



Video

Partnership for development: Time to inject new energy

On 25 September, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told a gathering of world leaders and top figures from the private sector, foundations and civil society that it is time to inject new energy into the global partnership to meet the MDGs if countries are to slash poverty, illiteracy and other socio-economic ills by the target date of 2015.

Full coverage

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/>

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Race to the bottom in taxation

Competition for investment is putting a strain on tax systems and impinging on national policy space as a result

Taxation is a clear area where international norms can facilitate investment, growth and development at the country level. The Monterrey Consensus on financing for development of 2002 recognizes that effective tax systems are an important means of mobilizing domestic resources for the sort of sustained economic growth that can reduce poverty. At a time when official development assistance flows have stagnated – and can come with significant conditionalities – developing countries see properly functioning tax systems as the main way to bankroll development strategies. Developing countries have also been competing intensely with each other,

indeed racing to the bottom, to lower their tax rates to attract foreign investment, which has greatly reduced disposable resources and, in turn, the ability to tailor economic and social policies to the national interest.

To address these and other challenges, the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters will meet in Geneva from 20 to 24 October. The Committee's work includes updating the influential United Nations Model Double Tax Convention between Developed and Developing Countries of 2001 and the Manual for the Negotiation of Bilateral Tax Treaties between Developed and Developing Countries of 2003.

Agreement on the need for tax norms

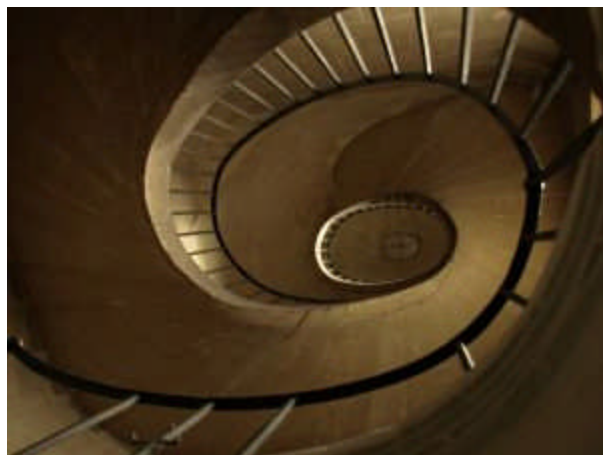
The Monterrey Consensus recognized explicitly the importance of effective tax systems in mobilizing resources to ensure sustained development as well as the need for the voice and participation of all

countries – both developing and developed – in shaping international tax norms and approaches that will impact upon them. While the role of domestic fiscal policies for each country's economic development is highlighted, the Monterrey Consensus also recognizes the global interconnectedness of national economies and the need for a supportive international environment to enable the progress of countries.

The text also calls for the equal participation of all countries, including developing countries, in shaping international tax norms which affect domestic mobilization of resources. To strengthen the effectiveness of the global economic system's support for development, it was agreed in Monterrey, that tax cooperation needs to be intensified through enhanced dialogue among national tax authorities and greater coordination of the work of the concerned multilateral bodies and relevant regional organizations.

Similarly, the draft outcome document for the Doha review conference on financing for development, which gets underway in a few weeks, builds on the Monterrey consensus and calls for fiscal reform as the key to enhancing macroeconomic policies and mobilizing domestic public resources. Enhanced international cooperation along with an improved transparency of public finance management, leading to a build-up of a sound and diversified financial sector are seen as central to the mobilization of domestic resources.

International cooperation is seen as indispensable in tax matters. The ultimate objective of broad participation by all countries in the development of international tax norms and rules would be an increase in tax revenues globally. Furthermore,



countries propose to strengthen efforts to increase tax revenues through more effective tax collection and modernization of tax legislation including through simplification of the tax system, broadening of the tax base, and strongly combating tax evasion. To support individual country efforts in these areas, countries propose to enhance international cooperation in tax matters and broaden participation in the development of international tax norms and rules. Countries would also consider strengthening the UN tax cooperation committee by upgrading it to an intergovernmental body.

Complementing the work of the Committee is a project on South-South sharing of successful tax practices which is currently being undertaken by the Special Unit on South-South Cooperation of UNDP in close cooperation with DESA's Financing for Development Office and two non-governmental organisations – the New Rules for Global Finance Coalition, and the Tax Justice Network. The project is designed to enhance cooperation among developing countries on tax matters by sharing experiences, and also to help identify areas where cooperation among developing countries needs to be enhanced to ensure that international tax norms are shaped in their development and application by developing country perspectives, experiences and realities.

Environment, natural resources, transfer pricing, corruption

Although the Committee is currently heavily involved in the updating of the UN Model Convention, which would facilitate both foreign direct investment and portfolio investment by, in particular, providing some assurance to investors that double taxation would be avoided, the Committee has a wide mandate dealing with tax and development issues. Given that effective, efficient and transparent tax systems have many impacts on sustainable development and poverty reduction, the Committee may in future choose to consider other aspects of international tax cooperation, such as environment and natural resource taxation, and transfer pricing.

Transfer pricing is an accounting practice of corporate groups or multinational enterprises by which profits and losses, and the applicable taxes, are reported in the most favourable jurisdiction. Under transfer pricing, corporate profits tend to be moved to the balance sheets of subsidiaries in low tax countries while losses and other deductions are registered as write-offs in jurisdictions where taxes are relatively higher.

Corruption is another important issue for both developed and developing countries, and experiences in countering it could usefully be shared, though it must be noted that definitional problems such as what constitutes corruption have yet to be resolved. With reference to the resources sector, initiatives such as the extractive industries transparency initiative should be recognized as important instruments in the fight against corruption and tax revenue authorities in developing countries should, therefore, strive for attaining higher levels of transparency in respect of revenue collections from the natural resources sector.

Addressing the tax skills deficit

The first meeting of the DESA-UNDP South-South project on tax practices was held on 22 and 23 May 2008, with high level representatives, including several heads of tax administrations, focussing on sharing successful experiences on taxation in a number of areas. Among them were: extractive industries including mining and fishing; maintaining an effective and independent judiciary body; balancing the interest of various stakeholders in the tax system; transfer pricing, including the treatment of intangibles, organising and modernising tax administration; compliance and the use of technology, including possibilities for closing the information and skills gap often suffered by tax authorities.

Experts at the meeting pointed out that an effective tax system, in both policy and administrative terms, is central to development, and political will and support for an effective tax system was critical. The tax culture of a country is also vital to sustainable development, since there had to be confidence in the system among the various stakeholders, including the general populace. For this reason there is a need to achieve an effective balance of education, assistance and strong compliance activity was central to effective tax systems and sustained development.

The “information deficit” and the “skills deficit” were other areas of great challenge for tax policymakers and administrations, and areas where sharing of successful experiences would be of particular benefit. The high costs of capital flight – including illicit financial flows due to tax evasion – brought out the need to cooperate, share experiences and address tax avoidance and evasion systematically, in addition to the cross-border flow of funds.

Global issues, global responses

Although, valuable work has been done in other forums to prevent double taxation and harmful tax practice as well as preventing tax evasion and avoidance, the United Nations is the only global forum for furthering international tax cooperation with a view to sustainable development, and the only venue for global responses to the immense challenges in this area.

The United Nations’ work will continue to assist developing countries to strengthen their efforts towards domestic resource mobilization, including encouraging investment but also combating tax evasion and avoidance. It will continue to emphasize the importance of effective tax systems to development, the value of international cooperation in achieving this, and the need to develop international tax norms that are shaped with the voice and participation of developing countries, yet draw upon the experience of developed countries and other interested sectors also, such as business and civil society.

Assisting developing countries to enhance their capacity to deal with both domestic and cross-border tax issues will remain one of the most important, practical and yet urgent ways to facilitate their self-sustained development. “In the longer term,” concludes Ambassador Trevor Manuel of South Africa, the Secretary-General’s special envoy on financing for development, “we should seek a world in which no country is dependent on aid. To do so, it is vital, as suggested in the draft outcome document for Doha, to strengthen the cooperation and capacity of developing countries in the area of tax collection.”

For more information:
<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/tax/>

Social equity gets a boost

Poverty and social impact assessments – the latest tool in the development handbook – force a rethink of the human dimensions of economic policy

Poverty is widespread around the world in large part because of the economic, social and political rights of people are routinely violated. In fact, human rights violations can be both a cause and a consequence of poverty. People living in poverty are excluded from society, and their ability to secure their own rights is particularly limited by their predicament. Poverty can be seen as a human condition of deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

The struggle against poverty has evolved more and more visibly into an overarching development goal of the international community. Poverty eradication, however, is not only a development goal. It is also a central challenge for ensuring worldwide recognition and realization of human rights. The international community has acknowledged that poverty is a violation of human rights and that promoting economic, social, and political rights can reduce privation.

The right tool for the job

In order to reduce poverty, tools for policy analysis need to be used that ensure development policies and projects in fact benefit the poorest. One such powerful tool is the poverty and social impact assessment. A poverty and social impact assessment is an analysis of the distributional impact of development policies and activities on the well-being of different social groups, with a particular focus on the poor and vulnerable. Impact assessments rely on quantitative and qualitative techniques, including stakeholder surveys.

Whatever the development activity, impact assessments provide a means to measure how different social groups will be affected by it. “The key issue is not to leave social development in a silo,” explains Isabel Ortiz, Senior Interregional Adviser in DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development, “but to mainstream social impacts in all development interventions. Ultimately, what is needed are national development strategies and international agreements, for example on trade, that benefit all members of society.”

The World Bank has conducted over 150 poverty and social impact assessments in seventy-two countries over the past five years in structural, sectoral and macroeconomic policies. Such assessments are now routinely used in such countries as Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda and Tanzania. The experience so far however, shows that the assessments are still viewed at the country level as a donor requirement, with limited national involvement in their preparation, and that funds to conduct them tend to be increasingly scarce. The assessments tend to be more frequently used in sectoral work and less in the analysis of macroeconomic policies, which can have deep and nation-state wide impacts on the poor.

For development interventions to truly benefit the poor, a wide range of alternate policy options need to be considered before any single one is chosen. Often, however, poverty and social impact assessments are applied to a very narrow range of policy options. Assessments conducted so far have cost in some cases several hundred thousand dollars each. There is an urgent need, therefore, to standardize methodologies for assessments and to develop low-cost, participative methods for their implementation. Poverty and social impact assessments should also be an integral part of poverty strategy preparation. Above all, the methodology for preparing assessments needs to be modified to reflect a human rights-based approach to development, with references to both international human rights norms as well as relevant national legislation.

Most importantly, both the process and the outcomes of the assessments should be the subject of debate at the national level in parliaments as well as in local forums involving stakeholders. Ideally, assessments need to lead to policy choices that enjoy broad-based support in the country. True national ownership of assessments would require that nationals have the



knowledge and skills themselves to carry them out and to be significantly involved in them. This tends not to be the case at the present time. Many of these assessments have involved elite national or international NGOs rather than grassroots organizations of stakeholders. Both donor and domestic resources should be allocated to developing the human resources necessary for conducting social impact assessments. The further use of national personnel should also contribute to bringing down the costs of this instrument.

Poverty eradication as a human right

On 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, events at UN headquarters in New York and around the world will promote solidarity with people who struggle with extreme poverty every day. In recognition of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the theme for this year's observance is human rights and dignity of people living in poverty.

Under the core human rights instruments, human beings are guaranteed among others, the rights to life, liberty and security of person, the right to the highest attainable standard of health, the right to just and favourable working conditions, the right to adequate food, housing and social security, the right to education and participation in the democratic process. Simply securing those rights for all – not only in word but in deed – would bring the world closer to poverty eradication.

The human rights-based approach to fighting poverty makes poverty reduction a legal imperative and obligation of the state, rather than mere charity, and so compels policymakers to implement strategies that allow the most vulnerable individuals and groups to escape poverty and deprivation.

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty presents an opportunity to acknowledge the effort and struggle of people living in poverty, a chance for them to make their concerns heard, and a moment to recognize that poor people are the first ones to fight against poverty. Participation of the poor themselves has been at the centre of the day's celebration since the General Assembly first announced it in 1992. The commemoration of 17 October also reflects the willingness of people living in poverty to use their knowledge and expertise to contribute to the eradication of poverty.

While providing a platform for the poor to make their voices heard, the International Day for Eradication of

Poverty will also provide an occasion to recall and raise public awareness about practical tools such as the poverty and social impact assessment which can serve to realize that human rights of those living in destitute conditions. As we pass the midpoint towards the achievement of the millennium development goals in 2015, of which halving the number of people living in absolute poverty is the most important, creating a widespread culture of poverty and social impact assessment among policymakers as well as ordinary stakeholders as a participative, nationally-owned exercise is particularly urgent.

For more information:

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

Global dialogue on development

Financial turmoil, climate change, food, energy price shocks cloud development outlook

The Economic and Financial Committee of the General Assembly meets starting 6 October in New York to address development cooperation in the face of widespread uncertainty

Following on the heels of a special high-level event on the Millennium Development Goals and against the backdrop of global financial volatility, the General Assembly's Economic and Financial Committee – commonly known as the Second Committee – will begin to tackle its programme of work for the sixty-third session on 6 October in New York. Deliberations are expected to last through 5 December though delegations will likely aim to wrap up most agenda items before the Monterrey review conference gets underway in Doha at the end of November.

The recent financial turmoil, which markedly intensified over the course of 2008 leading to the collapse of several major United States banks in September, presents an ominous backdrop for the current round of deliberations. Among other things, the effects of the global financial crisis and steep rise in food and energy prices threaten to reverse hard-won progress on some of the MDGs, particularly the primary goal of reducing world poverty and hunger. Complicating matters further is the issue of climate change, which the Committee will consider alongside the wide-ranging sustainable development agenda.

As in previous years, the Second Committee will also consider macroeconomic policy questions; operational activities for development; follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development; globalization and interdependence; sustainable development; information and communications technology; and poverty eradication. Other topics before the Second Committee are permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources; human settlements; and

groups of countries in special situations, such as least developed and landlocked developing countries.

Professor Ricardo Hausmann of Harvard University will deliver a keynote address at the start of the session in which he will share his views on growth, macroeconomic stability, international finance, and the social dimensions of development. A number of side panels to be held over the course of October and November will further enrich discussions. Topics include challenges and emerging issues in external debt restructuring, the Second UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, globalisation and health, overcoming economic insecurity, and reconstructing public administration for conflict prevention, recovery and development.

Over the past year, the Second Committee took action on thirty-five draft proposals. Under the chairmanship of H.E. Mrs. Uche Joy Ogwu of Nigeria, the Committee is expected to act on a similar number of proposals in the sixty-third session.

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

Social development, human rights in the spotlight

The General Assembly's Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee is expected to draft some sixty resolutions at its upcoming session, from 6 October and 25 November in New York

Year after year, the General Assembly allocates to its Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee – or more usually, the Third Committee – agenda items relating to a range of social, humanitarian affairs and human rights issues that affect peoples all over the world. An important part of the Committee's work focuses on the examination of human rights questions, including reports of the special procedures of the newly established Human Rights Council. In October, the Committee will hear and interact with twenty-five such special rapporteurs, independent experts, and chairpersons of workings groups of the Human Rights Council.

The Committee also discusses the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the promotion of the right to self-determination. The Committee also addresses important social development

questions such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and drug control.

At the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, the Third Committee considered sixty-seven draft resolutions, more than half of which were submitted under the human rights agenda item alone. These included a number of so-called country-specific resolutions on human rights situations. Under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, the Third Committee is expected to consider a similar number of draft resolutions in 2008.

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



H.E. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann articulates his vision for the United Nations on assuming the Presidency of the 63rd session of the General Assembly on 16 September

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/ga/63/2008/ga080916pm.rm?start=00:07:43&end=00:48:40> (40 minutes)

New global disability monitors to be elected

Conference of States Parties to disabilities convention will meet in New York to choose first group of independent experts to monitor implementation, starting 31 October

The first session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will take place on 31 October and 3 November in New York. Delegates will elect a bureau of officials on the first day, consider rules of procedure, and discuss any other matter with regard to the implementation of the Convention in accordance with Article 40 of the treaty.

On the following Monday, 3 November, the Conference will reconvene to elect members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee is a body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the agreement by States parties, which are obliged to submit regular progress reports. It is the Committee's responsibility to examine each report, making such suggestions and general recommendations for consideration by the country concerned. The Optional Protocol to the

Convention also gives the Committee competence to examine individual complaints of alleged violations by governments.

The Convention is serviced by a joint secretariat composed of 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.

For more information:

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

Trends and analysis

Amid financial tumult, top economists look to 2009

Project LINK will bring together global experts on 23 and 24 October to assess prospects for the year ahead

Some of the biggest names in economics will gather in New York on 23 and 24 October to discuss the global economic situation and prospects for 2009, as the world leaders remain focused on the most severe financial crisis since the Great Depression. Some thirty experts from developed and developing countries, plus participants from major international organizations, are expected to discuss the world economic outlook, along with regional variations, against the backdrop of unusual volatility in financial markets and continuing concern over commodities.

The outcome of the meeting, an initiative of Project LINK, will be incorporated into the annual UN report on World Economic Situation and Prospects to be released in January 2009. Project LINK is a co-operative, non-governmental, international research activity, which integrates independently developed national econometric models into a global econometric model. It provides a consistent framework for undertaking quantitative studies of the international economic transmission mechanisms and of the effects of international and national policies, developments and disturbances on the outlook for the world economy, and global economic integration in general.

Founded under the intellectual leadership of Nobel Laureate Lawrence Klein, LINK has expanded from a core of eleven researchers and seven country models in 1969 to more than 100 participants from sixty countries, with seventy-nine country models, including forty-five models of individual developing countries and regions. The national centres of the project include universities, private research organizations, government agencies, and central banks. The activities of the LINK consortium are coordinated jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Project LINK Research Centre at the University of Toronto.

For more information:

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

Women do double-duty as work falls along traditional gender lines

Gender experts head to Geneva from 6 to 9 October to debate policy prescriptions for promoting equal sharing of responsibility between women and men

Caregiving places disproportionate burdens on women and girls who are more often than not called upon to act as unpaid family caregivers, due to persistent gender stereotypes, limited public health systems, and scarce social services in many countries. The effects of unequal sharing of responsibilities between men and women are visible across generations, with substantial practical limitations on girls' full school attendance, women's workforce participation and leadership roles in political processes. Moreover, women and girls caring for relatives afflicted with HIV/AIDS are frequently stigmatized leading to a profound sense of isolation in what would otherwise be close-knit social groups.

In order to explore strategies for the promotion of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, DESA's Division for the Advancement of Women is inviting a group of international experts to meet in Geneva from 6 to 9 October. Participants will explore the causes of unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the public and private spheres – such as gender roles, stereotyping and socialization processes – as well as identify their effects on the structure of the labour market, governance and decision-making at all levels. They will also pave the way for improved data on time use among family members and other social policy measures.

The panelists' findings and policy recommendations will be conveyed to the UN Commission on the Status of Women whose next session, in March 2009, will be devoted primarily to the question of equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDS. This month's consultation in Geneva is being organized in collaboration with ILO, ECE, UNAIDS, and UNRISD. Observers from governments, UN agencies, NGOs and academia are also welcome to attend.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/equalsharimg/egm_equalsharing.htm

How to rebuild State capacity after conflict?

Practical measures for post-conflict reconstruction will be the subject of a DESA-UNDP expert group meeting in Accra from 2-4 October

A picture that often emerges after conflict is that of a devastated public administration unable to resume the basic functions of government to help with national reconstruction. In the worst case, the entire structure of government has to be rebuilt from scratch. And while, numerous reports, guidelines and recommendations have been written on post-conflict capacity-building, best practices that can be readily adapted and replicated remain elusive.

To address the knowledge deficit, DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management, in collaboration with UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, will bring together expert practitioners to share their experiences in re-establishing credible, functional governance and public administration institutions after violent conflict. The DESA-UNDP event, unfolding in Accra from 2 to 4 October, is part of DPADM's ongoing research into post-conflict reconstruction of government, the subject of the next edition of its flagship World Public Sector Report.

National reconstruction is inevitably a long and expensive process requiring careful analysis of the causes of conflict, as well as thoughtful consideration of the sort of public institutions that can help prevent conflict from recurring. It is particularly important to distinguish between the roles and responsibilities of State and non-State actors, as well as the influence of external actors in the sustainable reconstruction of governance and public administration capacities. The assembled experts will explore these and other matters when they meet in October, with a view to clearly identifying workable procedures and common challenges in implementation of national action plans.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/Events/Conferences/tabid/94/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1532/ItemID/1047/Default.aspx>

ICT gurus chat with young people about education

GAID will join forces with world youth in Yerevan from 21 to 24 October to discuss innovation in education for ICT promotion

The UN Global Forum for ICTs and Development will hold a forum on education and development in Yerevan from 21 to 24 October in an effort to engage more young people in efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through information and communications technology. Several hundred youth from across the globe will mix with ICT experts from both private and public sectors during the four-day event, showcasing innovative uses of ICT in the name of development.

Forum participants will delve into the conditions that lead to and sustain innovative practices with a particular emphasis on improving educational opportunities in developing countries. Limitations of education systems in many developing areas are seen by some as an impediment to diffusion of technology. The participants will discuss the ways to improve access to education, and specifically on building ICT skills among young people. Questions of access, connectivity, and local content will be examined as well as ideas about how obstacles – infrastructural, financial, cultural, or otherwise – might be overcome. On the final day of the conference, participants will present a set of proposals for evaluation by government, private sector, and civil society leaders.

The Yerevan forum is being co-organized by GAID, Athgo International, and the Government of Armenia. GAID is a project supported by DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management.

For more information: <http://www.un-gaid.org/es/node/2415>

Sustainable consumption and production

Draft ten-year framework to promote sustainable consumption and production aims to align economic activity with ecosystem capacity

The first draft of a global framework of national and regional initiatives on sustainable consumption and production was released in September. DESA's

Division for Sustainable Development, in collaboration with UNEP, will soon begin seeking input from government experts, civil society organizations, and the public with the aim of finalizing a proposal in time for the 2010 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

For more information:

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

The draft ten-year framework of programmes, informally known as 10YFP, is an expected output of the Marrakech Process, a global initiative to assist countries in their efforts towards sustainability. The process is guided by an Advisory Committee, which will meet in Paris on 23 October to provide feedback on the draft framework, among other matters.

The Marrakech Process was launched in 2003, not only to produce a draft 10YFP, but also to build political support and strengthen technical capacities for the implementation of sustainable consumption and production. During the last few years the process has led to greater cooperation among stakeholders and enhanced political support of the sustainable consumption and production agenda. Africa and Latin America have developed their own regional strategies on sustainable consumption and production, as has the European Union which issued an action plan in July. Importantly, progress has been made in engaging countries with emerging economies, for example through national roundtables in Brazil, India, and China.

For more information:

<http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess/index.shtml>

Inter-agency meeting on MDG indicators

Each year, leading statisticians from the UN system and beyond gather to review indicators used to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Since not all countries are equally prepared to produce the requisite data, the group will also consider way in which technical assistance can be applied to enhance national capacities for MDG tracking. The 2008 session, formally known as the fourteenth Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, will unfold in Geneva from 28 to 30 October. The IAEG membership includes UN system entities, national statistical offices, and other organizations concerned with the development of MDG data such as donor agencies and expert advisers.

Technical cooperation

Addressing increased oil and food costs in Guinea

DESA governance experts lead advisory mission to Conakry in October to study poverty, prices, and public policy

DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management is planning an advisory mission to Guinea at the end of the month to supervise a study of the impact of oil and food prices on the economy and the lives of people. The study group, led by DPADM and consisting of a team of national and international consultants, will evaluate the effects of recent price increases on poverty in particular, and propose measures to mitigate their effects.

For some, the 2008 food crisis reflects both a long unheeded problem of low agricultural productivity in developing countries and the poor's lack of access to affordable food. Increasing productivity through investments in water supply, infrastructure, improved seeds and fertilizers, education and agricultural research and development are some of the ideas in circulation for dealing with food insecurity while at the same time allaying persistent and widespread rural poverty.

According to the UN World Food Programme, some forty percent of Guineans are food insecure, while the majority of the population relies on subsistence agriculture without any financial safety net. The estimated forty-nine percent of the country's inhabitants living in poverty are considered to be especially vulnerable to economic shocks, and to small-scale natural disasters such as localized flood and drought.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/DPADM/AboutUs/OurWorkAreas/SocioEconomicGovernanceandManagement/tabid/527/Default.aspx>

CIS statisticians review international trade in services

Kiev workshop from 7 to 9 October intended to advance statistical know-how in Eastern Europe

The DESA Statistics Division, in collaboration with the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, is organizing a workshop on statistics of international trade in services in the CIS countries. The workshop is being hosted by the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine from 7 to 9 October in Kiev.

The workshop aims to train representatives from national statistical offices and central banks from the CIS countries on methodological development of the statistics of trade in services as well as the current country-practices in compiling trade in services statistics. The training will focus on both interpretation of conceptual issues and options for implementation of the international recommendations in country specific circumstances. The gathering of experts is also expected to facilitate the establishment of a network of statisticians in the CIS countries working on service trade statistics.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/tradeserv/cooperation.htm>

Housing earthquake safety initiative

Training in Banda Aceh from 13 to 16 October teaches basics of building safety in shaky landscapes

As part of a housing earthquake safety initiative led by DESA's Regional Centre for Development office in Hyogo, Japan, a workshop will be held from 13 to 16 October in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. The training session is intended to help communities in Aceh improve the structural safety of houses through effective implementation of building safety regulations. Workshop participants will gain practical knowledge of construction of earthquake-resistant buildings in compliance with provisions of the Indonesian building code and other safe practices. Simple retrofitting techniques will be explained, along with materials testing and vulnerability assessment methods.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/Regions/Global/Events/Conferences/tabid/458/mctl/EventDetails/ModuleID/1510/ItemID/1024/Default.aspx>

Publications and websites

Handbook



Resource Kit on Indigenous Peoples' Issues

The new Resource Kit on Indigenous Peoples' Issues is intended for UN country teams, and other development agents, providing them with guidance as to how to engage indigenous peoples and include their perspectives in development processes. Published by DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development, in cooperation with ILO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and SCBD.

To download:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/resource_kit_indigenous_2008.pdf

Meeting record



Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals

In evaluating the implementation of development targets, it is increasingly clear that success requires an approach that redefines the relationship between government and civil society. In particular, there is a need for involving all stakeholders in the formulation of public policy and decision-making. This title is a collection of papers presented for discussion at an expert group meeting on citizen participation in the implementation of the development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, held in New York in November 2006. Just released in print format.

To download:

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/UN/UNPAN028359.pdf>

Statistical compilations



Statistical Yearbook, 51st edition

The United Nations Statistical Yearbook is an annual compilation of a wide range of international economic, social and environmental statistics for over 200 countries and areas of the world, compiled from sources including UN agencies and other international, national and specialized organizations. This 51st edition contains data available to the Statistics Division as of March 2007 presented in 69 tables on topics such as: agriculture; balance of payments; communication; development assistance; education; energy; environment; finance; industrial production; international merchandise trade; international tourism; labour force; manufacturing; national accounts; nutrition; population; prices; research and development; transport; and wages.

The number of years of data shown in the tables varies from one to ten, with the ten-year tables covering 1995 to 2004 or 1996 to 2005.

Accompanying the tables are technical notes providing brief descriptions of major statistical concepts, definitions and classifications. Sales number E/F.07.XVII.1. Publication symbol ST/ESA/STAT/SER.S/27.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pubs/gesgrid.asp?id=391>



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. 8, August 2008

In this issue: Indices of world industrial production by branches of industry and by regions; producer

price indices; retail price indices relating to living expenditures of UN officials; earnings in manufacturing, by sex; construction of new buildings; total exports and imports by regions. Publication symbol ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/428.

For more information:

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



Industrial Commodity Production Statistics Database 1950-2005 on CD-Rom

This product represents the entire database of industrial commodity statistics covering the period 1950-2004, and contains the statistics available to the Statistics Division up to 12 February 2007. The production data refer to the total industrial production of each commodity during the years indicated and within the national boundaries of each country. The data include: production of industrial establishments for which the commodity is a primary product; production of industrial establishments for which it is a secondary product; production of industrial establishments for which it is an intermediate product. Unless otherwise stated in the footnotes, production by non-industrial establishments, such as farm production of dairy products, is excluded.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/industry/ics_intro.asp

Discussion paper

Economic Liberalization and Constraints to Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

This paper critically reviews the impact of globalization on sub-Saharan Africa since the early 1980s. The large gains expected from opening up to international economic forces have, to date, been limited, and there have been significant adverse consequences. Foreign direct investment in the region has been largely confined to resource, especially mineral, extraction, even as continuing capital flight has reduced financial resources available for productive investments. Premature trade liberalization has further undermined prospects for sub-Saharan economic development as productive capacities in many sectors are not sufficiently competitive to take advantage of any improvements in market access.

To download:

http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2008/wp67_2008.pdf

Outreach material

DESA Policy Brief No. 6: The Growing Threat of Climate-Related Insecurity

The threat to economic security from natural disasters is increasing: four times as many occurred annually during the period 2000-2006 as during the 1970s, with annual damages increasing sevenfold to \$83 billion per year, and a quadrupling of the number of persons affected. What role of global warming in these trends is difficult to say, though the scientific consensus is that climate change will increase the intensity and incidence of such disasters in coming years. This policy brief from DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division sheds light on the growing threat of climate-related insecurity and the need for an integrated approach to the problem.

To download:

<http://www.un.org/esa/policy/policybriefs/policybrief6.pdf>

Website



Multilingual ECOSOC

In the spirit of the 2008 International Year of Languages, DESA's Office of Economic Council

Support and Coordination, in collaboration with DPI, has expanded online coverage of ECOSOC affairs to Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish. The multilingual site provides information on the work of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, featuring the Annual Ministerial Review and Development Cooperation Forum and their roles in advancing the UN development agenda. Visitors will also find recent statements, along with the latest UN print and radio news. Information on current and past presidents of the Council, its Bureau and membership, and historical information are included.

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

Comings and goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in September:

Ms. Sharon Birch, Staff Assistant, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Ms. Lynn Thway, Finance and Budget Officer, Executive Office

Ms. Rocio Torres, Staff Assistant, Division for the Advancement of Women

Ms. Sabine Warschburger, Statistician, Statistics Division

Goings



Mr. Jacinto De Vera, Acting Chief of the Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch in DESA's Division for Public Administration and Development Management, retired on 30 September following some thirty-seven years of dedicated service to the United Nations.

Among his many achievements, Mr. De Vera has led DPADM's thematic group on civic engagement dealing with policy development, service delivery and public accountability. Mr. De Vera is particularly known for his expertise in foreign direct investment, transnational corporations, taxation, aid flows for MDG implementation, and international trade. Prior to assuming the role of acting head of the Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch in June 2008, he was Secretary of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration and was engaged in research on a range of issues in this field.

The following staff members also retired in September:

Mr. Samuel Jan, Computer Systems Assistant, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Ms. Jocelyne Theagene, Secretary, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Ms. Sylvia Tower, Staff Assistant, Division for Sustainable Development

Calendar

October

London Group on Environmental Accounting
13th meeting, Brussels, 29 September-3 October

General Assembly
63rd session, New York

- **Second Committee**
6 October-5 December

- **Third Committee**
6 October-25 November

DESA-UNDP Expert Group Meeting on Crisis
Prevention and Recovery
Accra, 2-4 October

Expert Group Meeting on Equal Sharing of
Responsibilities between Men and Women
Geneva, 6-9 October

Workshop on Statistics of International Trade in
Services
Kiev, 7-9 October

DESA-IASIA-SSPA Euro-Mediterranean Conference
on Redesigning Public Administration Training
Rome, 13-14 October

UNCRD Workshop on Construction of Earthquake
Resistant Buildings
Banda Aceh, 13-16 October

**Committee of Experts on International
Cooperation in Tax Matters**
4th session, Geneva, 20-24 October

GAID Global Innovation Forum for Education and
Development
Yerevan, 21-24 October

Advisory Committee of the Marrakech Process
2nd meeting, Paris, 23 October

Project LINK – Expert Group Meeting on the World
Economy
New York, 23-24 October

Inter-agency Meeting on MDG Indicators
Geneva, 28-30 October

**Conference of States Parties to the Convention on
the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**
New York, 31 October-3 November

November

African Regional Workshop on Census Data
Processing
Bamako, 3-7 November

DESA-ESCWA Workshop on Data Dissemination,
Meta-data and E-commerce
Dubai, 4-7 November

Ad-hoc Expert Group on a Voluntary Global Forest
Financing Framework
Vienna, 10-14 November

DESA-ECLAC Latin American Regional Workshop
on Census Cartography
Santiago, 24-27 November

**Follow-Up International Conference on Financing
for Development to Review Implementation of the
Monterrey Consensus**
Doha, 29 November-2 December

Observances

International Day of Older Persons
1 October

In recognition of the sixtieth anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the theme of
this year's International Day of Older Persons is the
rights of older persons. In many parts of the world,
the rights of older persons are violated every day.
Older persons often face age discrimination at a
workplace. In social environments, they may
experience a lack of recognition and respect. They
may be deprived of full inclusion and participation in
social, economic, cultural and political affairs. Most
disturbingly, in many countries, incidences of
neglect, abuse and violence against older persons are
not at all rare or isolated events. This international
day provides an opportunity to reflect on such
inequities and to champion the full participation of
older persons in society for the benefit of all.

For more information:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/un_meetings.html

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17 October

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty will also take on a human rights dimension this year with the theme of human rights and dignity of people living in poverty. The observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty can be traced back to 17 October 1987. On that day, over a hundred thousand people gathered at the Trocadero in Paris, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948, to honour the victims of extreme poverty, violence and hunger. They proclaimed that poverty is a violation of human rights and affirmed the need to come together to ensure that these rights are respected. These convictions are inscribed in a commemorative stone unveiled on this day. Since then, people of all backgrounds, beliefs and social origins have gathered every year on 17 October to renew their commitment and show their solidarity with the poor.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlDay/2008intlday.html>

United Nations Day

24 October

Simply put, it is the birthday of the United Nations. On 24 October 1945, the United Nations was formally established after a majority of its founding members ratified a treaty setting up the world body. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending that the day be observed as a public holiday by Member States. Traditionally, it has been marked throughout the world by meetings, discussions and exhibits on the goals and achievements of the Organization.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/events/unday2007/>

World Development Information Day

24 October

The General Assembly instituted World Development Information Day in 1972 with the object of drawing the attention of world public opinion each year to development problems and the necessity of strengthening international co-operation to solve them. The General Assembly also decided that World Development Information Day should coincide, in principle, with United Nations Day to stress the central role of development in the work of the United Nations.

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.