



Video

Climate Change Conference lays foundation for Copenhagen deal

At the end of the two-week United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznań, Poland, on 12 December, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer said that “the main goal of delivering practical results on the road to Copenhagen 2009 had been achieved”. Parties had agreed on a work programme that would lead to intensified negotiations next year. Of critical importance to developing countries was the launch of the Adaptation Fund.

http://unfccc.int/resource/podcast/pb_poznan_081213_1.mp4

(2:11minutes)

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Jump-starting a stalling global economy

Massive coordinated global economic stimulus packages will be required to counter the worldwide economic meltdown

The global economic landscape still remains very bleak. In 2009, world per capita income is expected to decline, export growth and capital inflows will fall, and borrowing costs for developing countries will rise as contagion spreads from the major economies across the rest of the globe. The United States dollar is resuming its decline, with a possible hard landing in 2009.

The world economy is mired in the most severe financial crisis since the Great Depression. DESA's World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) reports of 2006, 2007 and 2008 had already forewarned of the risks of this scenario. All factors analyzed in those reports - such as the predicted bursting of the housing bubble - have now played out and have thrust the world economy into recession.

WESP 2009 calls for deep reforms of global financial system

Presenting WESP 2009 to a global audience in Doha last month, Rob Vos, Director of DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division, commented that “we have seen extraordinary measures to deal with the crisis”, which include \$11 trillion in public funds committed so far and some

coordinated monetary responses. “But more and even bolder action is now required,” he warned.

Specifically, the WESP calls for deep reforms of the global financial system to prevent a recurrence of the crisis, including stronger regulation of financial institutions, adequate international liquidity provisioning, an overhaul of the international reserve system and a more inclusive global economic governance.

According to the WESP’s baseline scenario, world output would grow at a meager 1 per cent in 2009, compared to 2.5 per cent in 2008 and global growth rates of between 3.5 and 4 per cent in the preceding four years. The 2009 projection includes a decline in output of 0.5 per cent in developed countries, along with growth of 5.3 per cent in the transition economies and 4.6 per cent in the developing world.



Under a more optimistic scenario, taking into account a fiscal stimulus of between 1.5 and 2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) of the major economies and further interest-rate cuts, developed economies could post a 0.2 per cent rate of growth, and the developing world would surpass 5 per cent growth, the economists calculate.

But given the great uncertainty prevailing today, a more pessimistic scenario is possible. If the present credit squeeze drags on and confidence in the financial sector is not restored in the coming months, developed countries could slide into a deep recession, causing world output to fall and GDP growth in the developing world to plummet to 2.7 per cent. Such a dangerously low growth rate would compromise the ability of countries to sustain poverty reduction efforts and social and political stability. The poorest would thus suffer most from the crisis.

Enhance international policy coordination

The report has noted that crisis management moved slowly in 2008 with aggressively expansive monetary policy in the United States during the first half of the year in an attempt to stave off a recession while European central banks maintained a tightening stance in the face of inflation.

This mismatch between US and European policies is also typical of the lack of policy coordination during the boom years. At that time, growth was strong and the over-extension of credit in the US and over-accumulation of savings in surplus countries could have been countered with less pain and more room for maneuver than at present.

To shore up weaknesses in monetary and financial systems which have led to the extraordinary economic and social damage from the downturn and in order to prevent similar crises from happening again, DESA economists recommend a broad range of steps including: a fundamental revision of the governance structure and functions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for enhanced international policy coordination and more inclusive participation of major developing countries. They also call for fundamental reforms of existing systems of financial regulation and supervision to stem past excesses.

Additionally, a reform of the present international reserve system would be needed, away from the almost exclusive reliance on the US dollar and towards a multilaterally backed multi-currency system. Finally, reforms of liquidity provisioning and compensatory financing mechanisms would be necessary, backed, among other things, by better multilateral and regional pooling of national foreign exchange reserves, and avoiding onerous policy conditionality.

National economies remain inter-linked

The WESP also analyzes in detail the evolution of the global financial crisis during 2008 and the more fundamental factors that led to its build-up. It further assesses the impact of the crisis on global economic activity, especially in developing countries.

The synchronized slowdown in both rich and poor countries is further evidence that the belief - until recently widely held - that developing country growth would have been ‘decoupled’ from that in the United States and Europe was dangerously misleading. The

national economies of the world, in fact, remain inextricably linked. The report also reviews the policy actions taken so far across the world in response to the global financial crisis.

The report recommends more forceful fiscal policy stimuli be taken in an internationally concerted manner in order to prevent the world economy from falling into a much deeper and more prolonged recession. The WESP further details a number of more fundamental reforms to the international monetary and financial system that are needed to reduce risks of a recurrence of such a devastating crisis in the future.

For more information:

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

United Nations connects to civil society in real time

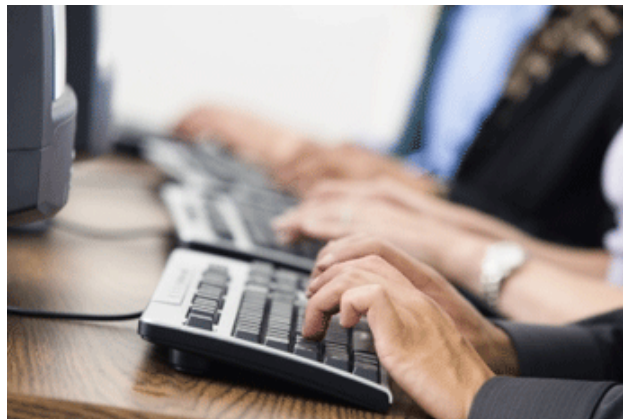
A newly developed civil society participation database greatly eases interactions between civil society and DESA

For the United Nations maintaining a close relationship with civil society organizations (CSOs) is an integral part of ensuring that its work reflects the will of “we the peoples,” as foreseen in the Organization’s charter. As Under-Secretary General Sha Zukang points out, “from the very beginning, civil society has played a critical role in major UN conferences and summits. The effective cooperation between civil society and the UN, especially with our Department of Economic and Social Affairs, was vital to the success of those conferences – and to the value of their outcomes.”

New software for connecting to civil society

A new civil society participation database named iCSO facilitates interactions between civil society organizations and DESA. The database provides online registration for CSOs, eases the application procedure for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and helps those non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are already accredited to the Council to submit their quadrennial reports and to designate representatives to the United Nations. In the past, these processes would have required extensive correspondence, painstaking filing and dedicated administrative staff time. Anyone who wished to find out more about particular civil society organizations, especially those organizations that do

not have significant websites of their own, would face a major research undertaking.



Instead today, by simply accessing iCSO through the Internet, users can search through a database of more than 12,000 organizations to find out more about the activities of these, which meetings they participate in and their status of United Nations accreditation. Currently, iCSO includes organizations in the areas of sustainable and social development, advancement of women, financing for development, forests and public administration.

In time, iCSO may come to encompass an even broader range of thematic areas of the United Nations. Additionally, iCSO is expected to transform and modernize DESA’s relationship with NGOs, releasing staff time from responding to routine queries and physically processing NGO applications towards more substantive activities to enhance DESA’s interaction with civil society.

An old relationship

DESA’s relationship with NGOs through ECOSOC is an old one, which dates back to the late 1940s. The first time that NGOs took a role in formal UN deliberations was through ECOSOC in 1946. Since 1946, the number of NGOs which have consultative status with the Council has mushroomed from 41 to some 700 by 1992 and finally some 3187 today.

Article 71 of the UN Charter authorized ECOSOC to make suitable arrangements for consultation with NGOs. Civil society’s relationship with ECOSOC is governed today by ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, which outlines the eligibility requirements for consultative status, rights and obligations of NGOs in consultative status, procedures for the withdrawal or suspension of consultative status, the role and functions of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, and

the responsibilities of the UN Secretariat in supporting the consultative relationship.

Consultative status is granted by ECOSOC upon recommendation of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, which is comprised of 19 Member States. There are three categories of status: general, special and roster consultative status. In addition to the Consultative Status with ECOSOC, NGOs might have obtained other accreditations in the economic and social area. Some of these were temporary accreditations for a particular conference that are no longer valid.

Which organizations are eligible?

Consultative relationships may be established with international, regional, sub-regional and national non-governmental, non-profit public or voluntary organizations. NGOs already affiliated through consultative status with another international organization may be admitted to consultative status with ECOSOC provided that they can demonstrate that their programme of work is of direct relevance to the aims and purposes of the United Nations. In the case of national organizations consultation with the Member State concerned is required.

To be eligible for consultative status, an NGO must have been in existence (officially registered with the appropriate government authorities as an NGO/non-profit) for at least two years, must have an established headquarters, a democratically adopted constitution, authority to speak for its members, a representative structure, appropriate mechanisms of accountability and democratic and transparent decision-making processes.

The basic resources of the organization must be derived in the main part from contributions of the national affiliates or other components or from individual members, rather than from government budgets. Organizations established by governments or intergovernmental agreements are not considered NGOs.

General, special and roster status

There are three categories of status of NGOs with ECOSOC: general consultative status, special consultative status and roster status.

General consultative status is reserved for large international NGOs with a broad geographical reach

whose area of work covers most of the issues on the agenda of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.

Special consultative status is granted to NGOs which have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by ECOSOC. These NGOs tend to be smaller and more recently established.

Organizations that apply for consultative status but do not fit in any of the above categories are usually included in the roster. These NGOs tend to have a rather narrow or technical focus. NGOs that have formal status with other UN bodies or specialized agencies such as FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, or WHO, among others, can be included on the roster status. The roster lists NGOs that ECOSOC or the UN Secretary-General considers to make "occasional and useful contributions to the work of the Council or its subsidiary bodies."

Participation in international conferences

NGOs in general consultative status, special consultative status and on the roster that express their wish to attend relevant international conferences convened by the United Nations and the meetings of the preparatory bodies of the said conferences can as a rule be accredited for participation. Other NGOs wishing to be accredited may apply to the secretariat of the conference for this purpose.

Future interaction with civil society

The iCSO database automates many of the routine tasks and queries that are involved in the many stages of the accreditation process, and facilitates the information gathering by government representatives. While the database itself cannot speed up the accreditation process, which depends on the quality and timeliness of information provided by the NGOs, as well as on the deliberations of the NGO Committee, the database does serve to free up staff and delegate time for the more substantive and political issues involved in the granting of consultative status with ECOSOC.

Nevertheless, even in the short term, the growth path of new applications of NGOs for consultative status can be expected to shift up significantly. All in all, iCSO is expected to strengthen DESA's relationship with civil society.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/civilsociety>

Global dialogue on development

Doha outcome calls for UN conference on impact of financial crisis on development

Doha conference held from 29 November to 2 December confirms that developed countries will maintain their ODA despite financial crisis

The Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus was attended by some 40 Heads of State or Government, 9 Deputy Heads of State or Government, 50 ministers and 17 vice-ministers of foreign affairs, finance, development cooperation and trade, as well as other high-level officials of 170 States and major institutional stakeholders, participated in the Conference.

Doha Declaration

Following intense intergovernmental negotiations, the Conference concluded with the adoption of the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development. The two key messages included in the document were a strong commitment by developed countries to maintain their Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets irrespective of the current financial crisis, and a decision to hold a UN Conference at the highest level on the impact of the current financial and economic crisis on development.

Other main highlights of the Doha Declaration are:

- Domestic resource mobilization: the importance of national ownership of development strategies and of an inclusive financial sector, as well as the need for strong policies on good governance, accountability, gender equality and human development.
- Mobilizing international resources for development: the need to improve the enabling environment and to expand the reach of private flows to a greater number of developing countries.
- International trade as an engine for development: the importance of concluding the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations as soon as possible.
- External debt: the need to strengthen crisis prevention mechanisms and to consider enhanced approaches for debt restructuring mechanisms.
- Addressing systemic issues: the need to review existing global economic governance arrangements, with a view to comprehensive reforms of the international financial system and institutions.

Plenary meetings

The Conference was chaired by the Emir of Qatar and included seven plenary meetings. A total of 133 Governments made statements to the plenary. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, the President of the General Assembly, the Director-General of WTO, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and the Administrator of UNDP spoke at the opening.

In their statements, Member States took stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, identified obstacles and constraints encountered and put forward ideas and proposals to overcome these difficulties. Many statements focused on the consequences of the global financial crisis for development and the need for bold and urgent measures to address them. Much attention was also devoted to the food and energy crises and to the untapped potential of innovative sources of finance.

Round tables

Six interactive multi-stakeholder round tables were held concurrently with the plenary meetings, centering on the six thematic areas of the Monterey Consensus. Each round table was co-chaired by two Heads of State or Government and ministers from developing and developed countries and moderated by a high-level official of the major institutional stakeholders.

Panelists included HRH Princess Maxima of the Netherlands; S-G's Special Envoys for the Conference, Mr. Trevor Manuel, South African Finance Minister and Ms. Heidemarie Weiczorek-Zeul, German Minister for Development

Cooperation. Following presentations by panelists, interactive discussions took place among representatives of Member States, inter-governmental organizations, UN agencies, civil society and the business sector.

Pre-conference events

The Conference was preceded by a high-level retreat on the global financial crisis, hosted on 28 November by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Emir of Qatar. The retreat was attended by some 30 Heads of State or Government and ministers from both developed and developing countries, as well as high-level representatives of the major institutional stakeholders. The retreat was meant to serve as a “bridge” between the discussions on the financial crisis that had taken place among smaller groups of countries and the wider membership of the United Nations.

A Global Forum of Civil Society was held from 26 to 27 November on the theme “Investing in people-centered development” and attracted participation of more than 250 civil society organizations and networks. In addition, an International Business Forum, held on 28 November focused on mobilizing private sector resources for development and was attended by more than 200 participants from the private sector.

Side events

More than 50 side events took place at the Conference site. In the spirit of Monterrey, the organizers were Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and the business sector. The issues of inclusive and innovative financing for development featured prominently in several side events. High-level speakers included: HRH Princess Maxima of the Netherlands, the President of Tanzania.

The success of Doha belongs to all Member States and all stakeholders. The challenge now is to deliver on the promise of the Doha outcome.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/doha/index.htm>

Linkages between poverty, financial crisis and climate change

Proceedings of the Second Committee were dominated by concerns on the impact of the financial crisis, the economic downturn and challenges posed by the volatility of food and energy prices

The Second Committee of the General Assembly concluded its 63rd session on 11 December with the adoption of 40 resolutions. Amidst discussions of the causes and consequences of the interconnected crises, the Committee asserted that the fight against acute and persistent levels of poverty, hunger and disease are inseparably linked to climate change.

The Committee determined that the most important task of the international community was to ensure that the financial crisis and the volatility in the prices of food and fuel do not lead to a development crisis. To address these challenges, there were renewed calls for multilateralism and global solutions for global challenges and an emphatic call for the United Nations to lead the way.

These predominant concerns led to the adoption of two major new resolutions. Firstly, a resolution entitled “Towards a new international economic order”, which outlines the role of the UN in promoting equitable and inclusive sustained economic growth and sustainable development, was voted upon. It has shades of the North-South debate on the new international economic order which goes back three decades.

Secondly, a consensus resolution on reliable and stable transit of energy that recognizes the need for extensive international cooperation in ensuring reliable transportation of energy. Another new resolution was focused on the concerns of middle income developing countries, as these countries believe that they are facing the brunt of the financial crisis and feel increasingly marginalized in the development work of the United Nations.

The resolution on climate change was adopted to send a clear message for urgent action to the 14th Conference of Parties of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Poznan, Poland from 1 to 12 December. The Committee also decided for a two day Review of Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Development States, to be held in September 2010, and review of the Brussels Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries in 2011.

Owing to the intense preparations for the Doha Review of Financing for Development, the Committee decided to adopt procedural resolutions on macro-economic issues and trade and development.

The resolution on operational activities for development makes a range of recommendations for increasing funding of operational activities for development. It is particularly notable for changing the periodicity of the comprehensive policy review of UN system's operational activities from a triennial to a quadrennial cycle. This means that a significant number of funds and programmes will need to prolong the duration of their strategic plan by two years. This should result in improving the coherence of operational activities around the guidance of Member States. It was also agreed to hold the next comprehensive policy review in 2012 instead of 2010 as planned.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/ga/second/index.shtml>

High demand for consultative status

The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), a standing committee of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will hold its 2009 Regular Session in New York from 19 to 28 January. The 19-member committee, mandated with the responsibility to monitor the evolving relationship between NGOs and the United Nations, will have a heavy agenda and examine around 100 new applications from NGOs seeking consultative status with ECOSOC. The Committee will also consider 2 requests for reclassifications and 95 submissions of quadrennial reports.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>

Classifying countries as LDCs

In preparation for the 2009 triennial review of the list of least developed countries (LDCs), experts of the Committee for Development Policy will meet in New York from 27 to 29 January

The LDCs category comprises low-income developing countries which face severe structural impediments to growth as indicated by high economic vulnerability to external shocks and low level of human capital development. There are currently 49 countries identified as LDCs, including the Maldives and Samoa whose graduation has already been taken note of by the General Assembly.

To be included in the category a country must satisfy the inclusion thresholds for gross national income (GNI) per capita, the human asset index (HAI) and the economic vulnerability index (EVI). In addition, the country's population must not exceed 75 million. To graduate from the category, a country must meet the graduation threshold of any two criteria (except for countries whose GNI per capita is at least twice the graduation threshold level) and be found eligible for graduation at two consecutive triennial reviews. Equatorial Guinea, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were found eligible for graduation at the 2006 triennial review.

The meeting will review the most recent available data and the preliminary results of the application of the criteria for classifying countries as LDCs. The objective of the meeting is to identify those low-income countries that would be eligible to join, and those LDCs already on the list that would be eligible to graduate from the category.

For more information:

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

Multi-stakeholder cooperation crucial for Internet development

Third meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Hyderabad, India from 3 to 6 December focused on 'Internet for All'

The IGF, attended by more than 1400 participants from 94 countries, allowed to build partnerships and relationships and was appreciated for its open multi-stakeholder model. It addressed many Internet issues that were not discussed anywhere else.

Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, described the IGF as a "space for frank and enlightened debate, shaping and informing the decision-making processes". Many other speakers noted that the Internet is bringing great potential for economic and social benefit to the

world. But at the same time there is a need to guard against the problems the Internet could bring when used for harmful purposes.

Common threads that emerged from the discussion were that multi-stakeholder cooperation is a requisite to tackle all existing problems. All users are part of the Internet and all actors have a shared responsibility to find solutions. While there is a need to discuss Internet governance issues globally, there is also a need for acting locally. It is often more urgent to find solutions at the national and regional levels.

There was a general understanding that there is no 'one size fits all solutions'. All countries have to find their own solutions, corresponding to their own situation. Through the sharing of best practices and the exchange of information they could find solutions that are adapted to their needs.

The next IGF meeting will be held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 15 to 18 November 2009. The preparation of the 2009 meeting will start with a broad consultative stock-taking process which will include a discussion on how to conduct the review process. The modalities of the review process will be discussed at the next round of open consultations in Geneva from 23 to 24 February 2009.

For more information:

<http://www.intgovforum.org/cms/index.php/home>

Trends and analysis

Implementing rights for indigenous peoples

Workshop will bring together indigenous experts in New York from 14 to 16 January for further implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly on 13 September 2007. The Declaration is the most comprehensive statement of the rights of indigenous peoples ever developed, giving prominence to collective rights to a degree unprecedented in international human rights law. The adoption of this instrument is the clearest indication yet that the international community is committing itself to the protection of the individual and collective rights of indigenous peoples.

The Declaration is a culmination of over twenty years of work that began in earnest at the Working Group which began the drafting of the declaration in 1985. The first draft was completed in 1993, and in 1995, the Commission on Human Rights set up its own working group to review the draft adopted by the human rights experts of the Working Group and the Sub-Commission. More than 100 indigenous organizations participated in the Working Group of the Commission annually.

The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) is also explicitly asked in article 42 of the Declaration to promote respect for and full application of the provisions of the Declaration and follow up the effectiveness of this Declaration.

This international expert group meeting on the role of the UNPFII in implementation of article 42 of the Declaration from 14 to 16 January in New York will discuss the way in which the UNPFII should address its mandate under Article 42 of the Declaration. The results of the workshop will be reported to the Permanent Forum at its eighth session. The meeting will be attended by indigenous experts and UNPFII members as well as interested Member States, United Nations Agencies and Indigenous Peoples' Organizations.

For more information:

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

Advancing gender statistics

Experts will meet in Accra, Ghana from 26 to 28 January to discuss the incorporation of a gender perspective in national statistical systems

Gender statistics cover a wide range of policy areas, including: population, families, health, education, work, and political participation. Governments, international organizations, and researchers among others need gender statistics for planning, analysis, advocacy and awareness-raising.

The 2009 Global Forum on Gender Statistics, held in Accra, Ghana from 26 to 28 January, is the second of a series of international meetings on gender statistics to be held annually with the purpose of promoting the advancement of gender statistics among decision makers and all other user groups. The 2009 Forum will serve to solidify the momentum gained with the launch in December 2007 of the Global Gender Statistics Programme and the Interagency Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS). In addition, the 2009 Forum will review best practices in the incorporation of a gender perspective in national statistical systems and in the measurement of women's participation in and contributions to the economy.

During the Forum, national-level experiences on integrating gender into population and housing census and household survey data collection processes and analysis will also be presented. The Forum will serve to highlight the need for statistics to respond to requirements for monitoring progress towards the attainment of gender equity goals and targets, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Furthermore, the IAEG-GS will hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the Forum to review the work of the two advisory groups on gender statistics and propose future actions for the groups.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wsh_ops/Ghana_Jan2009/default.htm

E-parliament and Internet governance

Global Centre for ICT in Parliament concluded 2008 with two important events: World e-Parliament Conference 2008 and Second Parliamentary Forum on Shaping the Information Society

The World e-Parliament Conference, organized by DESA, the European Parliament and the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament in Brussels on 25-26 November 2008 was attended by more than 300 participants who exchanged views on new technologies as tools to strengthen the representative, legislative and oversight functions of regional and national assemblies.

Among the key recommendations that emerged from the discussions was the need for leaders and members of parliaments to exercise strong political will to foster e-parliament at both the national and international level. The Conference called for greater cooperation and coordination among parliaments, governments, international organizations and the donor community to assist legislatures in developing countries to achieve the goals of e-parliament and to support regional networks.

It also urged stronger inter-parliamentary cooperation in particular in the areas of information and research services, new interactive technologies to reach and more fully engage citizens in the democratic process, and open standards for parliamentary documents.

Participants also highlighted the importance of investments to accelerate efforts ensuring that information on the legislative process in every country is publicly accessible on the Internet, to assist parliaments in developing countries in building their technical infrastructure, and to develop training programmes for ICT staff and members of parliament.

The Second Parliamentary Forum on Shaping the Information Society: the role of Parliaments and Legislators was organized jointly by DESA, through the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in Hyderabad, India, on 2 December 2008.

The Forum was convened on the eve of the third Internet Governance Forum (IGF) in order to encourage parliamentarians to bring a parliamentary dimension to the discussions on Internet governance-related issues as well as to discuss more in depth the themes of on-line child protection, cyber crime, and

privacy during the parliamentary Forum. As a follow-up to the discussions of the parliamentary forum interested parliamentarians met again in a closed meeting.

The Global Centre for ICT in Parliament is a global initiative launched in 2006 by DESA, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and a core group of parliaments, to promote the role of parliaments and legislators in the development of the Information Society and the use and mainstreaming of ICT in parliamentary processes and to enhance inter-parliamentary cooperation.

The Global Centre's activities in 2009 will start with the meeting of its Advisory Committee, a body composed of representatives of Presidents/Speakers of Parliament who are members of the Board of the Global Centre.

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

Task Force on transnational-Eurasian Information Super Highway established

Regional meeting in Baku prepared way for high speed exchange of data between Europe and Asia

For the past three years, DESA has been a cosponsor of the regional ministerial meetings on emerging ICT for Development issues in transition economy countries. The recent regional meeting on "Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway", organized within the framework of "BakuTel2008", paved the way for the much-needed discussions and action for laying out the vision and strategy for creating collaboration among the countries on high-speed and cost-effective exchange of data between Europe and Asia which can bolster and accelerate economic development.

Information superhighway may become one of the best opportunities to date for the countries to ensure a foundation for economic growth and positive social change, enabling participation in today's information society and providing tangible benefits to their citizens.

The prospect of universal access to information and hence the underlying infrastructure, are an integral component of today's information societies. In this

context the ability of regulators to ensure equity and fairness in a digital future is increasingly important; but also severely challenged by the speed of technological and global developments in information networks as well as communication and technology companies. Countries will intensify their efforts in future to establish transnational information superhighway and they will resolve arising problems on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation.

The meeting established recently the Task Force consisting of experts from the participant countries (Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan on voluntary basis) and organizations (DESA's Global Alliance for ICT and Development, Regional Commonwealth in the field of Communications (RCC) and Fiber Optical Cable System Trans Asia Europe (TAE)) to coordinate the initiative and holding the meetings of the Task Force in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The Task Force has to elaborate an Action Plan and convene the meetings in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Government of Azerbaijan will fund these activities and take the responsibility of organizing the meetings.

For more information: tikhomirov@un.org

Trends in re-imagining cities

Symposium was held in Philadelphia, United States, from 6-8 November to discuss the future of cities in current global challenges

Today, we face a new reality comprised of climate change, growth of inequity spurred by globalization, financial crisis, food crisis, fuel crisis, governance arrangements necessary for attaining the internationally agreed development goals and other challenges which are re-shaping relations among governments, civil society and private sector.

The previous thinking and paradigms for urban development have apparently reached their boundaries. New trends have propelled the recent rise of civic engagement, including democratization, the success of selected NGOs in delivering development inputs, the exponential growth of all forms of media and the increasing enhancement of access to information and communication technology (ICT).

The symposium on Re-imagining Cities aimed to convene an interdisciplinary group of practitioners from around the world to propose new ideas, solutions and a manifesto for redesigning cities in the 21st century in response to current challenges.

Jonas Rabinovitch of DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Policy focused in his keynote address on the issues of design, democracy and civic engagement as trends for future cities. He also outlined DESA's work on governance and public administration, including the principles behind civic values, civic engagement and civic action in preparation for the World Civic Forum to be held in Seoul, Korea, from 5-8 May 2009.

The symposium was attended by professionals that directly or indirectly shape the form of urban areas, including mayors, policy advisors, urban planners, architects, urban design specialists, conservationists and environmental planners.

For more information:

<http://www.reimaginingcities.net/>

Technical cooperation

Combating rural poverty

Capacity development workshop in Bangkok from 28 to 30 January will focus on improving agricultural productivity and efficient usage of water for the rural poor

More recently, the world has witnessed unprecedented rise in food prices, leading to social tensions in many countries. Estimates suggest that the total number of malnourished people worldwide could rise to 967 million in 2008, up from 923 million in 2007. In addition, a large number of developing countries are struggling to address the macroeconomic impact of high domestic food prices and inflationary pressure, as well as increased import expenditure. The food security challenges facing Africa particularly threatens the progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Furthermore, Water is a crucial resource in developing the productivity and resilience of the agricultural sector. Many countries are confronted with the challenge of water scarcity. Future sustainability of agriculture largely depends upon how water management in this sector is dealt with. In this regard, introducing technological innovations and implementing demand management measures are critical to enhance agricultural production and to alleviate water poverty in water using sectors other than agriculture.

In addition, reducing rural poverty is an important development challenge, since over one billion people live in rural areas and many of them do not have access to basic social services such as health, education, water, sanitation and modern energy sources. Markets remain underdeveloped, and infrastructure development has not kept pace with population growth. Participation of stakeholders in the development and implementation of rural development programmes will strengthen the sense of ownership at the implementation level.

For this purpose, DESA in collaboration with the UN-Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is organizing a workshop on "Improving Agricultural Productivity, Water Use Efficiency and Strengthening Rural Livelihoods" from 28-30 January in Bangkok. The workshop will bring

together senior government policy makers, representatives of local authorities, officials from the United Nations system, researchers and experts, as well as practitioners, to share lessons learned and best practices in combating rural poverty.

The workshop will focus on agricultural development and food security, improving agricultural water management and strengthening rural livelihoods. It will also discuss how to improve land use planning and management and regional approaches to sustainable agriculture and rural development. The outcomes of the workshop will serve as important inputs to the deliberations of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting of 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in February 2009.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/calendar/work_bkk09.htm

Developing indicators for performance monitoring

DESA workshop was held in Nairobi from 15 to 17 December to promote knowledge and awareness of results based monitoring and evaluation

Capacity building in monitoring and evaluation on results basis is a key requirement to achieve national development goals, including the goals of the Millennium Declaration. At national and community levels, agencies and institutions have been set-up to carry out a number of functions and activities which, if efficiently executed, would improve the livelihood of the population, thus reduce poverty.

In order to ensure that agencies and institutions will perform to the level expected from them, it is essential to have the proper performance monitoring and evaluation tools in place, in addition to a Strategic Results Framework (SRF). Most developing countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa, lack both the SRF for their institutions, and even those which have such institutional framework, lack the necessary tools that would enable them to monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions, on the basis of concrete impact and results.

To further promote knowledge and awareness of Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) as

an effective tool for performance measurement of agencies, institutions and programmes, DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management in collaboration with the UNDP and UNCRD Africa Office and with the support of the Kenyan Government organized a workshop on "Development of Indicators for Performance Monitoring" from 15 to 17 December in Nairobi.

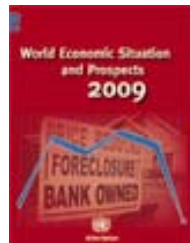
The workshop also provided a platform for participants to enhance their capacities in linking performance indicators and translating to MDG targets at the national level. It addressed various methodological issues in RBME and articulated the importance of linking progress in MDGs implementation with outcome, impact and results of national agencies, institutions, policies and programmes.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/Conferences/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1171/Default.aspx>

Publications and websites

Technical reports



World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009

The world economy is mired in the most severe financial crisis since the Great Depression. Recent issues of the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) had already warned of this risk. The underlying factors analyzed in these reports have now played out and have pushed the world economy into recession.

Growth in world gross product is expected to slow to 1.0 per cent in 2009, a sharp deceleration from the 2.5 per cent rate estimated for 2008, and well below the more robust pace of previous years. While most developed economies are expected to be in a deep recession, a vast majority of developing countries are experiencing a sharp reversal in the robust growth registered during the period 2002-2007, indicating a significant setback in the progress made in poverty reduction by many developing countries over the past few years. The prospects for the least developed countries, which had done so well on average over the past several years, are also deteriorating rapidly. Income per capita for the world as whole is expected to decline in 2009.

The report, released in early January, presents a detailed analysis of the evolution of the global financial crisis during 2008 and the more fundamental factors that led to its build-up. It further assesses its impact on global economic activity, particularly in developing countries. The synchronized slowdown in both rich and poor countries is further evidence that the belief, widely held until recently, that developing country growth would be 'decoupled' from that in the United States and Europe was dangerously misleading. The report also reviews the policy actions so far taken worldwide in response to the global financial crisis.

The report recommends more forceful fiscal policy stimuli in an internationally concerted manner in order to prevent the world economy from falling into

a much deeper and more prolonged recession. The WESP further details a number of more fundamental reforms to the international financial system that are needed to reduce risks of a recurrence of such a devastating crisis in the future.

The publication is a joint product of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the five United Nations regional commissions.

For more information:

<http://www.esa/policy/wess/wesp.html>

Handbooks



Handbook on the Least Developed Country Category: Inclusion, Graduation and Special Support Measures

This Handbook aims at promoting a better understanding of the LDC category and the benefits derived from membership therein. It contains a comprehensive explanation of the criteria, procedures and methodology used by the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) for establishing which countries are eligible for inclusion in, or recommended for graduation from, the LDC category. It also provides an overview of the international support measures that can be derived from having least developed country status and the implications of graduating from the list in terms of the potential loss of such measures.

The *Handbook* will be formally launched on 29 January with the participation of selected CDP members.

For more information:

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

and its companion website

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



Designing Household Survey Samples: Practical Guidelines

The Handbook provides practical guidelines to survey sample design, data processing and analysis of large-scale household surveys. It also underscores the important role a good implementation strategy of surveys significantly contributes to the generation of accurate survey results by minimizing non-sampling errors. In addition, the Handbook provides the basics of survey sample design in Annex I.

To order: <http://unp.un.org/Details.aspx?pid=10131>

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.

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Indices of world industrial production by branches of industry and by regions; Producer price indices; Earnings in manufacturing, by sex; Construction of new buildings; Total exports and imports by regions (volume and unit value indices and terms of trade); World exports by commodity classes and by regions. Publication symbol is ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/431.

For more information:

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

Outreach material



DESA's Policy Brief on Microfinance

The 10th issue identifies microfinance as “no panacea” but as a useful instrument in the fight against poverty. The brief focuses on lessons that can be learned from the experience of microfinance in building economic security and achieving poverty reduction. The issue also discusses the explosive growth as well as criticism of microfinance, recent trends in the evolution of microfinance and how microfinance can become part of the wider development strategy.



United Nations Public Service Awards Newsletter

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.

The fall issue of this newsletter contains success stories from the winners of the 2008 UNPSA and information about the positive impact of winning the UNPSA at the national level. Note that 15 January is the deadline for applying to the next cycle of the Public Service Awards competition.

For more information:

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan033102.pdf>

or <http://www.unpan.org/applyunpsa2009>

Websites



Integrated Civil Society Organizations System

This consolidated database of civil society information in economic and social affairs provides online participation and facilitates the application procedure for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Accredited NGOs with ECOSOC can also submit their quadrennial reports and designate representatives to international conferences convened by the United Nations.

Users can search and browse more than 12.000 organizations to find out more about their activities, meeting participation and accreditation status in the areas of sustainable and social development, advancement of women, financing for development, forests and public administration.

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

Comings and goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in December:

Mr. Win Khine, Information Systems Assistant,
Communications and Information Management
Service

Mr. Hermanus Smith, Chief of Section, Statistics
Division

Calendar

January

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009

Early January

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

Economic and Social Council

Election of the Bureau for 2009, New York, 15 January

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

Expert Group Meeting on United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

New York, 14-16 January

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

Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

2009 regular session, New York, 19-28 January

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>

Global Forum on Gender Statistics

Accra, Ghana, 26-28 January

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/newsletter/globalstat_unsd_calendar.htm

Expert Group Meeting on 2009 Triennial Review of the List of Least Developed Countries

New York, 27-29 January

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

Workshop on Improving Agricultural Productivity, Water Use Efficiency and Strengthening Rural Livelihoods

Bangkok, 28-30 January

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/calendar/jan2009.htm>

Launch of the Handbook on Least Developed Country Category: Inclusion, Graduation and Special Support Measures

New York, 29 January

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

February

Commission for Social Development

47th session, New York, 4-13 February

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

Economic and Social Council

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

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

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>

Statistical Commission

40th session, New York, 24-27 February

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

Observances

International Year of Human Rights Learning 2009

Marking the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the General Assembly has proclaimed the International Year of Human Rights Learning, to begin on 10 December 2008. The year shall be devoted to activities to broaden and deepen human rights learning. It calls upon Member States to intensify their efforts, throughout the Year and beyond, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms at the local, national and international levels.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/observances/years.shtml>

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.