoting social integration.

There are many groups in society that are marginalized by economic and social forces. People living in rural areas, for example, are on the margins of society. Government services do not reach those areas, and so the people neither benefit nor contribute to the larger community. How can they be considered as true citizens with rights and responsibilities if they are, in effect, excluded from society?

The economic, social and cultural implications of exclusion are manifold. In his report, the Secretary-General states, “Economic aspects of exclusion encompass exclusion from the labor market and access to assets. Social and cultural aspects refer to exclusion from access to social services, means of communication, community and family support or State protection. Such economic, social and cultural exclusion leads to political exclusion, where individuals are prevented from exercising their rights as citizens, including access to decision-making.”

Pervasive factors of exclusion

Different groups may be excluded in different countries. The report of the Secretary-General found the unemployed to be the most vulnerable to exclusion in some, while in others, ethnic, religious and cultural minorities face the greatest risk.

In Africa, social exclusion is seen as a direct result of poverty and discrimination based on gender and race,

as are internally displaced persons and refugees and HIV/AIDS infection. Sixty-eight percent of the HIV/AIDS-infected population lives in sub-Saharan Africa.

Migrant workers in Asia and the Pacific struggle against discrimination, exploitation and abuse. The year 2005 saw 58 million international migrants in search of employment throughout the region, but despite growing figures, protecting the rights of migrant workers has yet to be properly addressed.

The Asia-Pacific region is also home to 400 million elderly persons. This aging population is expanding twice as quickly as the general population, and its greatest challenge lies in securing income, employment, health, nutrition and social services.

Western Asia, a region troubled by conflict and displacement, confronts the crisis of refugees and a large migrant labor force. Three and a half million internally displaced persons and twice as many refugees face uncertainty in the Middle East, but as determined in the report of the Secretary-General, many will not benefit from social development programs because they lack the status of citizen.

Income inequality is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean, affecting most significantly indigenous groups and those of African descent. Various forms of discrimination are rife and exclusion of these groups hinders smooth functioning of democracy, achieving full citizenship and threatens the overall well-being of society.

Poverty and unemployment are the two main factors of exclusion in Europe. The report of the Secretary-General found 16 percent of the European population at risk of financial poverty in 2007, 20 percent lived in substandard housing, 10 percent lived in households where nobody worked and 4 percent in long-term unemployment.

In developed countries like the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, indigenous peoples consistently lag behind most indicators of well-being while immigrants face challenges relating to social, economic and cultural integration.

Social exclusion leads to increased poverty, reduced growth, higher incidence of crime, social upheaval and threats to public safety – regardless of the cause. It perpetuates a cycle of destitution, inequality, conflict and instability.

Social integration as the key to development and progress

Promoting social integration requires political leadership and commitment. However, “the task of social integration is not the responsibility of Governments alone but should be shared by all sectors of the economy and society at large, including the private sector and civil society organizations,” the Secretary-General states.

“Social policies should be transformative so as to enable the socially excluded and the marginalized to be integrated in society and to break intergenerational poverty and exclusion.”

As a starting point, one has to identify the hurdles and barriers that may jeopardize or prevent social integration for vulnerable groups, Mr. Zelenev says.

Socially inclusive policies should then be developed and mainstreamed into national development and poverty reduction strategies, the Secretary-General’s report recommended.

There must also be a removal of all discriminatory provisions from national legal frameworks and governments must be more active in pursuing policies that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property and birth or other status. Laws that prohibit discrimination are virtually important to safeguard the interests of all people in society, including marginalized and vulnerable groups.

At the same time, governments should also establish mechanisms in which socially excluded groups, including women, minorities and other marginalized groups are free to express their needs and aspirations.

Attention to the needs of fragile societies, including those emerging from conflict, as well as sub regions at risk, must in turn engage the international community. It is also ideal to maintain a forum wherein governments may exchange good policies and best practices to facilitate equity, inclusion and cohesion.

But while nations and governments endeavor to create a society for all, a culture of tolerance and respect for the rights of others is hardly possible without education. Development must begin with shaping young minds – and especially with promoting values of compassion, tolerance and respect for diversity.

Social integration has the potential to accomplish more than poverty eradication, full employment and decent work for all. It fosters an environment of respect for the dignity of each and every individual, leading to a society bound by a willingness to help each other, such that everyone works together for the common good.

Based on the Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, the Report of the Secretary-General on Promoting Social Integration and collaboration with Mr. Sergei Zelenev, Chief of the Social Integration Branch of DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2009.html>

Global dialogue on development

Developing the world through social integration

Social integration is the priority theme of the 47th session of the Commission for Social Development to be held from 4-13 February in New York

The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 envisioned a stable and just society – “a society for all”. It also saw how social integration can promote development and, thus, defined it as “the process of building the values, relations and institutions essential for the creation of such an equitable and dynamic society where all individuals, regardless of their race, sex, language or religion, can fully exercise their rights and responsibilities on an equal basis with others and contribute to society”.

In its 47th session, the Commission for Social Development will focus precisely on social integration as a means to eradicate poverty and provide full employment and decent work for all. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) stresses that policies and strategies to achieve these goals should include specific measures to promote gender equality and foster social integration for social groups, especially the youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrants and indigenous peoples.

ECOSOC also asserts that social integration policies should seek to reduce inequalities, promote access to basic social services, education for all and health care, and increase the participation and integration of social groups.

The Commission will also encourage Governments to continue their efforts to mainstream the concerns of older persons into their policy agendas, underscoring the importance of family intergenerational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity for social development. It will seek the realization of all human rights for older persons as well as the prevention of age discrimination. In this view, it will highlight the report of the Secretary-General on the “First review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: Preliminary assessment” and the “Regional implementation of the Madrid International Plan on Action on Ageing, 2002”.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2009.html>

Luxembourg diplomat elected to lead ECOSOC in 2009

Ambassador Sylvie Lucas of Luxembourg was elected on 15 January as the 65th President of the Economic and Social Council, making her the second woman to lead the 54-member body

Ms. Lucas will be assisted by four Vice-Presidents who were also elected: Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez of El Salvador, Tiina Intelmann of Estonia, Hamidon Ali of Malaysia and Somduth Soborun of Mauritius. This is the first time in the history of the 54-member Council that its Bureau will be led by three women Ambassadors.

Speaking after her election, Ms. Lucas outlined the Council’s work for the coming year. “Our main challenge is to further strengthen the quality and relevance of the work of the Council on development,” she noted.

She also presented the theme of the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), “Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global health,” to be held next July in Geneva.

She urged the Council to take advantage of this theme’s unique cross-sectoral nature that can help it to focus on the inter-linkages between health-related goals, including those that are part of the global anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the overall development agenda.

“I intend to work very closely with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly to make this year a decisive year for action on the health agenda,” she said.

In addition, Ms. Lucas announced the participation of ten countries which will make their National Voluntary Presentations (NVPs) during the 2009 AMR, noting that Member States consider the NVP mechanism as an important instrument to review progress, assess impact and promote best practices.

ECOSOC will kick start its activities for the 2009 AMR with the Special Event on Philanthropy and Global Public Health, to be held on 23 February. “This meeting will be an opportunity to engage foundations and the private sector together with the UN, to find creative solutions to step up progress towards the health MDGs and to promote global equity,” said Ms. Lucas.

Congratulating Ms. Lucas on her election, Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiros said she was confident the new President will guide the Council with as much success as her predecessor, Ambassador Léo Mérorès of Haiti.

In the next organizational session of ECOSOC, to be held from 10-13 February in New York, a briefing on the state of the world economy will be presented by Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development of DESA. Mr. Jomo will focus on the main findings of the new flagship publication World Economic and Social Prospects 2009. In addition, a renowned expert has been invited to participate in the briefing as a complement to DESA’s assessment.

For more information: <http://www.un.org/ecosoc/>

A call to conserve resources

The 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development holds an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting from 23-27 February in New York to discuss a timely agenda

Agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa are the five thematic issues of the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) to be held from 4-15 May.

The Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting will adopt these matters into the CSD-17 agenda and organization of work, but concerns regarding these thematic issues are not merely abstract notions. They represent a threat that is very real.

Our natural resources, specifically land, are being left barren after countless years of exploitation. As populations grow, the world will go hungrier than ever before if it carries on with the careless use of land. Society is facing the dangers of poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

The need for sustainable development has never been more urgent, and CSD-17 is working towards making sustainable agriculture and rural development, among other measures, the benchmark with which governments implement development policies.

The Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting is set to discuss policy options and possible actions to facilitate the implementation of sustainable development. While increasing food production and food security is essential for growing populations, it can be done with minimum harm to the environment. It must be done – for the sake of future generations.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>

Reinforcing virtual infrastructures

Follow-ups to the third Internet Governance Forum will be held from 23-26 February in Geneva to brainstorm for the next forum

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) of December 2008 in Hyderabad, India concluded with a resolve to make the Internet safer and more accessible to all users. Following its success, the IGF Secretariat is organizing two events: open consultations for stakeholders to share their insights on the third IGF and a members-only meeting to prepare for the upcoming 4th IGF.

The Secretary-General’s Special Adviser for Internet Governance, Mr. Nitin Desai, will chair the open consultations, which will take place from 23-24 February. Representatives of government, the private sector, civil society and the academic and technical Internet communities are invited to the meeting to relay feedback on the previous forum in an effort to improve the IGF. With the Tunis Agenda being central to Internet governance, one day will be set aside to deliberate the review process for which it has called.

A private meeting of the 50-member Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (MAG) will follow from 25-26 February. The MAG is entrusted with assisting in the preparations for the annual meetings of the IGF. It will discuss a first draft programme of the 4th IGF, which will take place from 15-18 November in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

For more information: <http://www.intgovforum.org>

Philanthropy and the global public health agenda

Special event of the Economic and Social Council will be held in New York on the International Corporate Philanthropy Day on 23 February

Organized by DESA and the United Nations Office for Partnerships, in collaboration with the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy and the World Health Organization, the event will serve as part of the preparatory process for ECOSOC's 2009 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health".

Top executives, philanthropy leaders, ECOSOC Members and other partners will discuss together ways to strengthen partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially in areas where progress has been slow, and which can benefit from stronger multi-stakeholder participation.

The programme will consist of an opening plenary on "Building effective public-private partnerships in health", to be followed by two leadership dialogues panels on "Improving health outcomes for women and girls" and "Raising the profile of Neglected tropical diseases". A President's summary of the meeting's deliberations, which will capture the "key messages" from the discussion, will serve as an input to the High-level Segment in July 2009 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The event will have a number of co-convenors that are dedicated to promoting the meeting and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/phlntrpy/philanthropy09.shtml>

Statistics that go beyond numbers

Climate change, agriculture and energy are top concerns in the Statistical Commission from 24-27 February in New York

Scientific studies on the impact of climate change to the environment, economy and society predict far reaching consequences. Recent climate events, in addition to scientific evidence, stress the urgency of addressing the issue as a priority in the political agenda.

As such, the 40th session of the Statistical Commission begins on 24 February with a review of climate change and official statistics as prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The report first defines the scope of climate change statistics in relation to official statistics. It explores areas where official statistics can provide input and added value to the analysis of the environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change as well as the adaptation and mitigation measures needed in response to it. Finally, the report offers recommendations for a work programme to mainstream climate change in official statistics at both national and international levels.

A seminar on "Innovations in Official Statistics" is being held on 20 February in preparation for the 40th session. It is part of a series of one-day high level seminars, organized by DESA's Statistics Division, which takes place every year on the Friday before the session starts. The seminar gives the global statistical community a chance to discuss relevant topics and share experiences on how best to address challenges facing national statistical offices.

The seminar will be organized around three panel discussions: "Innovation in Governance", "Innovation in Data Collection and Management" and "Innovation in Data Dissemination". It will be chaired by Mr. Geoff Bascand, Government Statistician of Statistics New Zealand and Ms. Katherine K. Wallman, Chief Statistician of the USA.

Pre-session seminars will jumpstart the week of the Statistical Commission. They begin on 23 February with "Environmental-Economic Accounting". This seminar gives a general overview of the basic concepts of environmental-economic accounting and its policy relevance as well as an overview of the revision process of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA). It will also elaborate on the specific modules of the SEEA, in particular on water accounting, energy accounting and material flow accounting.

A high level forum on "Globalization and Global Crises: the Role of Official Statistics" is also set on 23 February. Organized by the UN Statistics

Division, a high level panel composed of users and producers of statistics will impart their views on the role of official statistics vis-à-vis globalization and the global crises.

The UN Statistics Division and Statistics Norway, convener of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics, organized “Energy Statistics: Challenges and Ways Forward” on 24 February – the first official day of the Statistical Commission – to bring forward issues on energy statistics. The seminar will discuss the need for international recommendations for energy statistics, present challenges in developing these international recommendations, emphasize the importance of making energy statistics an integral part of official statistics and discuss the way forward in the field.

Also on 24 February, a lunchtime seminar on “Advances in Environment Statistics” is organized by the European Commission. Here, Eurostat will provide an overview of the recent developments and challenges facing environment statistics. The Instituto Brasileiro de Geografica e Estatistica (IBGE) will also conduct a special presentation on “Geospatial statistics and its use in Environmental Statistics” while Statistics Netherlands (CBS) will present “Recent developments in Environmental Accounts”.

The 40th Statistical Commission runs until 27 February featuring seminars with a statistical take on the most pressing global challenges of today.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission_40th_session.htm

Trends and analysis

Online discussion on global public health

Jointly organized by DESA, UNDP and WHO, the forum from 29 January – 26 February will provide valuable contributions to the intergovernmental process of the Economic and Social Council

The purpose of the moderated online forum is to bring together experts in the field, from within and outside of the UN system to discuss the strengthening of health systems, in particular how to overcome health inequities and to ensure universal access, and what concrete steps can be taken to address the shortage of health-care workers.

The online discussion will also focus on emerging and future health challenges, specifically, the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, the impact of the financial crisis on health care, and improving health partnerships.

The discussion presents an opportunity for the broader development community, in particular those working at the country level, to provide a valuable contribution to the United Nations intergovernmental process that takes place through the ECOSOC family of organizations. The ideas and recommendations collected may be considered for inclusion in the report of the Secretary-General on the Annual Ministerial Review, and will be made widely available on the Internet and at ECOSOC's substantive session in July.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/newfunct/amredis2009.shtml>

Consultations on energy statistics

Oslo Group on Energy Statistics will discuss a first draft of the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics in Ottawa, Canada from 2-6 February

DESA's Statistics Division collects energy statistics from more than 190 countries and updates and maintains the Energy Statistics Database which

contains energy statistics for the period 1950-2006 on more than 215 countries, regions and areas for production, trade, conversion and final consumption. The annual questionnaire on energy statistics is sent to national statistical offices, ministries of energy or other authorities responsible for energy statistics in the country.

The International Recommendations for Energy Statistics (IRES) are being developed in accordance with the decisions of the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 36th and 37th sessions which recognized the significance of energy statistics, recommended their development as part of official statistics and called for the revision and further development of the relevant international standards.

The Statistical Commission approved the establishment of two complimentary working groups to carry out the work. The Oslo Group on Energy Statistics will contribute to the development of improved methods and international standards for national official energy statistics, and the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics to enhance international collaboration and coordination.

A provisional text of the IRES has been prepared and will be presented at the 4th meeting of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics in Ottawa, Canada from 2-6 February. In addition, a number of issues that have been identified during the 3rd Oslo Group meeting, Vienna, 4-6 February 2008 will also be discussed.

This first version will be reviewed by the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics at its next meeting and worldwide consultation on the provisional draft IRES will take place in May and June 2009. An amended draft of IRES will be prepared for its review and endorsement by the United Nations Expert Group on Energy Statistics in late 2009. The final draft of IRES will be submitted to the 41st session of the UN Statistical Commission for adoption in December 2009.

For more information:

<http://og.ssb.no/ogmeetings/fourthmeeting>

Linking climate change and development

Workshop in New York on 3 February will prepare for the World Economic and Social Survey 2009

The principal objective of the World Economic and Social Survey 2009 –Climate Change and Development (WESS 2009) is to better understand the linkage between climate change and development with the aim of identifying the programmes and policies needed for low-carbon, high-growth and equitable development.

The tendency of climate change and development discussions to take place in separate areas has demonstrated the weakness of earlier approaches. To date a good deal of those discussions have focused around ethical (the theme of common but differentiated responsibility) and financial (funding mitigation and adaptation) issues, with a good deal less attention on policy measures.

The WESS 2009 will attempt to broaden the discussion to involve such critical issues as the trade, industrial and technology policies needed to help developing countries to establish high-growth, low-carbon development strategies and to make a case for a globally equitable and integrated approach that is coherent and mutually reinforcing.

The objective of the workshop is to generate a set of messages that will form the core recommendations of WESS 2009. The background papers for WESS 2009 are being completed, and the workshop will attempt to crystallize the ideas and recommendations for concrete chapters of WESS 2009.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wess2009forthcoming.html>

ICT and education

Regional seminar in Havana on 9 February will elaborate joint proposals on the role of technologies in the area of education

The education sector is not only immersed in the digital revolution that is transforming our societies, but because of its potential, it is a key vehicle for ICTs to contribute to development. Incorporating ICTs in education can help to expand educational coverage, improving the quality of education, training future professionals for the digital age and improving teaching and learning processes.

The incorporation of ICTs to education is an important topic in the international community and it has been defined as a priority by the Latin American and Caribbean countries in their national

development agendas and in the Regional Action Plan for Information Society eLAC2010. However, for ICTs to contribute to development, it is not enough to incorporate technology, it is necessary to establish long-term sectoral policies.

Resources must be allocated to develop and maintain a modern technological infrastructure, and changes in the educational system itself have to be made, including modifications of the curricula and pedagogical processes as well as training for teachers in order to enhance their technological skills and capabilities.

DESA's Global Alliance for ICT and Development (UNDESA-GAID), the Government of Cuba and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) will organize the Regional Seminar on ICT and Education at the Palacio de Convenciones in Havana, Cuba, on 9 February. The seminar will gather ICT-for-development experts to elaborate joint proposals on the role of technologies in the area of education. The event will take place in the context of the 13th International Convention and Fair INFORMATICA 2009.

This seminar will review the state of development and incorporation of ICTs in education in Latin America and the Caribbean and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating ICTs in education. It will also identify the challenges and solutions to address them and review policies and strategies to promote the incorporation of ICTs in education. Projects and innovative solutions that make use of ICTs in the education sector will also be identified.

For more information: <http://www.un-gaid.org>

Role of women in development

Expert consultation in Copenhagen from 17-19 February to discuss women's economic empowerment in preparation for the 2009 World Survey

Issued every five years, the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development is a flagship publication of DESA prepared for the Economic and Financial Committee of the General Assembly. It provides an opportunity to focus attention on the gender equality perspective in economic development.

The 2009 edition will address women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance, within the broad framework of the economic empowerment of women. The World Survey will focus on what has been achieved so far in terms of women's economic empowerment, identify the remaining gaps and challenges, address some of the key constraints that have hindered progress, and provide policy recommendations.

For this purpose, DESA's Division for the Advancement of Women is organizing an Expert Consultation on the 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 17-19 February. The Expert Consultation is part of the Division's preparation of the 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development and will discuss women's control over economic resources and access to financial resources, including microfinance. The expert consultation will review the first draft of the World Survey and provide further guidance on key issues and the way these should be addressed in the World Survey.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ws2009/>

Implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Experts met from 14-16 January in New York to set out methodologies by which the Permanent Forum can fulfill its new responsibilities

In September 2007, the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, marking a major victory for the world's indigenous peoples and an extraordinary achievement in international standard setting. The adoption of the Declaration signals a new mandate for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous (UNPFII) to "promote respect for and full application of the provisions of this Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration".

At its seventh session, the UNPFII recommended that the Council authorize an international expert group meeting to discuss in greater detail the way in which the Permanent Forum should address its new mandate under article 42 of the UN Declaration. At its regular

session in 2008, the Economic and Social Council approved the Forum's recommendation in decision 2008/249.

The Expert Group Meeting was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14-16 January 2009. It was attended by indigenous experts and UNPFII members as well as interested Member States, UN Agencies and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations.

During the meeting, participants were asked to outline approaches that the Permanent Forum can take to promote the implementation of the UN Declaration and to set out methodologies by which the Permanent Forum can fulfill its new responsibilities. Specifically, participants were requested to consider the following discussion points detailed below and make recommendations regarding each.

- Integration of the UN Declaration into the ongoing work of the Permanent Forum
- Capacity development for indigenous and non-indigenous communities and organizations
- Promotion of respect for and full application of the UN Declaration at the State level
- Dialogue with States regarding respect for and application of the UN Declaration and follow up on its effectiveness
- Cooperation within the United Nations system

Following discussions, the expert group recommended that the UNPFII decides to invite participants to the Forum, States in particular, indigenous peoples and UN agencies to submit written reports under Article 42 of the Declaration providing substantive information on the application and implementation of the Declaration at the national and local level; and to appoint a task team consisting of eight members of the Permanent Forum to examine reports and communicate with the submitting parties as may be appropriate.

The experts also recommended that the Permanent Forum encourage national human rights institutions and indigenous peoples' institutions to promote respect for and full implementation of the Declaration at the national and local levels; encourage States to incorporate adequate information on the implementation of the Declaration in the 'core report' to the human rights treaty bodies; and recommend

that States should ‘in the spirit of harmonious and cooperative relationship with the indigenous peoples’ establish as soon as possible where it does not already exist a national dialogue with indigenous peoples on human rights based on the Declaration .

The meeting also recommended that the Permanent Forum requests the Secretary-General to provide an adequate budget for the purpose of meeting the requirements of Article 42 of the Declaration and to remind UN agencies to take note of and respond to Article 42 of the Declaration and, as a matter of priority, directly integrate relevant provisions of the Declaration into the respective policies, programs and strategies of each UN agency. Furthermore, such agencies should undertake initiatives, within a reasonable timeframe, to ensure indigenous peoples’ effective engagement, dialogue and negotiations regarding the exercise of their human rights.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/>

Technical cooperation

Electronic and mobile Government in Africa

Capacity building workshop in Addis Ababa from 17-19 February will discuss progress made and challenges ahead

In today's technology-driven globalized world, governments are increasingly becoming aware of the importance and role of e-government and ICT in development. Many countries are adapting their public sector systems in accordance with the changing environment, realizing the importance of e-government readiness and e-governance in improving public service delivery to citizens. As IT applications, especially innovative e-government programs are employed as part of the public sector reform, the governments are taking note of the synergy from the interaction between new technologies, an educated population, and an enabling environment.

Policy makers now fully realize that ICT can effectively contribute to the enabling environment for development, create job opportunities, improve health and education and enhance transparency, accountability and good governance. By putting ICT as the center piece of development, countries can effectively support their economic and social development goals.

For this purpose, DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa will hold a capacity development workshop on electronic and mobile Government in Africa from 17-19 February in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The goal of this workshop is to explore regional knowledge into the issues and challenges of electronic and mobile government development in Africa. The progress will be reviewed and challenges ahead will be discussed aiming to help countries as they advance in developing their e/m government programmes, and seek to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The workshop will also focus on the transfer and exchange of ideas among multi-stakeholders on effective e/m government development. It will provide an opportunity to bring together a

multidisciplinary group of African policy makers, experts and researchers to further evolve the framework for the Global Knowledge Repository on electronic and mobile Government in Africa.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/BrowseEventsbyCalendar/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1207/Default.aspx?selecteddate=2/17/2009>

Launch of African Human Resources Management Network

DESA workshop in Arusha, Tanzania from 23-27 February will focus on building capacity for human resource development policy and strategy

The idea to establish this network was born in Cape Town, South Africa during the International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) Conference in April 2007. Following the meeting in Cape Town, a selected group of human resource managers established a working group and met at various meetings organized by DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management in Mbabane, Swaziland in September 2007, in Kampala, Uganda in April 2008 and finally in Accra, Ghana in October 2008.

This workshop marks the culmination of the work of DESA and a selected group of human resource managers from the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) in Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Uganda to establish the network through which professional management of human resources in the public sector in Africa can be institutionalized to sustain capacity development.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/BrowseEventsbyCalendar/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1228/Default.aspx?selecteddate=2/23/2009>

Publications and websites

Technical reports



Report of the Sixth United Nations Public Service Day and Awards Ceremony Day

The United Nations Public Service Awards Programme (UNPSA) is the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. It rewards the creative achievements and contributions of public service institutions to development in countries around the world. Through an annual competition, the UN Public Service Awards Programme promotes the role, professionalism and visibility of public service.

This report provides an overview of the UNPSA Programme, and presents information about the 2008 UNPSA nominations and categories; the 2008 UNPSA winners and finalists, as well as about the UN Public Service Day.

To download:

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un-dpadm/unpan033146.pdf>



Achieving Sustainable Development and Promoting Development Cooperation

In its 2008 High-level Segment held in New York from 30 June to 3 July 2008, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

organized a series of panels and roundtable discussions on the theme of its second Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development". The Council also convened its first Biennial Development Cooperation Forum (DCF).

The material gathered in this publication provides a comprehensive view of the 2008 High-level Segment. It brings together the proceedings - statements, issues papers, summaries of roundtables and other discussions - of the ECOSOC session as well as the preparatory meetings of the DCF and the outcome of

the 2008 NGO Forum. This publication serves as a resource and a vehicle to review the work of the Council in fulfilling its mandate to monitor and follow up on the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs as well as the new functions of the Council.

To order: <https://unp.un.org/Details.aspx?pid=18719>

Statistical compilations



Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online

The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics presents current economic and social statistics for more than 200 countries and territories of the world. It contains over 50 tables of monthly and/or annual and quarterly data on a variety of subjects illustrating important economic trends and developments, including population, prices, employment and earnings, energy, manufacturing, transport, construction, international merchandise trade and finance.

Vol. LXII – No. 12, December 2008

Quarterly and bimonthly tables included in this issue: Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials; Fuel imports of developed economies (unit value indices, volume indices and value); Indicators on fuel imports of developed economies; Registration of new motor vehicles; External trade conversion factors; Manufactured goods exports (unit value indices, volume indices and value); Selected series of world statistics. Publication symbol is ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/432.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mbs/>

Working paper

Role of media in curbing corruption: the case of Uganda under President Yoweri K. Museveni during the “no-party” system

The author of this paper argues that free, independent and hard-hitting media can play an important role in curbing corruption. Media in Uganda has enjoyed considerable freedom in this regard since Museveni

came to power in 1986. The evolving power structure and a changing media landscape, however, have presented both challenges and opportunities for media's watchdog role on corruption. This paper will explore how this environment defined such role between 1986 and 2006 during Museveni's "no-party" rule. It argues that, although media won important battles to promote accountability in public offices, the regime's complex power structure has consistently challenged their role as an instrument of public accountability.

To download:

http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2009/wp72_2009.pdf

Websites



Re-designed United Nations Development Account Website

The Development Account is an integral part of the technical cooperation activities of the economic and social entities of the United Nations. Projects aim at capacity-building through sub-regional, regional and interregional economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. To date, 138 projects have been approved by the General Assembly out of regular budget funds for a total amount of USD 91 million.

The updated website allows users to retrieve detailed information about proposed, active and completed projects and provides guidelines for project managers. The Documents section contains General Assembly resolutions, including mandates, reports by the Secretary-General as well as budget fascicles, and Advisory Committee on Administrative & Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) reports. The calendar provides information on upcoming meetings and events as well as proposed timelines and deadlines for implementing entities.

To browse: <http://www.un.org/esa/devaccount/>

Comings and goings

Comings



Ms. Haiyan Qian has been appointed by the Secretary-General as Director of DESA's Division for Public Administration & Development Management (DPADM), effective 1 February

2009. Ms. Qian has been engaged in the last 28 years in issues related to public policy and governance. Since joining the Department, Ms. Qian has served as Chief of DPADM's Knowledge Management Branch and Chief Manager of the United Nations Public Administration Network.

Prior to that, she worked for other United Nations agencies, such as the Centre for Science and Technology for Development and UNEP's Centre on Environmentally Sound Technology in Japan. Before joining the United Nations, Ms. Qian worked for the Chinese Government in the area of science and technology for development and served in the Chinese Permanent Mission to the United Nations based in New York twice, covering the United Nations Second Committee on Social and Economic Affairs. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Beijing, China and her Master in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA.

Mr. Nikolai Zaitsev, Chief of DESA's Office of the Under-Secretary General, has been re-assigned effective 1 February 2009 to assume new responsibilities as Head of a new Capacity Development Office in DESA.

Mr. Juwang Zhu has been appointed as the new Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary General as of 1 February 2009. Mr. Zhu has been Chief of Branch in DESA's Division for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar has been re-assigned as of 1 February 2009 to the post of Chief, Communications and Outreach Branch, Division for Sustainable Development. Mr. Chandavarkar has been released as Chief, Communications and Information Management Service.

The following staff members were promoted in January:

Mr. Josephus (Joop) Theunissen, Senior Programme Officer, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Ms. Bibi Khan, Research Assistant, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Ms. Aida Diawara, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division (effective 1 October 2008)

Goings

The following staff member also retired in January:

Mr. Sekou Soumahoro, Governance & Public Administration Officer, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Calendar

February

Online Discussion on Global Public Health

29 January – 26 February

<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/newfunct/amredis2009.shtml>

Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

Ottawa, 2-6 February

<http://og.ssb.no/>

Workshop on Climate Change and Development

New York, 3 February

<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wess2009forthcoming.html>

Commission for Social Development

47th session, New York, 4-13 February

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/2009.html>

High-level Meeting on African Agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting the Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution

Windhoek, Namibia, 9-10 February

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/africa/events/index.htm>

Regional Seminar on ICT and Education

Havana, 9 February

<http://www.un-gaid.org>

Economic and Social Council

Organizational session of 2009, New York, 10-13 February

<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/>

Expert Consultation on the 2009 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development

Copenhagen, 17-19 February

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ws2009/>

Capacity Building Workshop on Electronic/Mobile Government in Africa

Addis Ababa, 17-19 February

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/Conferences/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1207/Default.aspx>

Commission on Sustainable Development

Intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the 17th session, New York, 23-27 February

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>

ECOSOC Special Event on Philanthropy and the Global Public Health Agenda

New York, 23 February

<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/phlIntrpy/philanthropy09.shtml>

Internet Governance Forum

Geneva, 23-26 February

<http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/>

Workshop on Capacity Building for Human Resource Development Policy & Strategy in the Public Service

Arusha, Tanzania, 23-27 February

<http://www.unpan.org/Regions/Global/Events/Conferences/tabid/458/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1510/ItemID/1242/Default.aspx>

Statistical Commission

40th session, New York, 24-27 February

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission_40th_session.htm

March

Commission on the Status of Women

53rd session, New York, 2-13 March

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sess.htm>

Committee for Development Policy

11th session, New York, 9-13 March

<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/devplan/>

Commission on Population and Development

42nd session, New York, 30 March – 3 April

<http://www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2009/comm2009.htm>

Observances

Launch of the World Day of Social Justice

The General Assembly proclaimed 20 February as the World Day of Social Justice, inviting Member States to devote this special day to the promotion of concrete national activities in accordance with the objectives and goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”.

The day will be observed the first time this year and will be launched in conjunction with the 47th session of the Commission for Social Development on 10 February. An interactive panel discussion moderated by Ms. Rachel Mayanja, Assistant-Secretary General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues, will explore the dimensions of social justice as they relate to the three pillars of the World Summit for Social Development: poverty eradication, social integration and decent work. Mary Robinson, former president of Ireland and High Commissioner for Human Rights (1997-2002) will be among the panelists.

The event will be organized by DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization and the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlJustice/>

DESA News is an insider's look at the United Nations in the area of economic and social development policy. The newsletter is produced by the Communications and Information Management Service of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with DESA Divisions. Prior to January 2007, DESA News was issued every other month. It is now issued monthly.

Inquiries should be addressed to esa@un.org.