



On 13 September, the General Assembly adopted the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. A non-binding text, the Declaration sets out individual and collective rights to culture, identity, language, employment, health, education, and other issues. The Declaration was approved after 143 Member States voted in favour, 11 abstained and 4 – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States – voted against.

Webcast::

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/ga/61/2007/ga070913am.rm?start=01:01:04&end=02:53:32> (50 min.)

Audio: <http://radio.un.org/story.asp?NewsID=77349> (5 minutes)

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Unlocking development through finance

A high-level dialogue on financing for development this month will lay the groundwork for the Monterrey Consensus implementation review in Doha in 2008

The Monterrey Consensus is the flagship of international development cooperation. Through this agreement, countries committed in 2002 to join forces to unleash financial resources and achieve the economic conditions needed to reach internationally agreed development goals. Five years on, the Monterrey picture shows lights and shadows. Many developing countries have put their houses in order, improving macroeconomic management and

governance, while a number of advanced countries have also made headway in debt forgiveness. But increased voting weights of developing countries in the global financial institutions, mobilization of significant resources for decent employment, and a development-based trade system are still far from reality. Much work lies ahead if finance is to unlock the potential of development.

The third High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development hosted by the General Assembly on 23 and 24 October will cast a spotlight on the status of implementation of the 2002 Monterrey Consensus and shed light on the road ahead. The meeting sets the stage for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus taking place in Doha next year. Plenary meetings will take up the first day, bringing ministers and other high-

level officials together with the President of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General, and the executive heads of the World Bank, IMF, WTO, UNCTAD, UNDP. Six roundtables on the second day will build on the major themes of the Monterrey outcome: mobilizing domestic and international financial resources for development; international trade as an engine for development; international financial and technical cooperation; external debt; and systemic issues.

More domestic resources for development

The Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development held in 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico forged a global development partnership in which developing countries acknowledged their primary responsibility for their own economic and social development while pledging to adopt policies to improve the use of domestic resources. Industrialized countries, for their part, committed to increased financing and greater market access so as to pave the way to growth, poverty reduction and macroeconomic stability.

Five years on, developing countries appear on the whole to be keeping their part of the bargain. Progress has been made in introducing macroeconomic policies that consistent with price stabilization and orderly government finances. Microeconomic reforms that increase economic efficiency have been introduced, as have measures to improve governance and the rule of law. This is according to the Report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for development, an analytical assessment of implementation of the 2002 agreement that delegates are invited to use as background information for the discussions.

Despite progress in policy and regulatory areas, growth has been extremely uneven. According to remarks made by DESA's Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, Mr. Jomo K.S., in an informal presentation of the report to the General Assembly on 20 September, only a handful of countries have made significant strides, while many others have been unable to achieve sustained growth in per capita incomes.

Accent on decent employment

Developing countries need to speed up the growth and expand the diversity of their domestic financial sectors, according to the report. Countries should pay special attention to the creation of markets for long-

term debt in domestic currencies, with an emphasis on the issue of domestic currency bonds and a strengthened role for national development banks. Countries should also ease conditions for financing of productive investments, by small- and medium-sized enterprises among others, and promote microcredit and microfinance to give all social groups access to financial services.

At the same time, the public sector and multilateral development banks should finance projects that private investors will not undertake, such as provision of infrastructure and basic services. "Tardy investments in these areas," Assistant Secretary-General Jomo cautions, "undermines the medium-term growth prospects of developing countries, as it has in many countries which have unduly emphasized reducing fiscal deficits."

When it comes to fighting poverty, national development strategies should give priority to macroeconomic policies that boost full, productive and decent employment, and mobilize resources accordingly. This commitment to employment, coupled with appropriate policy measures, should furthermore be incorporated in the 2008 Doha agreement, proposes Mr. Jomo, as it was recognized in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and the 2006 ECOSOC Ministerial declaration.

How can investment be sustainable?

A good way to inject resources for development is through foreign direct investment. It is no coincidence that the 2002 Consensus included a recommendation for leading action in this area. In the last five years, strong economic growth and a better investment climate in a number of countries have resulted in significant private investment growth. FDI in particular amounted to almost \$400 billion in 2006, according to the Secretary-General's report.



Yet most FDI materializes not in green field investment, notes Mr. Jomo, but through mergers and acquisitions. Moreover, much of the FDI for new economic activity entails a flow of funds from one industrialized country to another. Meanwhile, about 70 percent of the FDI reaching developing regions is absorbed by about a dozen countries.

Manuel Montes, Chief of the Policy Analysis and Development Branch in the Financing for Development Office in DESA, says that countries should create a domestic environment that can attract foreign direct investment. "But if that investment is to be sustainable, it has to be consistent with the national development strategies of developing countries and, therefore, be oriented towards employment and export growth, and expanded ownership." Measures should be put in place, he adds, so that foreign affiliates and domestic firms can be brought together to strengthen linkages in pivotal areas such as information technology, training and finance.

For an equitable trading system

Trade continues to be a crucial component of the development partnership forged in Monterrey because benefits accrue to all partners, and are seen to be much greater and more permanent than either official development assistance or debt relief, the Secretary-General states in his 2006 report. In particular, the Monterrey Consensus stressed that a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, along with trade liberalization, investment and technology, can spur development worldwide and fight poverty, "benefiting countries at all stages of development."

When WTO members launched the Doha round of trade negotiations during the fourth Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar in November 2001, they in fact designated it a development round. The round would seek "to ensure that developing countries and especially the least developed among them, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development." Yet the fate of the Doha Round is uncertain. Trade negotiations resumed this year following a breakdown in 2006 chiefly over divergent positions on agriculture. Some industrialized countries were opposed to major concessions on farm subsidies, while some developing nations were reluctant to lower tariffs on industrial goods.

Clearly, the Doha Round can truly only be a development round if it results in real market access and entry for developing country exports of goods and services to major markets, including extension of duty-free and quota-free treatment to all least developed countries, stresses Assistant Secretary-General Jomo. This round of talks, he adds, should also ensure sufficient policy space for developing countries to manage and regulate economic policy in order to reach national development goals.

Development aid, a change in order

In contrast with the stagnation of trade talks, the world has seen development assistance virtually double since 2002 after years of decline. But aid growth has been driven largely by debt relief and emergency assistance, rather than fresh funding, the Secretary-General points out in his report. As proof, he cites a fall in development aid from 0.33 percent of GNI of OECD countries in 2005, when large debt relief packages were approved, to 0.30 percent in 2006. This is despite commitments made in 2005 by the Group of Eight in Gleneagles, Scotland, which pledged to double aid to Africa by 2010.

Projected development assistance of 0.36 percent by 2010, however, still falls far short of the pledged 0.7 percent target. The Secretary-General reminds in his report that \$150 billion is needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. And only with significant, long-term, predictable resources can development goals be met. As the clock ticks, donor nations, with the exception of European Union countries, are behind schedule in their 0.7 commitment.

Development goals, however, are not the main driver of aid flows. Aid is selective, and driven "more by politics than by need, undermining its effectiveness," Mr. Ban pointed out earlier this year. According to the World Economic and Social Survey 2005, the top twenty aid recipients were granted more than half of net bilateral development assistance, with ninety percent of aid going to fewer than half of eligible countries. Given this scenario of so-called darlings and orphans, the Secretary General recommends that countries discuss how to better align aid with national development goals, and use international cooperation to promote policy advice consistent with national development strategies. Measures might include additional budget support, less aid conditionality, simpler monitoring, reduced transaction costs, more flexibility and improved effectiveness.

The quality of aid

The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness called for more efficient forms of official assistance with an emphasis on more direct budget support. “The problems raised by aid conditionalities and the constraints they impose on development policy space also need to be boldly addressed and included in a revision of the Monterrey Consensus,” along with measures to ensure the fulfilment of promises to increase aid flows, suggests Jomo,

With the scaling up of aid also comes an urgent need for improved governance of the international system. Aid flows are complex, fragmented, and insufficiently coordinated. There are also a growing number of new donors, such as NGOs and the private sector. Recipient countries have little say in the process. Although the interests and views of donor countries are well represented in the multilateral financial institutions – especially in those associated with the allocation of concessional financing— and the on OECD Development Assistance Committee, no permanent financial forum exists to represent the interests of aid recipients.

The launch of the Development Cooperation Forum under the Economic and Social Council next year can play a crucial role in filling that gap, ensuring recipient countries participation and ownership, raising political oversight of aid effectiveness and discussing what kinds of flows should really be counted as aid. According to the Secretary-General, for aid to be effective, each country needs to set its own priorities, which include the pace and sequencing of implementation. The third High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness at Accra next year should therefore not only review progress in implementation, Mr. Jomo points out, but also look at concrete actions to speed up and deepen it, focusing on ownership, accountability and capacity-building.

Overcoming external debt

In Monterrey, world leaders acknowledged that debt relief and debt cancellation play a pivotal role in liberating resources for development. Debt cancellations under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative have indeed rekindled growth, proving that “debt overhang is a shackle to economic growth,” in the words of Mr. Jomo.

Somewhat distressingly, for some countries that have received debt forgiveness, debt is rising again. The Secretary-General report indicates that the debt relief and restructuring approach for low-income countries, and its associated conditionalities, have not paid sufficient attention to growth and the expansion of policy space required to make overcoming debt distress possible. Mr. Montes notes that “government finances have been so constricted under poverty reduction and growth programmes that countries have been unable to invest in critical infrastructure so that private investment can restart.”

At this juncture, an urgent paradigm shift is needed. Debt restructuring that allows debt-distressed countries to achieve self-regenerating growth is much needed, with an accent on the use of grants and the possibility of one hundred percent debt cancellation. In addition, the international community should begin discussions on alternatives to the Paris Club approach, to broaden the creditor community in the interests of borrowers and lenders alike.

Greater voice in the global financial institutions

Among the main systemic issues that need to be addressed, the Monterrey Consensus called for modernizing the governance of global finance institutions which still reflect the period immediately after the Second World War. Developing countries are home to close to eighty percent of the world’s population, and they contribute forty-five percent of world output. Yet, their size and significance is poorly reflected in forums where crucial decisions about their economic and social future are taken.

According to Mr. Jomo, “The global financial institutions’ sometimes controversial record and the sharp decline in their legitimacy – among middle-income countries as well as the least developed countries – have raise questions about their role and continued credibility in the developing world.” Reform of the voting weights of developing countries in the IMF and World Bank, called for at Monterrey, is long overdue and must be resolved before 2008. To fulfil the agreed-upon mandate, a redistribution of weights should result in a significant increase in the voting power of developing countries. “Global economic decision-making should be consolidated in international institutions of a universal nature – those that are part of the UN system – rather than in limited ad-hoc and unaccountable groups.”

For more information:

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

A bridge between religions and cultures

Recognition of shared values and a culture of understanding are elements of long-lasting peace in the 21st century

A path-breaking event devoted to the promotion of inter-religious and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace will be held on 4 and 5 October, at the General Assembly. The event represents the culmination of numerous processes related to this theme at the United Nations, including the 2005 Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace held at UN Headquarters, the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and the Alliance of Civilizations. The high-level gathering is expected to weave together the many thematic strands of these diverse bridge-building initiatives into a coherent fabric, which can provide guidance to the international community.

The high-level dialogue and its informal interactive hearing will seek to promote a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations, advance a multi-stakeholder coalition, including with the private sector on related issues, further strengthen the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, and translate shared values into action in order to achieve long-lasting peace in the 21st century.

Rooted in the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as in the many General Assembly resolutions on building a culture of peace, non-violence and tolerance, and on an alliance of civilizations, the dialogue is the first of its kind to bring together senior members of national governments around this theme. The theme of inter-religious and intercultural understanding now moves squarely into the mainstream of the General Assembly's concerns and is here to stay.

The time for the dialogue has certainly come. In today's world, there is a pressing need for religious and cultural bridge-building involving government and civil society in the neutral and universal space of the United Nations. Many of the world's present conflicts are rooted in social, economic and territorial issues, which, more often than not, are transformed into violence by opportunistic extremists who manipulate religious and ethnic differences among communities to further their own ends.



At the same time, religion is a traditional and legitimate way in which societies transmit their values. Organized religion codifies a set of values for its adherents and packages them for transmittal to the next generation. Therefore, it is no surprise that economic and cultural globalization has met with a strong resurgence of religious belief and practice in many parts of the world, including in the industrial countries. This religious revival reflects a reaffirmation of traditional values and identities in the face of the powerful drive towards homogeneity in lifestyles and consumption that has been unleashed by globalization.

Time to mainstream religious and cultural debate

The United Nations and its sister agencies, which have been addressing economic, social, territorial and cultural issues for over six decades, are now seeking the policies, structures and programmes that can identify and respond to the causes and immediate needs of the many crises that have an intercultural and inter-religious dimension. Although it has not been common practice in United Nations programmes and publications to refer to the inter-religious and intercultural dimensions of economic and social issues, it is expected that the mainstreaming of inter-religious and intercultural discussions at the intergovernmental level would provide policy guidance and pave the way for bringing this bridge-building dimension more explicitly into the many economic, social and cultural programmes that the departments and agencies of the United Nations system undertake, including those for education, post-conflict institution building and long-term economic and social development.

The high-level dialogue will be opened by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Dr. Srgjan Kerim, of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and will consist of statements to the plenary of the General Assembly by Member States

and Observers to the United Nations. Mr. Kerim recently declared at a Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations that he comes from a country at a crossroads of cultures and religions. “I know from my personal experience how important it is that there be understanding between cultures, and that this understanding be enacted through dialogue on a daily basis.”

An innovative feature of the event will be the half-day informal hearing with civil society, including NGOs and the private sector, which will include remarks by Mr. Jorge Sampaio, High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Alliance of Civilizations. The hearing will be divided into two panels, where prominent civil society speakers will make presentations followed by interactions with member states on the subjects of “challenges of inter-religious and intercultural cooperation today,” and “best practices and strategies of inter-religious and intercultural cooperation going forward.” The first panel will be devoted to stocktaking on this theme from perspectives of different countries while the second will seek to suggest concrete courses of action. The subsequent formal plenary meetings of the dialogue will conclude with closing remarks by the President of the General Assembly, which will serve as the main outcome document of the dialogue.

From dialogue to action

The dialogue is expected to build on the outcome of the 2005 Conference on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace held at UN Headquarters, which called for strategies to enhance interfaith cooperation toward peace, and was transmitted to the President of the 59th General Assembly. The 2005 conference had called for an expansion and deepening of the relationship between the United Nations and civil society, including religious nongovernmental organizations. It advocated practical actions in the fields of education and the media so as to foster understanding, tolerance and cooperation between peoples of different religions and beliefs and urged the formation of an open-ended tripartite group comprising representatives of member states, civil society, and non-governmental organizations which would follow up on these issues through existing United Nations system mechanisms as well as by identifying new ways to address inter-religious, intercultural and inter-civilizational challenges. Finally, the conference invited the Secretary-General to explore ways to enhance implementation mechanisms and to follow up on the various initiatives and resolutions on enhancing the dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

The varied statements of member states, the proceedings of the informal interactive hearing, and the President’s concluding remarks are expected to constitute a significant and lasting body of outcomes that can guide action at the national, regional and international level in advancing inter-religious and intercultural understanding. Just as important as the details of any courses of action that may be proposed, is the very holding of this major event at ministerial level, which sends an important signal to governmental and civil society actors as well as to international organizations that economic, social, environmental and cultural policies and programmes need to take increasingly into account – explicitly or at least implicitly – the inter-religious and intercultural dimension of the challenges faced by the world, to ensure that the responses to these are sustainable and effective in preventing conflict in the 21st century.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/follow-up/hld-interreligious.shtml>

Global dialogue on development

Economic and social issues in the spotlight at 62nd General Assembly

Edmund Phelps, 2006 Nobel Prize winner in economics, delivers keynote address on 8 October

The General Assembly Second Committee, responsible for economic and financial affairs, and the Third Committee, devoted to social, humanitarian and cultural matters, dive into their respective programmes of work starting 8 October. The Second Committee will consider such issues as protection of global climate for present and future generations and operational activities for development of the UN system as its 62nd session heads into high gear this month. Items slated for review include follow-up to, and implementation of, the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development; macroeconomic policy questions, including the international financial system and external debt crises; globalization and interdependence; 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 natural resources; sustainable development; implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme; implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; operational activities for development; groups of countries in special situations, such as least developed and landlocked developing countries; and training and research.

This year, the Second Committee is chaired by H.E. Ambassador Kirsti Lintonen of Finland. Vice-Chairpersons are Peter Le Roux of South Africa, Hassan Ali Saleh of Lebanon, and Melanie Santizo-Sandoval of Guatemala. Tamar Tchitanava of Georgia is serving as Rapporteur. Raymond Osbourne Wolfe of is Chairman of the Third Committee.

The DESA Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination is organizing several panel discussions and other events to support the work of the Assembly and its Second Committee. The panel discussions and keynote addresses feature high-level experts, including renowned academics, representatives of the United Nations system, civil society and private sector.

Edmund Phelps, 2006 Nobel Prize winner in economics and Professor of Economics at Columbia University, will deliver a keynote address on 8 October. Dr. Phelps' Nobel award-winning work on employment, capital accumulation and intergenerational trade-offs has had great impact on macroeconomic policy-making. Mr. Phelps is expected to share his perspectives on the application of his theories to economic policy in developing countries in order to improve development outcomes.

On 9 October, a roundtable will take place on the UN development system response to different countries' needs and priorities in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The event is related to the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities, and seeks to introduce fresh perspectives on coherence in the work of the UN development system at the country-level. The roundtable will provide an opportunity to address linkages between the policy review and recommendations of the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, and to discuss progress of the "Delivering as One" pilot.

A panel discussion on the Doha development round will take place on 25 October. The panel will deal with the benefits that could accrue to both developing and developed countries from the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round of Trade Negotiations and the obstacles that impede this achievement. Panelists will present their outlook on the WTO negotiations and propose actions to be taken to overcome the impasse. Pascal Lamy, Director-General of the WTO will participate, along with Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Denis Redonnet, European Union Commission Deputy Head of Cabinet for External Trade, Roberto Azevedo, Under-Secretary-General of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, and other speakers to be confirmed.

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

Comprehensive policy review of operational activities

Triennial comprehensive policy review to adopt norms for all UN organizations through 2010

This year, the General Assembly will conduct a triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the broad UN system, a thorough and comprehensive assessment of action taken by the UN family to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of activities in the field.

The Economic and Social Council reviewed an analytical report of the Secretary-General on this issue in July. Now, in October, it is the Assembly's turn to consider the issue, aided by a second report containing recommendations of the Secretary-General for managing operational activities through 2010. Both reports were prepared by the Office of Economic and Social Council Support in DESA. A comprehensive statistical analysis of the financing of operational activities for development of the UN system in 2005 and 2006 will also be presented.

Recommendations cover a range of territory, including: substantial and sustained increase of non-earmarked funding for operational activities; improvements in results-based management; efficiency and coherence of the UN system; development of a comprehensive financial reporting system; reinforcement of national ownership and leadership of activities, in particular of capacity-building efforts; mainstreaming of South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as gender and women's empowerment; enhancement of the role of the UN system in transition from relief to development; strengthening of relevance, coherence and effectiveness in the delivery of operational activities at the country level; improvement of UN staff capacities and knowledge management; and emphasis on development of evaluation capacity in recipient countries, along with strengthened evaluation functions in the UN system.

Once delegates have had a chance to deliberate on these matters, the General Assembly is expected to adopt a resolution providing further guidance to the UN system for the next three years. The policy directives mandated by the Assembly are considered norms to be applied by all funds, programmes, specialized agencies and other affiliated UN entities.

The research conducted by DESA to prepare for the policy review has involved intensive consultative processes with Member States and with all UN organizations in addition to independent, credible, and evidence-based evaluations involving document reviews, surveys and field visits.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/tcpr.htm>

World leaders call for coalition to confront climate change

Over 150 countries attend the largest-ever gathering on climate change

The largest-ever gathering of world leaders on climate change ended on 24 September with a call to forge a coalition to speed up a global response to an issue that Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, has identified as one of his top priorities. National action on climate change is important, but the climate challenge must essentially be confronted within a global framework, "one that guarantees the highest level of international cooperation," suggested the Secretary-General to top officials from over 150 nations, including 80 Heads of State or Government.

This framework must include bolstered leadership by industrialized countries on emissions reductions, the provision of mitigation incentives for developing countries – without compromising economic growth or poverty reduction efforts – and an increase in support for adaptation, especially in least developed and small island developing States.

The world's immediate challenge is to transform our common concern into a new consensus on the way forward, Mr. Ban said. "This journey begins in Bali this December. It will succeed or fail based on the strength of the leadership and commitment displayed by the people in this hall." It is hoped that negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bali, Indonesia, in December will help move governments towards a new political and legal arrangement by 2012, when the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol ends.

The President of the General Assembly, H.E. Dr. Srgjan Kerim, appealed to countries not to lose the current momentum, and proposed creating a

comprehensive roadmap to guide the way forward for the UN system and its Member States: “To outline the instruments we have and structures necessary to address climate change.” Mr. Kerim announced that at the beginning of next year he will convene a thematic debate to begin to forge that consensus and elaborate the steps the UN should take to enhance its contribution.

The Secretary-General concluded with an appeal to world leaders: “We hold the future in our hands. Together, we must ensure that our grandchildren will not have to ask why we failed to do the right thing, and let them suffer the consequences.”

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/climatechange/2007highlevel/>

Trends and analysis

International cooperation in tax matters

Experts to discuss tax evasion and taxation of development projects, among other issues

The twenty-five experts who make up the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters will meet from 29 October to 2 November in Geneva. Participants will examine issues such as the improper use of tax treaties to avoid taxes, taxation of development projects, exchange of information between tax authorities, and dispute resolution in international taxation. Discussions will feed into an update of the UN Model Tax Convention, on which many bilateral agreements are based.

Committee members will consider ways of combating tax avoidance and evasion through treaty and domestic law provisions. They will discuss the definition of “permanent establishment”, a term that refers to the degree of economic engagement in a country. A designation of permanent establishment generally allows national authorities to tax profits of the established activity, and is especially important where there is trade in services, rather than goods. The assembled experts will also exchange views on whether development projects should be subject to the normal tax rules or granted tax exemptions.

Exchange of information between tax authorities will be stressed as a means of promoting the integrity of tax systems by safeguarding them against evasion and reducing aggressive tax avoidance. The group of experts will also consider the revision of the UN Manual for the Negotiation of Bilateral Tax Treaties, which assists developing countries in bilateral tax treaty negotiations with developed countries. Lastly, the Committee will address the treatment of Islamic financial instruments under tax treaties that are geared to interest bearing instruments, and may not be well-suited to Islamic financial instruments that have no “interest” component.

The Committee of Experts is comprised of individuals nominated by governments and acting in their personal capacity. They are drawn from the fields of tax policy and tax administration, and are selected in consideration of equitable geographical distribution and representation of different tax systems. The members are appointed by the Secretary-General for a term of four years, after

notification to the Economic and Social Council to which the Committee reports.

For more information:

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

Measuring violence against women

General Assembly seeks indicators to assess scope, prevalence, and incidence of aggression

Efforts to eliminate violence against women commonly materialize in the form of gender equality policies in different fields. But assessing success or failure of such policies hinges on the availability of reliable data on whether violence has increased or decreased as a result of their adoption. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Statistics Division in DESA, together with ECE, will hold an expert group meeting on indicators of violence against women in response to a General Assembly mandate to develop a set of measures that can be used by countries to assess the scope, prevalence and incidence of such aggression. The meeting will be held in Geneva from 8 to 10 October.

Indicators proposed by a range of governmental and non-governmental actors so far cover areas such as prevalence, severity and impact, risk factors, victim support, public attitudes and perceptions, and measures to combat violence against women. Assessment of current initiatives, and recommendations for further action, will be summed up in a report for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women and Statistical Commission.

For more information:

<http://www.unecce.org/stats/documents/2007.10.gender.htm>

New financial tools for sustainable development

Innovation in research investment, insurance, and municipal bonds can help overcome the finance gap

Financial tools to encourage innovative sustainable development projects will be in the spotlight in New York on 18 and 19 October. An expert group meeting organized by DESA’s Division for Sustainable Development will pave the way for the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development by discussing the challenges of introducing innovative financial instruments in support of agriculture,

desertification, drought, rural development, and Africa. Specific ideas include funds for agricultural research and development, index-based insurance products for agriculture, micro-health insurance in Africa, and sub-national instruments for financing basic utilities.

In recent years, there has been shift in the way agricultural research and development is financed, with fewer public funds available. In Africa, the problem is acute due to scarce and scattered human and financial resources. The first of four sessions at the New York meeting will provide an overview of new methods of financing research such as advanced purchase commitments and cash-prizes.

Agricultural insurance products based on weather indexes will be the subject of the second session. Such products can be an attractive option for farmers in developing countries, especially in those economies based on rain-fed agriculture. The scope and limits of insurance will be explored along with risk sharing between government and beneficiaries.

Africa's experience with micro-health insurance and the potential for coverage scale-up will be examined. Sub-Saharan Africa has the world's highest maternal mortality, with HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis wrecking havoc on the continent's population. There is a pressing need for greater involvement of the private sector in healthcare delivery in Africa, and thus the need for sustainable business models. The third session will assess the performance of micro-health insurance initiatives, and consider financial sustainability in light of the ability of consumers and governments to pay.

The last session will deal with long-term financing of utilities. Borrowing has traditionally not been seen as a viable financing option for water and electricity at the local level. Yet the demands placed on municipalities by rapid urbanization, fiscal decentralization, and decreased transfers from central governments are forcing a reconsideration of conventional practices. In this vein, success stories in attracting domestic and international investors to municipal bonds in developing countries will be shared, along with the role of intermediaries and pooled financing arrangements to distribute risk and enhance the credit of local authorities.

The meeting will bring together academics, development institutions, practitioners in the field, and private sector actors. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, will deliver introductory remarks.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/finance/egm2007/>

Decent work for all

What are the obstacles countries face the quest for full employment and decent work for all? Experts are meeting in New York from 2 to 4 October to examine this question by sharing national and regional experiences with job creation. The meeting is organized by the Division for Social Policy and Development in DESA, and will result in a brief summary with specific policy recommendations.

This year, the 45th session of the Commission for Social Development began a two-year review and policy cycle on this theme. Serviced by DESA, the Commission's policy segment in 2008 is expected to lead to a negotiated outcome with action-oriented policy recommendations, based in part on the findings of the assembled experts in October.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/meetings/egm5/>

Innovation and stability in public service

Innovation may appear to be at odds with the predictability and stability that is often associated with – and expected from – public institutions. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management in DESA will participate in a high level panel on innovation in public administration during the Annual Congress of the Latin American Centre of Administration for Development that may well reconcile these two notions.

Efficiency, equity, professional management, developing inclusive policies to fight poverty and encouraging alliances and networks to provide public services are themes that will be explored in the workshop, to be held in Santo Domingo from 30 October to 3 November. Guido Bertucci, Director of DPADM, will sit alongside the Governor of the State of Bahia in Brasil, the Minister of the Presidency of Chile, the Minister of Public Service of Dominican Republic and two high level experts in the area of public administration in Latin America.

For more information: <http://www.clad.org.ve/>

Technical cooperation

The role of judges and parliamentarians in fighting discrimination against women

Workshop in Amman seeks to enhance application of women's anti-discrimination convention

Eleven of thirteen countries in Western Asia have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Many have constitutional guarantees granting women equal rights with men. Yet de facto discrimination against women remains in education, employment, health, public life, decision-making, and in the family. To encourage judges and parliamentarians to protect and promote rights embodied in the treaty, DESA's Division for the Advancement of Women, together with ESCWA, is organizing a regional workshop in Amman, Jordan, from 17 to 19 October.

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recently called for greater involvement of judges and parliamentarians in raising awareness of the Convention, and reporting on implementation. While judges have the power to use international human rights law to protect the rights and interests of women and girls, and to interpret national laws in a gender-sensitive manner, too few know about the treaty or apply it in judicial settings.

Parliamentarians, for their part, drive legal reform by reviewing and enacting laws. Legislators can narrow the scope of reservations to the Convention, allocate resources for programmes that encourage gender equality, and ensure that domestic policy is in tune with a country's international obligations.

About thirty judges and parliamentarians are expected to take part in the workshop. Among other things, presenters will shed light on the steps needed to enact and interpret laws that accord with the Convention, suggest ways to reconcile provisions of the treaty with Islamic law, and highlight some of the negative effects that reservations to the Convention can have on women of the region.

For more information:

<http://www.escwa.org.lb/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=612E>

Local women leaders of Africa on study tour

The Euro-Africa Partnership for Decentralized Governance is an initiative supported by DESA, the Regional Assembly of Tuscany in Italy, and the Conference of European Legislative Regional Assemblies, which aims to strengthen the capacity of local governments in Africa to engage in decentralization efforts. As part of this initiative, a group of local government leaders in Africa will gather in central Italy from 4 to 11 October.

Participants in the study tour include elected women leaders from local governments in Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali, Rwanda and Uganda. These policy-makers will attend the Assembly of Local Institutions for Peace and Human Rights in Perugia, will meet officials of the Regional Assembly of Tuscany and of local Italian institutions, and interact with representatives from academia.

For more information:

<http://www.euroafricanpartnership.org>

Public governance and East Asian development

DESA joins forces with Korean scholars to promote development through citizen engagement

Social justice and civil society engagement are not merely ethical principles of development, they are also necessary conditions for achieving stable economic growth. A



comparative analysis of East Asian countries has shown that stressing human rights, setting in motion strategies for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, and boosting citizen participation in governance lead to more equitable, and sustainable, development. These ideas were the subject of a graduate course on global governance and East Asian development from the UN perspective, presented by the DESA Division for Public Administration and Development Management this summer at Kyung Hee University, in Seoul.

Visiting lecturers from DESA sought to create awareness of the relationship between global and national governance, and socio-economic development. Emphasis was placed the need to incorporate the UN development and human rights agendas in public governance, and boost civil society engagement in policy processes. Some forty students signed up.

DESA is currently working on a monograph intended for use as a reference in future courses. The department is also collaborating with Kyung Hee University on a world civic forum to be held in 2009 on the subject of just societies, from vision to action.

Geospatial technology and census mapping

Regional workshops in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean focus on census mapping

Three regional workshops this month will highlight the application of geographic information systems and other geospatial technology to census mapping with an emphasis on preparation of enumeration, enumeration operations, analysis and dissemination of data. The workshops will take place in Lusaka from 8 to 12 October, in Bangkok from 15 to 19 October, and in Port-of-Spain from 22 to 26 October.

The workshops will begin with a review of the fundamentals of geographic information systems and census geography concepts, especially geo-coding systems. It will then focus on practical data collection issues such as conversion to digital format, and on GIS-based data analysis and dissemination, showing examples of use with appropriate software. In addition to learning technical skills, participants will have the opportunity to discuss the institutional, organizational and financial aspects of GIS roll-out. The revised United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses will be presented.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/meetings/wshops/>

Compilation of economic statistics in Africa

The DESA Statistics Division, in collaboration with ECA, is organizing a second regional workshop on compilation of basic economic statistics for African countries in Addis Ababa, from 16 to 19 October. DESA has stepped up efforts in the region to disseminate knowledge of statistical data compilation norms and methods. The goal is to enable statistical offices in Africa to produce data that meets the needs of policy-makers and the business community that meets generally-accepted standards embodied in the revised 1993 System of National Accounts. Participants will also be able to exchange views on country practices, needs and actions required to improve compilation of basic economic statistics.

Public management in Latin America and the Caribbean

The third of a series of sub-regional training seminars on the implementation of the Ibero American Charter of Public Service will be held in Cartagena de India, Colombia from 16 to 19 October. The seminar will be attended by ministers and directors of public service in the Andean and Caribbean regions, and aims to analyze the management problems civil servants face in Latin American countries. Participants will also become familiar with the dynamics of institutional change, learn about reform strategies, and reflect on initiatives that may be introduced the Charter.

This training series is organized by DESA with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and the National Institute of Public Administration of Spain.

UNPAN e-knowledge management training

UNPAN members will be trained in the administration and maintenance of online information sources at a training workshop to take place from 23 to 26 October in Seoul. The UNPAN database includes events, articles, documents, and contact records. Trainees will not only be instructed on techniques of online information management, but also on sharing innovative practices in knowledge

management as part of UNPAN's underlying capacity-building efforts. The event is being organized by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management in DESA, in cooperation with the Ministry of Government Administration and Home Affairs of the Republic of Korea, and the UN Project Office on Governance.

For more information:

http://www.unpan.org/directory/conference/guest/browseoneconference.asp?conference_id=2117

Call for applications for 2008 public service awards

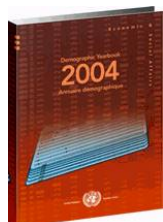
The DESA Division for Public Administration and Development Management is now accepting applications for the 2008 United Nations Public Service Awards. The United Nations Public Service Awards are considered the most prestigious international recognition of excellence in public service. Institutions worldwide are encouraged to apply. The application deadline is 30 November.

For more information:

http://www.unpan.org/dpepa_psaward.asp

Publications and websites

Statistical compilations

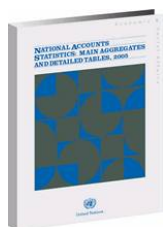


Demographic Yearbook 2004

The 2004 edition of the Demographic Yearbook includes statistics on population size and composition, fertility, mortality, infant and foetal mortality, marriages and divorces. It also includes a detailed set of technical notes explaining the origin, availability, timeliness, quality, reliability and coverage of the data presented. The primary sources of data reported are national population and housing censuses, population-related statistics from national administrative recording systems, and population and household surveys reported by national statistical authorities. The 2004 Yearbook presents updated data on deaths and death rates by cause of death, which was last published in the 2002 issue, as well as a summary table of the availability of sex-disaggregated data by country and area. Publication symbol ST/ESA/STAT/SER.R/35. Sales number E/F.07.XIII.1.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dyb2.htm>



National Accounts Statistics 2005: Main Aggregates and Detailed Tables

This title contains detailed national accounts statistics in national currencies of 178 countries or areas from 1994 to 2005. The National Accounts tables are a valuable source of information on the economies of the world, covering aggregates such as gross domestic product, national income, saving, household and government consumption expenditure including detailed consumption classes of products, gross capital formation, exports and imports, value added by economic activities and relations among product, income, final consumption, saving, gross capital formation and net lending. In addition, the compilation contains detailed data by sector drawn from production, generation of income, allocation of

primary income, secondary distribution of income, use of disposable income, capital, and financial accounts, where available.

Statistics for each country or area are presented in separate chapters with uniform table headings and classifications as recommended in the United Nations System of National Accounts. A summary of the SNA conceptual framework, classifications and definitions is included. Publication symbol ST/ESA/STAT/SER.X/36. Sales number E.06.XVII.11.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/nasp4.htm>



Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online

MBS provides monthly statistics on more than 50 indicators from over 200 countries and areas, together with special tables illustrating important economic developments. Quarterly data for significant world and regional aggregates are included regularly.

Vol. LXI, no. 8, August 2007,
ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/416

Special features in this issue: Indices of world industrial production by branches of industry and by regions; producer price indices; earnings in manufacturing, by sex; construction of new buildings; total exports and imports by regions including volume and unit value indices and terms of trade.

For more information: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mbs>

Working papers

Challenges and Priorities in Reforming Governance and Public Administration in the Middle East, Northern Africa, and Western Balkans

These are challenging times for governments around the world. Since the middle of the twentieth century, and particularly since the beginning of the new millennium, governments have been under growing pressure to respond to the evolving demands of citizens and to function within an increasingly

complex global environment. Governments must address domestic priorities such as poverty, unemployment, educational deficits, and environmental degradation while simultaneously introducing whatever changes are necessary to ensure effective integration into the world economy. Prepared by DPADM, this paper highlights governance challenges that countries from the southern and western Mediterranean have had to face in recent years, and suggests priorities for public administration reform at the regional and sub-regional levels.

To download:

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan027287.pdf>

Corruption and Democracy

What is the impact of democracy on corruption? In most models, analysts assume a negative relationship with more democracy leading to less corruption. But recent theoretical developments, case evidence, and a panel data set covering a large number of countries from 1996 to 2003 suggest an inverted “U” relationship between corruption and democracy. According to the author, the turning point in corruption occurs rather early in the life of new democracies and at rather low per capita incomes.

To download:

http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2007/wp55_2007.pdf

Outreach material



DESA Policy Briefs

The second and third titles in DESA’s series of economic policy notes draw on major findings of the recent World Economic and Social Survey 2007 to highlight the rising

costs of health care, and the challenges of income security associated with an ageing population. Increases in health costs due to ageing should be manageable, according to brief number 2, if governments put greater emphasis on preventive measures which could limit the incidence of chronic diseases. Brief number 3 explains that the surest way to address income security is to have a universal social pension that provides a floor below which nobody could fall. Universal pensions can also provide the basis for a more comprehensive pension

system consisting of a mixture of public and private initiatives adapted to existing country practices, financial circumstances and equity considerations.

For more information:

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



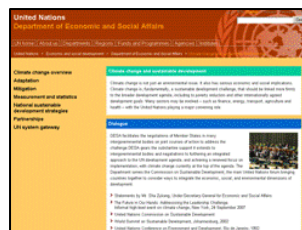
Children’s art exhibit to eradicate poverty

The International Children’s Art Competition was organized by DESA in collaboration with the Department of Public Information and the UN Postal Administration to commemorate the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October. Children around the world were asked to design a United Nations stamp on the theme “We can end poverty.” Over 12,000 entries were received from 124 countries. From 8 to 19 October, the fifty best designs will be displayed in the Visitors’ Lobby of UN Headquarters in New York. The six winning designs will be issued as UN stamps in 2008.

For more information:

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

Websites



Climate change and sustainable development

DESA has launched a new website that covers the issue of climate change from the perspective of sustainable development. Climate change is not just an environmental issue. It also has serious economic and social implications that may compromise the broader UN development agenda. Adaptation and mitigation efforts are vital, while integration of climate change into national sustainable development strategies, and creation of partnerships for action are also important goals.

To visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/dsea/climatechange/>

Comings and goings

Goings



Ms. JoAnne DiSano, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, retired on 16 September after nine years of dedicated service to the Organization. In addition to overseeing support to the

Commission on Sustainable Development, Ms. DiSano was in charge of the Secretariat of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development which brought together 100 Heads of State and 25,000 participants, culminating in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. She also led the preparatory process for the Mauritius International Meeting on small island developing States in 2005. Prior to joining the United Nations, Ms. DiSano held a number of executive positions in the Australian and Canadian governments working on environmental, employment and immigration issues.



Mr. Manuel Dengo, Chief of the Water, Natural Resources and Small Island Developing States Branch in the Division for Sustainable Development, retired on 30 September having been with

DESA since 1997. As the UN's chief expert on water resources management, Mr. Dengo guided the five-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action on SIDS, and acted as Secretary of UN-Water, the United Nations system mechanism for coordination of action on water resources and sanitation. Prior to joining DESA, he served for three years as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office at Geneva, as coordinator of the 1994 World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, and as a technical expert on hydrometeorology and water resources in Latin America for fifteen years at the World Meteorological Organization.



Mr. Claude Sauveplane, Inter-regional Adviser on Water Resources in the Division for Sustainable Development, retired from the United Nations on 30 September having spent twenty

years managing development projects and providing policy advice at the request of national governments, largely in Africa. Mr. Sauveplane is an expert on

governance and reform of the water and sanitation sectors, national and transboundary water resources management, rural water supply and sanitation, and performance of water and sanitation services. Before joining the United Nations, he served as a hydrogeologist with the Alberta Research Council in Canada, and with the French Geological Survey. Mr. Sauveplane holds a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Alberta.

The following staff members also retired in September:

Ms. Daisy Johns, Administrative Assistant, Executive Office

Ms. Marina Mak, Secretary, Financing for Development Office

Ms. Ada Samuelsson, Economic Affairs Officer, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Comings

The following staff members were promoted in September:

Mr. Bekuretsion Amdemariam, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Ms. Aminata Fofana, Staff Assistant, Division for Sustainable Development

Ms. Kay Govia, Staff Assistant, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Calendar

October

DESA/ECA Online Discussion on Women, Political Participation and Decision-making in Africa
4 September-14 October

General Assembly

62nd session, New York, 18 September-December

- High-level Dialogue on Inter-religious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, 4-5 October
- Second Committee, convening 8 October
- Third Committee, convening 8 October
- High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, 23-24 October

DESA Expert Group Meeting on Full Employment and Decent Work for All
New York, 2-4 October

DESA/Regional Assembly of Tuscany/Conference of European Legislative Regional Assemblies: Study Tour of Elected Local Government Women Leaders in Africa
Rome, 4-11 October

DESA/Regional Commissions Expert Group Meeting on Indicators to Measure Violence against Women
Geneva, 8-10 October

DESA Workshop on Census Cartography and Management
Lusaka, 8-12 October

International Children's Art Exhibit
New York, 8-19 October

DESA/Inter-Parliamentary Union/Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments:
World e-Parliament Conference 2007
Geneva, 10-12 October

DESA Workshop on Census Cartography and Management
Bangkok, 15-19 October

DESA/Government of Spain: Sub-Regional Training Seminar on the Implementation of the Ibero-American Charter for the Public Service
Cartagena de Indias, 16-19 October

DESA/ECA Regional Workshop for African Countries on Compilation of Basic Economic Statistics
Addis Ababa, 16-19 October

DESA/ESCWA Workshop on the Role of Judges and Parliamentarians in Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Amman, 17-19 October

DESA Expert Group Meeting on Innovative Finance for Sustainable Development
New York, 18-19 October

DESA Workshop on Census Cartography and Management
Port-of-Spain, 22-26 October

DESA/Government of the Republic of Korea: 5th UNPAN e-Knowledge Management Training Workshop
Seoul, 23-26 October

Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

3rd session, Geneva, 29 October-2 November

DESA High-level Panel on Innovations in Public Administration
12th Congress of the Latin American Centre of Administration for Development, Santo Domingo, 30 October-3 November

November

Pan African Conference of Ministers of Local Government: Leadership Capacity Building for Decentralized Governance and Poverty Reduction in Africa
Monrovia, 20-22 November

DESA 6th Coordination Meeting on International Migration
New York, 26-27 November

Observances

International Day of Older Persons

1 October

Addressing the challenges and opportunities of ageing, with an emphasis on empowerment, is the theme of the International Day of Older Persons for 2007. The role of older persons in economic and social development is a major feature of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, as is promoting democracy and the rights of older persons through their participation in all aspects of society. This year marks the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Madrid Plan, and the launch of its first review and appraisal. Crucially, this will be based on an inclusive and participatory approach, engaging older persons themselves in the process.

For more information:

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

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17 October

This year's theme is "People living in poverty as agents of change: 20th anniversary of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty". The event will include an attempt to "stand up and speak out" to break the Guinness World record set in 2006 and the commemoration of the day including personal testimonies of extreme poverty. As part of the commemoration, an exhibit at UN Headquarters in New York will display the winning designs of an international children's art competition.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntlDay/2007intlday.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.

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.