



Video

Doha Conference to limit impact of financial crisis on developing countries

At the opening of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha on 29 November, the Secretary-General of the United Nations called for bold and effective efforts to ensure that today's financial turmoil does not become tomorrow's human crises with particularly devastating effects on the world's poorest.

<rtsp://webcast.un.org/ondemand/conferences/ffd/2008/pl/ffd-pl-081129am-eng.rm?start=00:30:24&end=00:40:10> (10 minutes)

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Poor countries seek technology to brace for climate change

To accelerate technology development and transfer will be essential for developing countries to achieve climate change goals

Technology is a critical means by which countries rich and poor can adapt to and mitigate climate change. Indeed, technology will be the key to averting catastrophic climate change in this century. Through the development and deployment of clean and climate-friendly technologies, the world can adopt a powerful, integrated approach to tackling

climate change and promoting sustainable development.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has already announced the heartening news that the portfolio of technologies necessary for achieving global climate goals is – or will become – available. But these technologies are largely located in the industrial countries. Developing countries - those that are most vulnerable to climate change - currently have the least access to these technologies. The essence of the challenge, then, is to sharply accelerate technology development and transfer.

Beijing Conference calls for wave of technological transformation

Only effective international cooperation can achieve the wave of technological transformation that developing countries need to address climate change over the coming decades, according to participants attending the Beijing High-level Conference on Climate Change: Technology Development and Technology Transfer that concluded on 8 November 2008. The meeting was held in the run-up to the next Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Poznan, Poland in December 2008.

More than 30 ministerial-level representatives, four heads of United Nations agencies, and representatives from over 67 countries participated.

Opening the two-day meeting, China's Premier Wen Jiabao urged developed countries to transfer climate-friendly technologies to China and other developing countries, and he called on the international community to establish a fund and mechanism for overcoming technology transfer barriers.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in his message to the Conference, stressed the importance of making newer and cleaner technology available across the globe. "New thinking and specific measures are necessary to remove existing barriers to clean technology transfer and diffusion. Clean technologies have proven their worth again and again," he said.

Many of the 800 participants attending the meeting stressed the need to provide early sharing of technologies as they develop so they can be adapted to differing climates and national settings. They also highlighted the need to accelerate, in a systematic way, the diffusion of advanced technologies in the market globally. A statement and summary accepted at the conclusion of the conference emphasizes the "need to accelerate research, development, deployment and transfer of technologies", in order to address the challenges posed by climate change.

During the conference, participants discussed the status of clean technologies, the barriers to transfer, as well as mechanisms to overcome them. Public-private cooperation and partnerships were highlighted as a key to the deployment in the marketplace where the majority of the investments will be made. Participants also highlighted that the scale of the climate change challenge calls for new and innovative mechanisms of international cooperation, particularly in the fields of research, development,

transfer and deployment of climate related technologies.



"Of particular value at this Conference was that experts, policy-makers and other stakeholders engaged each other on critical issues, away from the constraints of the negotiating table," said Sha Zukang, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. "We saw areas where real differences persist, but also areas of common interest and possible convergence," he added.

"I am confident that the Conference will contribute positively to the forthcoming climate change negotiations in Poznan in December," said Zie Zhenhua, Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission of China.

Challenges for developing countries to combat climate change

Developing countries are the most at risk from climate change and have the most at stake at Poznan and beyond. They are also the least prepared for and least able to afford adaptation to climate change. For them, therefore, the stakes in technology transfer are enormous and often a matter of life and death, particularly in such countries as small island developing states and those of the drought-ridden Sahel.

Technology transfer obligations and commitments of countries are set out in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol. The Bali Action Plan also singles out technology transfer as a key area for further progress on the road to a new agreement on climate at Copenhagen in 2009.

World leaders have recognized that concerted global action is a prerequisite for stabilizing greenhouse gas emissions at safe levels. Technology is one area that

unites the interests of developed and developing countries. All countries have an interest in the rapid development, deployment and diffusion of climate-friendly technologies – thereby enhancing country capacities to take effective mitigation actions and pursue adaptation strategies.

Moving to action in technology transfer

But the question remains – can we move from recognition of shared interests to action? How do we reckon with such tough issues as who should transfer what, to whom, and at what price?

It is well known that technology development and transfer is a broad, multifaceted topic. Four considerations should guide further global action on technology transfer. First, it should be clear that hardware supply is only the most visible facet of technology transfer. To this, one must add complex processes of sharing knowledge, know-how and adapting technology to meeting local conditions. Second, the approach followed by countries should be comprehensive, meaning that it should consider both mitigation and adaptation technologies. Sometimes adaptation technologies are neglected in favour of more well-known and easily-identified mitigation technologies. Third, the discussion of technology transfer should be guided and informed by a clear understanding of the status of development of key technologies. Fourth, countries should seek to analyze and then identify the major barriers and obstacles to transfer and diffusion of clean and climate-friendly technologies. In other words, their approach must be practical.

Available technologies and innovation

Regarding the portfolio of available technologies, one should differentiate between: (i) mature technologies, with a proven record of deployment; (ii) state-of-the-art technologies, which are nearly ready for large-scale deployment; and (iii) technologies still under development.

Energy efficiency technologies are technically mature, and energy efficiency is repeatedly singled out as one of the most important near-term mitigation options. It has the potential to contribute towards both climate and other goals, such as improving air quality. According to analysis by the International Energy Agency, end-use electricity efficiency and fuel efficiency have the potential to reduce energy-related carbon dioxide emissions by 47 per cent in 2030. In this regard, China's policy of reducing the

energy intensity of its economy by 20 per cent, between 2005 and 2010, is a noteworthy step.

Renewable technologies, such as wind and solar, are also examples of technologies that are mature and available in the market. Economies of scale will bring down prices, and performance improvements will occur. Appropriate policy support is required in order to secure the place of renewable technologies in the energy mix.

Firms from developing countries are innovating and amassing market share in the field of renewable energy. For instance, Suntech, a Chinese firm, has become a leader on solar PV, based on a combination of its own technologies with that purchased from developed countries.

State-of-the-art technologies include high-pressure coal combustion plants and hybrid vehicle technology. Significant additional R&D, and demonstration at scale, are required for mitigation technologies such as second-generation biofuels, hydrogen fuel cells for cars, grid-connected solar photovoltaics, and carbon capture and storage (CCS).

CCS is of major concern, given the reliance of many developed and developing countries on coal. The lack of funding and incentives for full-scale and demonstration projects constitutes a major barrier. At present, the necessary technical expertise and know-how is largely in the hands of a small number of firms based in developed countries. Further delay would mean that the technology essentially comes too late to make the needed difference.

At the far end of the spectrum are new technologies which might emerge from the discovery of new materials, the development of new equipment and methods, and the identification and development of new fuels. This will require a major push on research and development (R&D). Technology cooperation between developed and developing countries, and increasingly between developing countries, will need to be significantly enhanced. Similarly, it will be necessary to catalyze the complementary roles of the public and private sectors in technology development and technology transfer.

Barriers for technology development and transfer

What are the critical barriers impeding technology development and technology transfer? For developing countries, one of the most significant barriers is that, at current costs, the energy services from climate-friendly technologies are too costly for

the vast majority of their populations. In addition, capital shortages and high capital costs are still commonplace in many developing countries – a situation exacerbated by the current financial crisis.

Other barriers include market conditions, inappropriate fiscal and regulatory policies, lack of access to information, the condition of infrastructure, and weak human resource capacities.

The legal and regulatory frameworks can promote and enable – or slow – technology development and transfer. In this respect, views differ sharply on whether prevailing international intellectual property rights protections constitute genuine barriers to technology transfer and diffusion. Certainly, the rationale for intellectual property rights is to promote innovation. But perhaps by now, the pendulum has swung too far - from protection to protectionism.

On the eve of the next Conference of Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Poznan, Poland, tough negotiations between governments on these hard issues still lie ahead. Through well-informed substantive discussions, countries will need to confront head on these thorny issues, which simply will not go away. Only by enlightened negotiation, with the welfare of all of humanity in mind, can nations rich and poor ensure that, ultimately, a binding outcome emerges from the subsequent Copenhagen Conference of Parties in 2009 - an outcome that enables a climate for human survival in the decades to come.

For more information:

<http://www.ccchina.gov.cn/BjCTC/en/> and
<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

Better population and housing censuses help measure development progress

2010 marks the next round of housing censuses around the globe and countries need to step up their implementation

Reliable and up-to-date statistics are the foundation for effective national development policies. As Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Development Sha Zukang puts it, “statistics are an integral part of the United Nations Development Agenda.” The United Nations conferences and

summits have led to unprecedented agreement on international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. “The challenge now,” proposes Sha Zukang, “is to step up their implementation, and further strengthen the monitoring of and accountability for progress.”

Reliable statistics for development require regular censuses in order to provide a meaningful core set of national data and information necessary for socio-economic planning and governance. United Nations statistical norms call for each country to have a census every ten years at least. “The United Nations,” recalls Paul Cheung, Director of DESA’s Statistics Division, “has been helping the countries of the world conduct population and housing censuses since the 1950s.” The year 2010 marks the next round of censuses around the globe.



The 2010 Census Round

The 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, a United Nations initiative to support the 2010 census round, sees population and housing censuses as a main source of data for effective development planning and objective decision-making. In addition, the data enable monitoring population trends and programmes, as well as evaluation of policies. The 2010 World Programme seeks to ensure that each Member State conducts a population and housing census at least once in the period from 2005 to 2014 and disseminates the results.

The Marrakech Action Plan agreed at the Second Meeting of the International Round Table on Managing for Development Results held in February 2004 identified the implementation of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Census as a key means to improve national and international statistical capacity. The action plan calls

on countries to plan a census during the 2010 round, and on the United Nations to guide the collection of official statistics, including the coordination of international standards for outputs and to continue to support countries undertaking censuses.

Major activities of the 2010 World Programme include formulating census methodological guidelines, facilitating exchanges of experience, and helping countries to improve their statistical capacity in census-taking. Census methodology is constantly changing and moving forward. Exchanging national experiences and know-how contributes significantly to timely and reliable census results and efficient and effective census operations. And that is why the Programme stresses regional and South-South cooperation.

DESA capacity building activities for censuses

“No census can be perfect, regardless of the methodology adopted,” points out Ms. Rosemary Bender of Statistics Canada, who chaired a joint meeting of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Statistical Office (EUROSTAT) in Geneva in May 2008. “Quality assurance, therefore, should be an essential component of census programmes.” The technical assistance provided by DESA to national statistical offices seeks to promote capacity building for quality assurance among other things. To support the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, DESA has appointed an Interregional Advisor on Population and Housing Censuses to provide the necessary technical support to ensure that member states participate actively in the Programme. The advisor provides technical support through correspondence, websites, e-mail, missions to countries and regions, and multi-country workshops, using a combination of face-to-face cooperation and e-TC or electronic technical cooperation.

Additionally, DESA’s Statistics Division is conducting in 2008, a series of regional workshops on data processing, with emphasis on contemporary technologies for data capture and data editing. So far, six workshops have been conducted in Doha, Geneva, Tanzania, Bangkok, Mali and Chile, for their respective regions. The upcoming workshop in Minsk, Belarus (8-12 December) targets the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

These workshops present international standards for processing data from population and housing censuses and highlight the significant additional capabilities of contemporary technologies and their

use for census data capture and data editing. The workshops cover such contemporary technologies in census data capture, as the use of optical mark recognition (OMR), optical character recognition and intelligent character recognition (OCR/ICR).

The workshops also go over the process stages for data capture; provide an overview of major commercial suppliers for data capture; review the principles and practices for census data coding and data editing; and suggest ways of improving the management and planning of the census, including through outsourcing. The workshops also enable the sharing of national experiences in census data processing across countries.

Although countries should use the best available data capture technology, they are strongly advised, when deciding on technology use, to consider their individual circumstances, including their available financial resources, expertise and outsourcing opportunities. The importance of adequate planning for the census, including for data capture is a key message of the workshops. In particular, it is stressed that decisions regarding outsourcing of data processing should be taken early enough to allow time for the bidding process, and for testing and implementing the technical specifications. Furthermore, the implementation of quality assurance systems during data processing is essential for good quality census outputs.

The Belarus workshop on census data processing builds on the lessons learned from the previous workshops, and focuses specifically on contemporary technologies for data capture, methodology and practices of data editing, documentation and archiving. The target audience of the meeting includes managers and experts in national and international statistical offices responsible for census planning and management.

The workshop covers the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses and the preparations of the 2010 round of censuses in the European region; a review of the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, the Conference of European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2010 censuses of population and housing as well as international recommendations on census planning and management. The workshop also goes over international recommendations on contemporary practices in census cartography and the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), provides an

introduction to GIS fundamentals as well as an introduction to data capture methods.

Learning from census taking in Ethiopia and Mozambique

Building on its decades of experience, DESA's Statistics Division continues to promote the sharing of census experiences at the global level and through South-South cooperation. At a DESA side event at the last Statistical Commission in May 2008, Mrs. Samia Zekaria Gutu, Director General of the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia presented the 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia. She focused on recent experiences of census-taking in pastoral areas and on the application of new technologies for data capture. The Ethiopian census set two distinct census dates for the sedentary population and the nomadic population. The census 2007 was the first census in Ethiopia enumerating the entire population. Mrs. Gutu detailed the use of technology during the census operation including satellite imagery for demarcation of enumeration areas for the pastoral areas where the nomadic population lives and scanning technology for data capture. She also commented on the special challenges which pastoral regions posed for the census taking.

The Ethiopian experience highlights the importance of involving national agencies and stakeholders in all phases of census planning and conducting because they can add important and relevant experiences. The Ethiopian case shows that new technologies should only be deployed after a careful testing and consideration process which may involve a direct comparison of competing technologies or methodologies in pilot censuses. Ethiopia also benefited from the experiences and knowledge of other countries, which greatly enriched the planning and conduct of the census process.

The 2007 census in Mozambique, presented by Mr. João Dias Loureiro, President of the country's national statistical office, involved the creation of executive organs at the national, sub-national, and local levels, because the execution of the census was decentralized. Mr. Loureiro highlighted that politicians helped to sensitize the public at the local level on the importance of the census. Strong political commitment made the census a national priority. At the same time, the politicians did not interfere in the technical running of the census. Mr. Loureiro confirmed that the politicians provided the Population and Housing Census with strong commitment. Additionally, as head of the NSO, he

regularly attends cabinet meetings, although not a member of the cabinet. Accordingly, "cabinet members and the members of parliament," Loureiro revealed, "are constantly updated on statistical activities".

The experience of Mozambique suggests that conducting a successful census requires, among other things, strong political support at all levels for the census process, with due respect for the independence of the statistical agencies from any political interference in the technical areas of census taking. An effective census also calls for strong advocacy, publicity and social mobilization, including traditional leaders, unions, youth organization and other groups and entities under the leadership of a strong national statistical office. Above all, what is needed to make it all work, is a well-organized and structured census team.

The censuses in Ethiopia and Mozambique show clearly that poor countries can indeed conduct good censuses when strong political and social support are combined with a respect for the professional independence of the census conducting agency. The national statistical offices also need to possess strong technical knowledge. As the 2010 census round unfolds, DESA's Statistical Division will continue to support national efforts through its closely linked network of national statistical offices.

Summing up, Director Paul Cheung concludes that, "the United Nations global census programme is one of the most successful statistical projects in the world, providing every ten years, comprehensive population and housing benchmarks for the world. A successfully implemented census also has a tremendous positive impact on the national statistical system."

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_PHC/default.htm

Global dialogue on development

Poznań climate change conference to ensure post-Kyoto agreement

Parties are expected to advance international cooperation on a post-2012 climate change deal in

Over a decade ago, most countries joined an international treaty - the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - to begin to consider what can be done to reduce global warming and to cope with whatever temperature increases are inevitable. More recently, a number of nations approved an addition to the treaty: the Kyoto Protocol, which has more powerful (and legally binding) measures. The Protocol's first commitment period began in 2008 and ends in 2012. A strong multilateral framework needs to be in place by 2009 to ensure that there is no gap between the end of the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period in 2012 and the entry into force of a future regime.

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznań, Poland from 1 to 12 December will be a milestone on the road to success for the processes which were launched under the Bali Road Map. The meeting comes midway between the Conference of the Parties (COP) 13 in Bali, which saw the launch of negotiations on strengthened international action on climate change, and COP 15 Copenhagen, at which the negotiations are set to conclude.

The Poznań meeting, which is expected to draw around eight thousand participants, will both advance international cooperation on a future climate change regime and ensure progress on key issues. It will provide an opportunity to draw together the advances made in 2008 and move from discussion to negotiation mode in 2009. At COP 14/CMP 4 in Poznań, Parties are expected to:

- Agree on a plan of action and programmes of work for the final year of negotiations after a year of comprehensive and extensive discussions on crucial issues relating to future commitments, actions and cooperation
- Make significant progress on a number of on-going issues required to enhance further

the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, including capacity-building for developing countries, reducing emissions from deforestation (REDD), technology transfer and adaptation.

- Advance understanding and commonality of views on "shared vision" for a new climate change regime
- Strengthen commitment to the process and the agreed timeline

In addition, the issue of technology will be high on the agenda and the conference will deal in depth with the issue of risk management and risk reduction strategies. Poznań can also produce concrete progress on several issues which are important in the short run - up to 2012 - particularly for developing countries, including adaptation, finance, technology and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

In the context of adapting to the inevitable effects of climate change, Parties are expected to put the finishing touches to the Kyoto Protocol's Adaptation Fund so that it is ready to roll out concrete projects in 2009 in Poznań. Some governments are likely to make voluntary contributions to provide for initial funding.

Such an outcome at Poznań would build momentum towards an agreed outcome at Copenhagen in December 2009.

For more information: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

Shaping the global agenda for forests and climate change

Forest Day 2 will be held on 6 December during the Fourteenth Session of UNFCCC to discuss the role of sustainable forest management in fighting climate change

Every year, an estimated 13 million hectares of forests are lost globally due to deforestation. Trees, under-story vegetation, and forest soil contain some 1.2 trillion tones of carbon, just over half the total in all terrestrial vegetation and soils. Tropical deforestation releases approximately 3.8 billion tones of carbon dioxide (CO₂) a year and accounts for about 17 percent of human-generated CO₂ emissions. However, mitigation of global greenhouse gas emissions through carbon sequestration is one of the

many vital services that forests provide to the global environment. Over 1.6 billion people worldwide are estimated to depend on forest products and services for their livelihoods.

Forests have been increasingly acknowledged as being central to the ongoing debate on climate change in recent years. To provide a forum for discussion on some of the interlinkages between forests and climate change, Forest Day 2 will be held at the upcoming Fourteenth Session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Poznan, Poland on 6 December. This event is being organized by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the Government of Poland, and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) including the UN Forum on Forests Secretariat, DESA.

Under the overall theme “Shaping the Global Agenda for Forest & Climate Change”, Forest Day 2 will discuss the role of sustainable forest management in fighting climate change, forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation, including reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD). The Day will also focus on monitoring and data collection challenges, governance issues such as rights, law and enforcement, poverty, livelihoods, equity and justice as well as financial incentives such as payments for ecosystem services.

DESA’s UN Forum on Forests Secretariat will be organizing a special event as part of the Forest Day 2 programme on “Financing for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM): Climate Change link”. This event will highlight some of the challenges, opportunities, and recent developments on financing for sustainable forest management and how these issues affect the role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

For more information:

http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/Events/COP14-ForestDay/forest_day2008.htm

Second Committee’s work in full swing

A total of 38 draft resolutions have been put forward and the Committee has already adopted ten of them, including the one on debt and international financial system

The Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee) of the General Assembly is dealing in this session with issues relating to economic growth and development such as macroeconomic policy questions (including international trade, international financial system and debt), financing for development, sustainable development, human settlements, poverty eradication, globalization and interdependence, operational activities for development, and information and communication technologies for development.

Informal consultations are still ongoing on the remaining draft resolutions and the overall negotiations seem to be progressing in a constructive atmosphere. One resolution that still needs to be finalized is on operational activities. This resolution will address three major issues: funding of operational activities, improving statistical reporting and changing the review cycle from triennial to quadrennial.

Another outstanding draft resolution is on globalization and interdependence, where biennialization of the agenda item and the selection of next year’s theme are being discussed. Consensus has yet to be reached on the reference to the latest financial crisis. Other more difficult resolutions that need to be finalized include climate change, poverty eradication, and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

For more information:

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

GA consultations on operational activities

Second Committee needs to finalize the discussion on funding of UN operational activities and aligning the planning cycles of UN funds and programmes

Following the General Debate on operational activities for development in the Second Committee on 15 October, Member States have engaged in a series of informal consultations on a draft resolution, presented by G77, with a view to providing further guidance on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

The consultations have revolved around two main issues, namely, 1) funding of UN operational

activities for development and 2) aligning the planning cycles of UN funds and programmes with the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development.

Funding

Voicing concern about the decline in real contributions to the UN development system in 2006, the draft resolution would urge donors and other countries to substantially increase their voluntary contributions to the core budgets of the UN development system, while inviting the Secretary-General to scale up his efforts to promote the quantity and quality of funding for UN operational activities for development. There was a perception that the statistical analysis of financing of UN operational activities for development should be strengthened. In this regard, Member States requested UNDP and DESA to integrate by 2010 the two reports that they are preparing on this topic.

Alignment

The negotiations showed that there is broad support for changing the comprehensive policy review from a three-year to a four-year cycle. Two potential options for timing the shift to a quadrennial cycle are under consideration. Although there has not been consensus, Member States were of the view that the optimal option should be the one that allows for greater guidance from the General Assembly to the governing bodies of the funds and programmes.

The agreed draft resolution will be presented to the General Assembly for approval following the conclusion of the consultation process.

For more information:

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

Third Committee focuses on gender equality and women's human rights

Resolutions on violence against women, trafficking in women and girls, gender mainstreaming, and gaps between commitments and implementation of gender equality were adopted by the Third Committee

From 13 to 15 October, Member States discussed gender equality and women's human rights under agenda items on the advancement of women and the

implementation of the outcomes of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly in the Third Committee.

Violence against women

Attention was focused on violence against women as one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world. Building on global momentum to address this scourge, the General Assembly adopted by consensus a new resolution to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. The resolution welcomed the Secretary-General's Campaign "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women" (<http://endviolence.un.org/>). While welcoming the many activities implemented by States, the resolution acknowledged that impunity for acts of violence against women continued worldwide. The resolution urged States to continue to develop a systematic, comprehensive, multi-sectoral and sustained approach to ending violence against women, and to use all available information on promising strategies to end impunity and eliminate the culture of tolerance towards violence against women.

The General Assembly also provided detailed guidance on the steps and measures that States should take to prevent and address violence against women, including the development of national action plans, strengthening of legislative frameworks, collection and analysis of data, and allocation of resources. Other measures recommended were the creation of specialized institutional mechanisms, the implementation of specialized training of relevant public officials, the establishment of integrated centres to provide services to victims and the provision of appropriate rehabilitation programmes for perpetrators. Measures to modify discriminatory social and cultural patterns and stereotypes and to support partnerships with non-governmental organizations were also called for.

Trafficking in women and girls

The General Assembly continued its work to address trafficking in women and girls which is recognized as one of the most corrosive forms of violence against women and a violation of women's human rights. It is also the fastest growing form of transnational organized crime. Trafficking in persons is regularly addressed by the General Assembly and other bodies of the United Nations, and there is increasing collaboration among United Nations entities in anti-trafficking activities. The General Assembly adopted

a resolution by consensus on 21 November, which called for Member States to, among other things, strengthen gender- and age-sensitive preventive and accountability measures, and to provide protection and support for trafficked victims.

Importance of gender mainstreaming and equality

A third resolution adopted by the Third Committee reaffirmed the importance of the gender mainstreaming strategy. The resolution on Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, called on Governments, the United Nations system and civil society to intensify actions at national, regional and international levels to address the gap between commitments to gender equality and their implementation. Intergovernmental bodies were also encouraged to incorporate gender perspectives into their work.

In the General Debate, Member States welcomed the outcomes of the fifty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women on “Financing for gender equality and empowerment of women” and saw an opportunity in the upcoming Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (Doha, Qatar, 29 November-2 December 2008) to address gaps in financing for gender equality.

Efforts to mainstream gender equality perspectives into national development strategies and international development cooperation programmes were highlighted by Member States. New initiatives reported on included gender audits, mandatory gender assessments, and gender-responsive budgeting processes. Several Member States noted the usefulness of gender-responsive budgeting for determining resource needs and financing gaps, and called on the international community to help developing countries build their capacity for gender-responsive budgeting.

Appreciation of UN gender equality work

Member States expressed their appreciation for the work on gender equality carried out by the United Nations, as well as their support for proposals for improved institutional arrangements for gender equality. Several Member States emphasized the need to maximize the impact of the gender equality work of the United Nations at national and regional levels.

The status of women in the United Nations system was also discussed by Member States, some of which expressed concern with the slow pace of progress towards gender parity. They stressed the importance of the United Nations leading by example and called on the Secretariat to intensify efforts to achieve gender balance.

For more information:

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

Advisory Group on DCF to discuss thematic focus areas

In the course of the Doha Review Conference, the Advisory Group on the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) will meet on 1 December

The biennial high-level DCF is one of the principal new functions of a strengthened Economic and Social Council. Mandated to enhance the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and to promote dialogue to find effective ways to support it, the DCF will be held every other year within the framework of the High-level Segment of the Council. The Forum was launched in Geneva in July 2007 and the first biennial Forum took place in New York on 30 June and 1 July 2008.

To enable a coordinated and focused dialogue with key stakeholders on the objectives and agenda of the preparatory process for the high-level biennial DCF, the Under-Secretary-General of DESA has established an informal Advisory Group for the Forum. The next meeting of this advisory group will take place in the course of the Doha Review Conference on 1 December 2008, from 8:30 to 10:00 am in the DESA Conference Room at the Sheraton Hotel in Doha.

The main purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the approach and the thematic focus areas outlined in the draft strategy for the 2010 DCF, to prepare a strategic road map to foster convergence between the OECD/DAC-led aid effectiveness process and the mutual accountability role of the DCF; and explore ways to proactively engage the stakeholders throughout the preparatory process, at the country, regional and global levels. A number of new members have joined the Advisory Group for the period until 2010.

For more information:

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

Internet for all

Third Internet Governance Forum to be held from 3 to 6 December in Hyderabad, India will focus on people with disabilities and linguistic diversity

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) is an outcome of the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, which took place in 2005. In the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, Governments asked the Secretary-General to convene a new forum for policy dialogue to discuss issues related to key elements of Internet governance in order to foster the Internet's sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development. The two previous meetings of the Forum were held in Athens in November 2006 and in Rio de Janeiro in November 2007.

The Forum is not a decision-making body, but a space for dialogue for all those involved to discuss Internet governance issues, where all participants engage as equals. There will be no negotiated outcome, but the meeting will seek to create an open and inclusive dialogue among all participants on public policy issues relating to the Internet and create new dynamics between participating institutions.

Representatives of government, the private sector, civil society, the academic and technical communities, international organizations and the media will meet in Hyderabad, India, for the third meeting of the IGF, to be held from 3 to 6 December 2008 at the Hyderabad International Conference Centre in Hyderabad, India. The meeting will focus on the overall issue of "Internet for all", with a strong focus on people with disabilities and linguistic diversity as we move towards giving Internet access to the next billion people.

Four main themes will be addressed: reaching the next billion; promoting cyber-security and trust; managing critical Internet resources; emerging issues - the Internet of tomorrow. In addition, one session will be devoted to taking stock and looking at the way forward. Parallel to the main sessions on these themes, there will be open meetings and thematic workshops to discuss specific issues and share best practices.

Some 1,500 participants from more than 100 countries are expected to attend. Assistant Secretary-General on Economic Development, Jomo Kwame Sundaram will open the meeting.

For more information: <http://igf.wgig.org/cms/>

New report on social determinants of health

Members of ECOSOC will be briefed on a new report on 10 December focusing on the social causes of poor health

Social justice is a matter of life and death. It affects the way people live, their consequent chance of illness, and their risk of premature death. We watch in wonder as life expectancy and good health continue to increase in parts of the world and in alarm as they fail to improve in others.

The new report "Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health" of the Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, gathers the findings of the Commission on the social causes of poor health and delivers recommendations on what needs to be done to reduce health inequalities within and between countries. The briefing is an opportunity to learn on a topic of direct relevance to the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review theme on "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health".

The briefing on a new report will be held for Members of the Economic and Social Council on 10 December, 3-5 p.m. in the ECOSOC Chamber. The event will feature a presentation by the Chair of the Commission, Sir Michael Marmot, and interventions by two discussants, Dr. Ruth Levine, Vice President for Programs and Operations, and Senior Fellow, Centre for Global Development (Washington, D.C.), and Dr. Nora Lustig, J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Visiting Professor of International Affairs, The Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. The session will be moderated by Mr. Thomas Stelzer, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/ecosoc/meetings/meeting_WHO.shtml

Rights of persons with disabilities

First session of the States Parties to the Convention took place in New York on 31 October and 3 November to elect the bureau of the conference

The purpose of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the first new human rights treaty of the twenty-first century, is to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity”. The Convention and its Optional Protocol entered into force on 3 May 2008. As of 19 November, the Convention had been ratified by 41 States, and signed by 136. The Optional Protocol had 25 ratifications and 79 signatures. For countries ratifying the Optional Protocol, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will be able to consider complaints from individuals or groups on inadequate implementation of the Convention, once all national recourse procedures have been exhausted.

The Convention is serviced by a joint Secretariat composed by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, housed in the Division for Social Policy and Development of DESA, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. DESA’s work on the Convention focuses on providing policy guidance on the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development, including the processes of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed goals.

The first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities took place on 31 October and 3 November at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

On 31 October, the bureau of the Conference was elected: Mexico as President, with four Vice-Presidents - Hungary, Jordan, New Zealand, and South Africa. The Conference also held an interactive panel discussion entitled “The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a human rights instrument and a tool for achieving the Millennium Development Goals”.

On 3 November, 12 independent experts were elected to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the treaty body tasked with monitoring

the Convention’s implementation. Members of the Committee serve in their personal capacity, and do not represent any government or other organization. The twelve elected Committee members are: Mr. Monsur Ahmed Choudhuri (Bangladesh), Ms. Amna Ali Al Suweidi (Qatar), Mr. György Kóncei (Hungary), Ms. Ana Peláez Narváez (Spain), Mr. Cveto Ursic (Slovenia), Ms. Jia Yang (China), Mr. Mohammed Al-Tarawneh (Jordan), Mr. Ronald McCallum AO (Australia), Ms. María Soledad Cisternas Reyes (Chile), Mr. Germán Xavier Torres Correa (Ecuador), Mr. Lotfi Ben Lallohom (Tunisia), and Ms. Edah Wangechi Maina (Kenya).

The next session of the Conference of States Parties will take place in New York, likely in August 2009, with the exact dates to be announced.

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

Trends and analysis

Energy statistics to gain significance

Experts will meet in Aguascalientes, Mexico from 2 to 5 December to consult on the status of International Recommendations for Energy Statistics

After recognizing the significance of energy statistics, the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its 36th and 37th sessions recommended their development as part of official statistics and called for the revision and further development of the relevant international standards. As a result, DESA's Statistics Division, in cooperation with the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics and the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics, has embarked in the preparation of International Recommendations for Energy Statistics (IRES).

In this context, DESA's Statistics Division is co-organizing with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) of Mexico an international workshop on energy statistics from 2 to 5 December in Aguascalientes, Mexico. The main objectives of this workshop are to inform countries on the status of preparation of IRES, and to consult with them on issues they face in the collection, compilation and dissemination of energy statistics.

IRES is intended to cover a broad range of issues from basic concepts, definitions and classifications to data sources, data compilation strategies, energy balances and dissemination. Once approved by the Commission, IRES will provide a firm foundation for a long-term development of energy statistics based on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. A key element for the preparation of IRES is a worldwide consultation with national energy statistics compilers and relevant international and regional organizations.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/Workshops/mexico2008.htm>

Monitoring the Millennium Development Goals

Workshop in Bangkok will bring together experts from 10 to 12 December to review recommendations

for reporting Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Since the periodic assessment of progress towards the MDGs started, the international statistical community has been concerned about the lack of adequate data to monitor trends in many developing countries and to inform the global monitoring and political debate.

The Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators (IAEG) regularly reviews and discusses countries' needs in building capacity for the production and analysis of MDG and development indicators and work with national statistical offices to identify priorities in capacity building and to facilitate the coordination of technical assistance activities.

The purpose of this workshop is to review recommendations for reporting of MDG data and to establish strategies for dealing with data discrepancies and data gaps at the national and international level. In addition, the workshop will provide participants with the skills needed to improve sub-national data for the MDG indicators.

For more information:

<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Capacity/Bangkok.htm>

Getting to the next level of E-Governance Readiness

DESA event in New York from 11 to 12 December will be attended by e-government experts to enhance the quantitative part of the e-governance survey

E-governance is a pivotal component in the effort to strengthen efficient and effective governance for development. It profoundly impacts on the ability of United Nations Member States to deliver citizen-centric public service and attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Governments around the world are moving forward in their e-governance efforts, but progress is uneven and substantial disparities remain.

Set against this backdrop, the United Nations E-Government Survey aims to identify and help address these disparities; especially, in support of a move towards a more inclusive information society, as envisaged in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). The Survey tracks progress of the 192 Member States in implementing e-government

programmes. It measures and compares their state of e-government readiness via a benchmarking tool, namely, the Global E-Government Readiness Index.

In this context, DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management is organizing an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on E-Government Readiness Indicators: Getting to the Next Level. The meeting is a no stand-alone event, as it is directly linked to the United Nations E-Government Survey. The purpose of the meeting is to enhance the quantitative part of the survey by developing five sets of measurable, additional/revised e-government indicators. It will also serve as a forum to examine the survey's methodology, along with an expert review and update of the current questionnaire in response to the current advancement and foreseeable trend of government online service programmes.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/Conferences/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1010/Default.aspx>

Climate change and statistics conference in the Asia-Pacific region

Statisticians and other experts will meet in Seoul from 11 to 12 December to shape a roadmap for the development of official climate change statistics

The national statistical offices have contributed to climate change statistics in various ways. Some are heavily engaged in reporting greenhouse gas emission estimates to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) while others provide related accounts and economic or social analysis. Many of them have no activities at all related to this topic. It is therefore necessary to increase the interest and discuss how official statistics can better contribute to measuring, monitoring and analysis of climate change and related economic and social impacts.

The international statistical community recognized the importance of the role of official statistics in climate change issues, and organized the international conference on Climate Change and Official Statistics that was held in Oslo, Norway, from 14 to 16 April 2008 as a first step in the global discussion. The discussions and recommendations of the Oslo conference have been contributing to the formulation

of a programme to strengthen the use of official statistics in this area of highest policy relevance.

The purpose of this Conference on Climate Change, Development and Official Statistics in the Asia Pacific Region, jointly organized by the Korean National Statistical Office (KNSO) and DESA's Statistics Division, is to discuss the regional relevance of the recommendations of the Oslo Conference. The conference will contribute to the shaping and refining of a roadmap for the development of official climate change statistics at the national, regional and the international level. The roadmap will be submitted to the 40th session of the UN Statistical Commission in February 2009 for further deliberation.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/climate_change/Korea/default.htm

Technical cooperation

Improving civil registration and vital statistics in the SADC region

Experts will meet in Blantyre, Malawi from 1 to 5 December to strengthen their national statistical capacity to support the Internationally Agreed Development Goals

Within the framework of the project “Strengthening statistical capacity-building in support of progress towards the Internationally Agreed Development Goals in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region”, DESA’s Statistics Division in collaboration with SADC, is organizing a workshop on the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics.

The workshop will provide training to SADC countries on the implementation of the United Nations guidelines and international standards on civil registration and vital statistics in terms of concepts, definitions, data collection methods and compilation. It will also assess the current status of the civil registration and vital statistics system in SADC countries and identify gaps to be filled. Furthermore, the workshop will review national capacities to produce and provide national vital statistics to DESA’s Statistics Division through the Demographic Yearbook questionnaire.

A special emphasis will be placed on assessing the functioning and efficiency of the exchange of information between data sources (civil registration) and producers (national statistical authorities) of vital statistics.

For more information:
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wsh_ops/Malawi_1Dec08/default.htm

Population and housing censuses in Eastern Europe

Regional workshop in Minsk, Belarus from 8 to 12 December will focus on international standards,

contemporary technologies for census mapping and data processing

The 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses aims to ensure that each Member State conducts a population and housing census at least once in the period from 2005 to 2014 and disseminates the results. The programme recognizes population and housing censuses as one of the main sources of data for effective development planning and objective decision making.

The purpose of this workshop is to present international standards for conducting population and housing censuses and to highlight the significant capabilities of contemporary technologies and their use in census mapping activities and data capture. More specifically, the Workshop will cover the revised international standards for conducting population and housing censuses and provide international recommendations on census planning and management.

The workshop will also focus on new approaches in census geography, including the use of Geographical Information Systems and Global Positioning Systems in census mapping, feature new technologies for census data capture, and discuss the process stages for data capture.

For more information:
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wsh_ops/Belarus_8Dec08/default.htm

Developing indicators for the MDG objective of poverty eradication

DESA training workshop in Nairobi from 15 to 17 December aims to develop indicators for performance monitoring

Facilitated by DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management, the workshop will be organized in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) objective of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. It will introduce to the concept of Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) and of Strategic Results Framework (SRF) for institutions and teach participants how to develop indicators for performance monitoring at the institutional, project and programme level. It will also address

methodological issues in RBME and conduct group practice sessions.

For more information:

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

Publications and websites

Technical reports



Ageing and Development

This book is an authoritative analysis of the social and economic implications of this trend. Providing a wealth of statistical and quantitative evidence and compiled by leading economists working in this area, this book provides an analysis of the social and economic implications of population ageing and development. It argues that the challenges are not insurmountable, but societies need to put in place the required policies to confront these challenges effectively. This is a timely and definitive guide to the impact of global ageing population.

To order: <http://unp.un.org/details.aspx?pid=18126>



Uneven Economic Development

Leading economists and development experts examine the causes and implications of international economic divergences. This comprehensive and timely book reviews economic growth and structural change patterns since the 1960s, before critically reviewing the respective role and impact of trade liberalization, macroeconomic policies, governance and institutions on comparative national economic performance, particularly in developing countries.

To order: <http://unp.un.org/details.aspx?pid=18127>



Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Challenges and Responses for Public Administration - Contribution of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration

The Committee of Experts on Public Administration of the UN looks at the ways in which public administration and institutional governance

can be mobilized to most effectively implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). This report includes essays by some of the leading figures of the Committee on issues critical to shaping the contemporary state in order to implement the MDG. This issues range, for instance, from migration and primary education to African States and the search of new forms of public governance.

To download:

<http://unp.un.org/details.aspx?pid=18753>

Statistical compilations



Population and Vital Statistics Report

This issue of the Population and Vital Statistics Report presents data for countries or areas on population size from the latest available census, estimated total population size for 2006 or 2007, and the number and rate of vital events (live births, deaths, and infant deaths) for the latest available year within the past 15 years (1993-2007). This issue also presents data for the world and its major areas and regions on estimated population size for both 2005 and 2006. These estimates were prepared by the Population Division of DESA. Publication symbol is ST/ESA/STAT/SER/A246-247.

For more information:

<http://unp.un.org/details.aspx?pid=17806>



International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Rev.4

The International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) is the international reference classification of productive activities. Its main purpose is to provide a set of activity categories that can be utilized for the collection and reporting of statistics according to such activities. This fourth revision of ISIC (ISIC, Rev.4) is the outcome of a review process that spanned several years and involved contributions from many classifications experts and users around the world. This process resulted in an ISIC structure that is more detailed than the previous version, responding to the need to identify many new industries separately. Publication symbol is

ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/4/Rev.4 and Sales No. E.08.XVII.25.

For more information:

<http://unp.un.org/details.aspx?pid=18142>



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. 9, September 2008

Quarterly and annual tables included in this issue: Fuel imports of developed economies; Indicators on fuel imports of developed economies; Registration of new motor vehicles; External trade conversion factors; Manufactured goods exports; Exports by commodity classes and by regions, developed economies; Selected series of world statistics. Publication symbol is ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/429.

Vol. LXII – No. 10, October 2008

Quarterly and bimonthly tables included in this issue: Retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials; Civil aviation traffic (passenger-km, cargo net ton-km); Total exports and imports by countries or areas (volume, unit value, terms of trade and purchasing power of exports, in US dollars). Publication symbol is ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/430.

For more information:

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

Discussion papers

World Economic Situation and Prospects: Monthly Briefing Note to the Secretary-General, November 2008

In response to the intensified global financial crisis, a large number of countries adopted extensive emergency plans in October 2008, following a more comprehensive and internationally concerted approach. However, great uncertainties remain in global financial markets. The impact of financial strains on economic activity is deepening and the crisis is spreading rapidly towards a growing number of developing countries and the economies in transition.

To download:

http://www.un.org/esa/policy/events/sgnote_2.pdf

Websites



National Statistics Day: Celebrating the vital role of statistics in national development

The DESA Statistics Division has added a new website that provides a list of countries that celebrate Statistics Day/Week/Month along with the latest date of observance, links to their commemorative sites and other relevant documents on the events. Ninety-seven countries and areas have been celebrating a statistics day, week or month to raise the profile of official statistics. There are variations in the way these events are held, most countries celebrate a statistics day annually, some countries observe either a week-long event, or celebrate a statistics day every 5 years or did so as a one-time occasion.

To browse:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/dnss/statistics_day/Statistics_Day.htm

Comings and goings

Comings



Ms. Jan McAlpine joined the Department as the new Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFFS) on 5 November. Ms. McAlpine has been working on environment, trade and social issues for over 30 years, with a specific

focus on international forest policy matters for the past 15 years. She previously served as Senior Negotiator and Advisor for Forests for the United States Department of State, and participated in international processes on forests including the UN processes on forests under the Commission on Sustainable Development and the UNFF.

She has been instrumental in conceiving and implementing three significant international forest initiatives: the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the regional Forest Law Enforcement and Governance processes and the Liberia Forest Initiative. Most recently, she was a Visiting Scholar and Senior Research Fellow for International Forestry Resources and Institutions at the University of Michigan, where she played a leading role in organizing and facilitating discussions at the National Summit on Coping with Climate Change.



We also welcome **Mr. Tariq Banuri** as new Director of the Division for Sustainable Development on 12 November. A national of Pakistan, he brings to the United Nations a broad experience on the interface between policy, research, and practical actions

on the realization of the goal of sustainable development. Before joining DESA, Mr Banuri was a Senior Fellow and Director of the Future Sustainability Programme of the Stockholm Environment Institute.

Mr. Banuri started his career in the Civil Service of Pakistan, went on to receive a PhD in Economics from Harvard University and joined the United Nations as a Research Fellow at the World Institute for Development Economics Research. He has served on national as well as international forums for policy, advocacy, and research, including as a Coordinating Lead Author on the Nobel Prize-winning Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change.

The following staff members were promoted in November:

Ms. Margaret Mbogoni, Statistician, Statistics Division

Ms. Cheryl Sawyer, Population Affairs Officer, Population Division

Ms. Sharon Taylor, Social Affairs Officer, Division for the Advancement of Women

Ms. Claire Fellini, Editorial Assistant, Population Division

Mr. Graham Osborn, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Goings



Mr. Jeremiah Banda, Chief of the Demographic and Social Statistics Branch of the Statistics Division, retired on 30 November 2008.

Among his many achievements, Mr. Banda was in charge of the overall management of the 2010 World

Population and Housing Census Programme. His long career in the United Nations system includes service as a regional advisor to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on statistical training and household surveys.

Prior to joining the Statistics Division, Mr. Banda worked as a senior statistician in the Cost of Living Division of the International Civil Service Commission. Mr. Banda is one of the pioneers of statistical work in Africa, heading the Statistical Office of Zambia and conducting the national Population and Housing Census in the 1980's.

The following staff members also retired in November:

Ms. Joyce Buchanan, Programme Officer, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination

Ms. Leticia Silverio-Ruffing, Information Assistant, Division for Sustainable Development

Ms. Vajinder Singh, Programming Assistant, Development Policy & Analysis Division

Calendar

December

General Assembly
63rd session, New York

- Second Committee
6 October-December
<http://www.un.org/ga/second/>
- Third Committee
6 October-December
<http://www.un.org/ga/third/>

Follow-Up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus

Doha, 29 November-2 December
<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>

United Nations Climate Change Conference
Poznan, Poland, 1-12 December
http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php

- **Forest Day at United Nations Climate Change Conference: Shaping the Global Agenda for Forests and Climate Change**
Poznan, 6 December
http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/Events/COP14-ForestDay/forest_day2008.htm

Workshop on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in SADC Region
Blantyre, Malawi, 1-5 December
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/Malawi_1Dec08/default.htm

International Workshop on Energy Statistics
Aguascalientes, Mexico, 2-5 December
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/Workshops/mexico2008.htm>

Third Internet Governance Forum
Hyderabad, India, 3-6 December
<http://igf.wgig.org/cms/>

Regional Workshop on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses: International standards, contemporary technologies for census mapping and data processing
Minsk, Belarus, 8-12 December

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/Belarus_8Dec08/default.htm

Workshop on Millennium Development Goal Monitoring
Bangkok, 10-12 December
<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Capacity/Bangkok.htm>

Briefing on the report of the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health
New York, 10 December
http://www.un.org/ecosoc/meetings/meeting_WHO.shtml

Conference on Climate Change, Development and Official Statistics in the Asia-Pacific Region
Seoul, Republic of Korea, 11-12 December
http://unstats.un.org/unsd/climate_change/Korea/default.htm

Expert Group Meeting on E-Government Indicators
New York, 11-12 December
<http://www.unpan.org/Events/BrowseEventsbyCalendar/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1010/Default.aspx?selecteddate=12/11/2008>

Training Workshop on Development of Indicators for Performance Monitoring
Nairobi, 15-17 December
<http://www.unpan.org/Events/BrowseEventsbyCalendar/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1171/Default.aspx>

January

Economic and Social Council
Election of the Bureau for 2008, New York, 15 January
<http://www.un.org/ecosoc/>

Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
2009 regular session, New York, 19-28 January
<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>

Launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2009
Date to be determined – Early January
<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/wesp.html>

Observances

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

3 December

The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons, 3 December, aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities. It also seeks to increase awareness of gains to be derived from the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. The theme of the day is based on the goal of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and participation in society by persons with disabilities, established by the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by General Assembly in 1982.

The theme for this year's observance as well as for the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is "Dignity and justice for all of us". These are established universal principles and the United Nations has recognized that the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundations of freedom, justice and peace in the world. A seminar will be held at United Nations Headquarters in Conference Room 4 on that day at 9:30 a.m., focusing on the implementation of the digital accessibility agenda of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Permanent Missions of Australia and Hungary will sponsor musical performances starting at noon of a renowned Hungarian pianist and of a remarkable Australian indie rock band.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=109>

International Migrants Day

18 December

Throughout human history, migration has been a courageous expression of the individual's will to overcome adversity and to live a better life. Today, globalization, together with advances in communication and transport, has greatly increased the number of people who have both the desire and the capacity to move. This new era has created challenges and opportunities for societies throughout the world. It also has served to underscore the clear link between migration and development.

In recognition of the large and increasing number of migrants in the world, 18 December is celebrated

each year as International Migrants Day. Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are invited to observe International Migrants Day through dissemination of information on the human rights and fundamental freedoms of migrants, and through sharing of experiences and the design of actions to ensure their protection.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/events/migrants/>

International Human Solidarity Day

20 December

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders identified solidarity as one of the fundamental values essential to international relations in this century. Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most. In the context of globalization and the challenge of growing inequality, the strengthening of international solidarity and cooperation is indispensable for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

International Human Solidarity Day is a day to celebrate unity in diversity, remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements, promote a culture of solidarity and spirit of sharing, and encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication.

For more information:

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

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.