



Timothy E. Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation and former United States senator, hosts a press conference on 27 February to introduce a report of the Scientific Expert Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, prepared for the 15th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

A recording of the webcast can be viewed online at <http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/pressconference/pc070227.rm>. A summary podcast is also available at <http://radio.un.org/play.asp?NewsID=6401>.

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Joining forces for middle-income countries

International cooperation with intermediate economies is needed to prevent them from descending the ladder of development

The health of middle-income countries is to the international system what a strong middle class is to any society, the foundation upon which social achievements can be sustained. And as is the case with societies in general, economic advancement of the middle-income group is an essential ingredient of broader regional stability. Yet the high volatility of economic growth among middle-income countries has resulted in frequent growth collapses, which in turn

have generated serious pressures on democratic governance. Given that forty percent of the world's people surviving on less than two dollars a day live in middle-income nations, there is a sense in some corners of a wolf always at the door.

An Intergovernmental Conference on Development Cooperation with Middle-income Countries will take place in Madrid from 1 to 2 March to address these concerns, and explore ways of engaging the international community more fully in the welfare of MICs. All countries have a vested interest in ensuring that middle-income nations are able to consolidate the gains they have made, and continue to move forward on the UN development agenda.

The Conference has been organized by the Government of Spain in collaboration with DESA, and is expected to bring together ministers and other representatives of donor and middle-income countries,

along with officials of international organizations including international financial institutions. Conference delegates will examine the role of the various stakeholders in development policy, identify the most significant needs of middle-income countries, and recommend areas where additional international support would be most effective.

The event will revolve around four working sessions with discussions on the need for financial stability and trade inclusion of MICs, on social cohesion, on democratic governance, and on international cooperation with the middle-income group of developing nations. Opening remarks will be made by the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Miguel Ángel Moratinos, and by Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, José Antonio Ocampo, followed by the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Rodrigo Rato, and Supachai Panichpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD.

Hubs of regional development

Over the last five years, following the Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, a new consensus has emerged on the need to fight extreme poverty. This has taken the form of pledges to increased debt relief and development aid for the least developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, where levels of extreme poverty and deprivation are staggering.

Clearly, Africa is a priority, and for good reason. Yet aid provided to the poorest countries need not divert attention from the MICs which stand to benefit from other forms of development cooperation.

According to a study on development cooperation with MICs, prepared under the direction of Spanish scholar José Antonio Alonso together with DESA, development cooperation with MICs should “support their progress and that of their regional setting, and bring more stable governance to the international system.” The continuing progress of the group of middle-income economies is pivotal to the dynamism of the international system. In much of the developing world, a small number of MICs – among them China, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa – account for between one third and one half of the regional population and gross national product. Consequently, the health of one of these “development hubs”, whether strong or weak, has an important influence on the advancement of the region as a whole.

The need to anchor development

MICs are a heterogeneous group. Although there is no widely accepted definition, MICs are generally understood to comprise some 80 states with per capita income in 2005 ranging from \$900 to about \$10,000. The list includes both large and small countries, some of continental size and some islands. Some are rich in natural resources such as oil and gas. Some export primary commodities while others export manufactures and services. But all are constantly subject to market vicissitudes that can derail or reverse achievements. The high volatility of economic growth in a number of MICs is a clear impediment to development, according to the report. Most of these countries are vulnerable to external shocks such as the sudden and abrupt decline in the value of exports, rapid escalation of international interest rates, and reversal of private flows. Income inequality within middle-income countries also tends to be much higher than it is in high-income countries, indeed even higher than in low-income countries accounting for high rates of poverty that are often out of line with national development in the aggregate.

During the period 1978-2003, only one country successfully climbed from the low-income to the middle-income rung of economic development, while as many as twenty-five countries moved in the opposite direction, from the middle-income to the low-income group. While ten countries managed to shift from the middle-income to high-income rung, the trend over the last twenty-five years has clearly been downward making a rather compelling case for enhanced international cooperation in support of MICs.

The Monterrey consensus of 2002 held that each developing country should accept political responsibility for its own development, for example by devising and implementing poverty reduction measures that are consistent with its own national development goals and priorities. This is not always easy. Nonetheless, the international community can provide incentives that help keep poverty eradication at the top of the domestic agenda. One such mechanism would be an easing of the financial criteria for determining aid eligibility. Countries that progress economically should not be penalized by sharp cut-off lines between groups of aid beneficiaries that can discourage national initiative. Many MICs are also plagued by acute levels of debt, yet are not eligible for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. Reduction or restructuring of the external debt of middle-income countries is another incentive that could be offered to promote national poverty eradication efforts.

The development cooperation system, as the report recommends, should work with countries at all levels

of development, not only those on the lower rungs of the development ladder, adjusting and modifying the intensity of aid to meet specific needs at each stage.

Aid effectiveness and ownership

The role of donors and international organizations in cooperation with MICs are expected to be the subject of remarks by high representatives of MICs, among them Cape Verde's Foreign Minister, Victor Manuel Barbosa, and Enrique Iglesias, Secretary General of the Iberoamerican General Secretariat. Francisco E. Laínez, Foreign Minister of El Salvador will act as the chairman of a panel on this topic. Ways of increasing financial resources available to MICs will be considered, as will encouraging "a more flexible use of those resources, with less conditionality," points out Cristian Ossa, an adviser in the Financing for Development Office of DESA and member of the team helping to organize the conference. As spelled out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of March 2005, the effectiveness of aid depends crucially on giving the recipient country ownership of development strategies.

Although the recipient country should lead decisions on the use of aid, fostering domestic ownership may be at odds with conditionality, which has often constrained the policy choices of developing countries. The strong commitment to national policy space made by Member-States at the 2005 World Summit recognized the need to change course.

South-South cooperation gains foothold

Conference delegates will also discuss how to improve technical assistance to MICs. "Official financial assistance is not as important to most MICs in the upper-income stratum as technical assistance," says Mr. Ossa. "This can be provided in numerous areas, ranging from health programmes for developing vaccines to the development of plants resilient to tropical soils and frequent droughts, and so on" A good portion of foreign assistance to this group of countries is provided in the form of advisory services such as support to the design of economic policies, strengthening of institutions, and the sharing of experiences, but direct technical assistance can still be given a boost.

Technical cooperation is, on the other hand, gaining foothold via South-South cooperation, which bolsters a sense of ownership thanks to its horizontal structure. A remarkable initiative in this area is the India-Brazil-

South Africa Dialogue Forum, a mechanism for political consultation and coordination and strengthening cooperation in specific economic areas, as well as for encouraging economic relations among these three countries. China, a leading proponent of South-South cooperation, had trained some 7,000 African workers in a variety of jobs and programmes by the end of 2003, while India has spent over \$2 billion in wide-ranging programs under the India Development Initiative.

Often South-South development cooperation has been expressed in the macroeconomic realm through dialogue on economic policies and provision of liquidity in times of crises, in financing for development through Multilateral Development Banks owned by developing countries, and initiatives for the creation of regional bond markets.

Preventing financial shocks

The conference will address the vital need for financial stability in MICs. "In the financial crises that hit Asia and Latin America in the 1980s and late 1990s most of the emerging markets affected were MICs," points out Mr. Ossa. "For these countries, such crises implied a major setback which translated into increased poverty and lower standards of living." In fact, the increase in poverty that occurs at times of crisis is greater and speedier than reduction in poverty during period of growth. The experience of Thailand, one of the countries hit hardest by the 1997 Asian financial crisis, will be represented at the conference by Chalongsob Sussangkarn, president of the Thailand Development Research Institute, who will speak following a presentation on financial stability by Spanish Secretary of State for Economy, David Vergara. Volodymyr Makukha, Ukraine's Minister for Economy, is expected to complete the panel.

During the Asian crisis, the sharp growth of volatile cross-border capital flows rendered the IMF's



traditional methods of crisis prevention and resolution much less effective. According to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2007, the Fund should therefore broaden its crisis-prevention toolkit to foster closer engagement with emerging market members. In other words, the international community should join forces to “provide financial support that is predictable, flexible and substantial.”

The risks from abrupt capital movements and contagion from crises, as Under-Secretary General Ocampo has often indicated, can be reduced “not only by consolidating good macroeconomic management, but also securing adequate space for counter-cyclical macroeconomic policies.” The development of deep domestic financial markets in local currencies is also one of the surest ways for MICs to achieve greater autonomy in economic policy.

Bolstering infrastructure investments

In addition to the instability engendered by abrupt capital movements, only a limited number of MICs have wide access to international capital markets, mostly in emerging markets. As Under-Secretary General Ocampo emphasizes, improving MICs’ stable access to multilateral financing and, especially, to private financing is more important to many countries in this group than direct official development assistance, which is likely to continue to be limited.

Perhaps also “even more important than ODA are development-friendly rules in the areas of finance, trade and technology;” that is, the conditions and rules under which countries integrate into the world economy.

The Madrid meeting will deal with the current rules and conditions governing the global economy through a panel on commercial insertion and competitive advantages of MICs that includes Jorge Enrique Triana, Foreign Minister of Argentina, and UNCTAD’s Secretary-General Panichpakdi. Algeria’s Foreign Minister, Mohammed Bedjaoui, will act as chairman.

The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2007 tells us that in 2006 China and India raised their exports in global trade by about 20 percent in real terms, resulting in improvement in domestic economic conditions and stronger interregional linkages.

Nevertheless, most developing countries remain vulnerable to a slowdown in the major developed economies and to volatility of international commodity and financial markets. Heavy dependence on primary commodities exports renders exports revenues in MICs unstable.

The best way to accelerate development of MICs is to support to their efforts to develop technology and research capacities. To this end, infrastructure investments are of the essence, and domestic constraints that hinder technology and research should be removed. It is here where official bilateral and multilateral resources can play a decisive role. “Infrastructure is very costly and only pays off in the long-term,” explains Mr. Ossa, “but moving into more competitive and productive areas by investing in infrastructure is vital to the long-term growth of MICs.”

Improvement of institutional quality, a priority

None of these targets can be achieved without building credible public institutions equipped with skilled personnel able to deliver. In the words of Under Secretary-General Ocampo, “MICs should make improving institutional quality a priority.” The conference’s last session on social cohesion and democratic governance will explore ways in which international cooperation can deepen MICs’ institutional development. Leire Pajín, Spanish Secretary of State for International Cooperation, and François Bourguignon, Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President for Development Economics at the World Bank will discuss this issue, along with Joao Cravinho, Portugal’s Secretary of state for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

International cooperation with MICs can materialize, according to the study, through assistance in the design of robust tax systems that improve the link between economic growth and social equity. At the same time, strong social safety nets must be built to anticipate and cushion the effects of macroeconomic shocks in the most vulnerable sectors.

Cooperation has also a role to play in the improvement of statistics, of human resource training, and in the strengthening of tax management institutions. Helping countries learn from the experiences of developed countries and other MICs, and encouraging the empowerment of social groups who can exert pressure to make institutions more inclusive and accountable can also be valuable.

MICs can make a difference in the provision of regional and global public goods such as peacebuilding, prevention of contagious diseases, financial stability and environmental sustainability.

Here is a case is made for backing the efforts of these countries to enhance their representation in international economic decision-making. The issue was at the core of the Monterrey Consensus on

Financing for Development, but since then only the IMF has taken any serious steps to expand the influence of MICs. Having the voices of MICs heard in worldwide forums, where far-reaching decisions with a global impact are made, continues to be a challenge.

For full access to the study on development cooperation with middle-income countries and other documentation for the conference, please visit <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdmission.htm>.

The DESA publication entitled Financing for Development: Building on Monterrey provides a comprehensive view of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development, including speeches, proposals, reports and resolutions. It can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdmission.htm>.

Global statistical system: the way forward

Building statistical capacity and broadening the scope of statistics remain the main challenges



The Statistical Commission has created the language for statisticians worldwide to communicate. If anniversaries are a good opportunity to take stock of accomplishments made and challenges ahead, the sixtieth anniversary of the

Statistical Commission reminds us that the body of statistical standards it has built throughout six decades allows for talking about a global statistical system in the first place. The poor ability in some developing countries to produce reliable data to monitor the internationally agreed development goals is, nonetheless, a symptom that statistical capacity building remains a major challenge for the global statistical system.

The Statistical Commission has succeeded in guiding national and international official statistics that have contributed greatly to the understanding of national and global trends. It has developed a global statistical system that is built upon the foundation of the national statistics offices and is supported by regional and international statistical offices. As the Chairperson of the Statistical Commission, Gilberto Calvillo, has

graphically described it, “The Commission effectively functions as the executive board of the global statistical system.”

The Commission certainly oversees the work of over twenty expert and interagency coordination bodies in virtually all statistical fields. In light of the technical recommendations of these groups, the Commission has adopted myriad international statistical standards and methods, which have opened the way to a full-fledged exchange and comparison of data on a global scale.

Standardization and dissemination of international statistics: the early years

When the Statistical Commission first met in 1946, uniformity of definitions and classifications was a pressing and urgent need. In its early years, the Commission set international standard classifications for merchandise trade, industries and commodities, and endorsed recommendations and guidelines for national population and housing censuses, household sample surveys and national accounts. The international System of National Accounts is arguably the best-known of internationally agreed standards. It is made up of integrated concepts, classifications, definitions and tabulations relating to national income, production and consumption, for example gross and net national income and production.

Among the most complete and comprehensive data sources in international statistics is the Demographic Yearbook, a compilation of population statistics from national population and housing censuses. The first Demographic Yearbook, for 1949, responded to the eagerness by countries, in the wake of the Second World War, to have updated, reliable and detailed statistics of their populations, including the populations of colonies and territories. The Commission led the way in calling for large-scale technical assistance to the newly-independent States to help build independent national statistical offices and their work programmes.

In addition, since the 1950s, the Commission has established standards and guidelines for income distribution vital statistics, social indicators, energy, and environment statistics that have opened the scope of the global statistical system.

Fostering statistical capacities in countries

The Statistical Commission began to embrace development statistics at the beginning of the 1970s following a request by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1566 (L) for “special regard to

reviewing and appraising economic and social progress,” within the frame of the implementation of the Second United Nations Development Decade. After repeated calls for better statistics from global conferences on global development issues starting on 1972, the Commission has become the international focal point for developing and standardizing statistics and indicators for monitoring internationally agreed development goals.

Over the last years, the Statistical Commission has supported the Economic and Social Council’s work on integrated and coordinated follow-up to major UN summits and conferences, for example by reviewing proposed conference indicators for technical soundness. Development indicators constitute an area in which the Statistical Commission plays a lead role in relation to the work of the ECOSOC system, noting in particular concerns about the ability of countries to produce Millennium Development Goal measures.

Last year ECOSOC responded to those concerns adopting a resolution that called attention to the need to strengthen the statistical capacity of countries at all levels. The resolution also gave the Statistics Division of DESA a strong mandate to improve the global MDG database, particularly with regard to its coverage and its presentation of data and metadata.

The Commission’s analysis of the availability of key indicators in each country paints a gloomy picture: a number of countries still lack sufficient capacity to fulfil even basic national and international data demands, and even less to produce such data to high quality standards.

As the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Jose Antonio Ocampo, highlighted on 26 February during the high-level forum on the Statistical Commission and the way forward for the global statistical system, statistical capacity building remains “a major challenge...Unless a significant effort and investment is made soon to strengthen national statistical capacity, especially in developing countries, reliable data to monitor development, including the UN development goals, will simply not exist for many countries and for years to come.”

Joining forces among the members of the global statistical system is a good way to enhance the statistical capacity of countries, according to the chairperson of the Statistical Commission, Mr. Calvillo. In a recent meeting of the members of the bureaux of the Council and its functional commissions, Mr. Calvillo proposed increasing coordination among national statistics offices, regional and international

agencies. In this way, the financial and technical support of multilateral agencies and donor countries could be received or implemented in accordance with national needs which would ultimately expand the technical capacity of national statistical offices.

A unified UN system

Cooperation among UN system agencies, especially in the area of data compilation and dissemination, remains a challenge. As Under-Secretary General Ocampo indicated during the forum on the global statistical system, improvement would “reduce the country response burden, make the international data flow more efficient and, most importantly, would reduce the danger of data inconsistencies,” both between national and international data and among different international sources. He applauded the work of the Inter-agency Expert Group on the MDG Indicators, headed by the Statistics Division, while calling for more concerted action.

The foundations of the global statistical system laid down by the Statistical Commission have proven to be resilient amidst the rapid changes brought about by globalization. National accounts and international merchandise trade statistics are basically well established around the world. However as Paul Cheung, Director of the UN Statistics Division, recognizes, globalization poses additional challenges for statisticians such as expanded coverage and greater detail on the rapidly growing service economy. No less important are the need to develop tools to measure the relationship between economic development and the environment, and track changes in an increasingly borderless global economy. Global times require global data, and an effective international statistical system to lead the way.

For more information:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/stacom_archive/statcom_events.htm

For the text of ESC resolution 2006/6 on strengthening statistical capacity, please see:

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

Global dialogue on development

Green light to resolutions on youth, older persons and African development

The Commission for Social Development urges greater attention to social groups in pursuit of national development goals

Adoption, by consensus, of key resolutions calling for greater attention to the needs of youth and elderly persons marked the end of the forty-fifth session of the Commission on 16 February.

The Commission recommended the adoption of a resolution on youth to the Economic and Social Council and, through the Council, adoption by the General Assembly of a supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth, stressing that young people are important actors in social development and encouraging Member-States to involve youth in all aspects of development that affect them. Specifically, consultations with youth organizations and the inclusion of youth representatives in national delegations to relevant United Nations forums should be considered. The Commission also reiterated the General Assembly's call on UN organizations to intensify inter-agency coordination of youth policies and programmes, urging the Secretary-General to take the lead "to move discussions from an ad hoc to a more regular basis" in cooperation with governments and youth-led-NGOs.

The Commission also asked for the development of a broad set of indicators related to youth, and recognized the importance of the World Youth Report, urging the Secretary-General to regularize its production as a biennial publication starting in 2009.

The adoption of a supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth would mean the addition of five new priority areas to the text. The Commission proposed action to set up systems to monitor the effects of globalization on youth, and to boost youth employment and skills development programmes. It proposed empowering young people to act as key contributors to an inclusive information society; called for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment for youth, for protection of youth from involvement in armed conflict and reintegration of youth ex-combatants, and tackled intergenerational issues, such

as measures to strengthen families and empower young women.

The UN Focal Point on Youth, Patience Stephens, welcomes the adoption of the supplement to the World Programme of Action for Youth. "While the process of negotiating this technical supplement was intense, Member-States' commitment to the long hours was itself an indication of their determination to respond to the changing and complex global context in which youth live."

In the wake of the first round of the Commission's appraisal of the International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, and five years after its adoption by the Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid, the Commission endorsed a resolution by which it would address the modalities of national and regional review and appraisal, and welcomed governments' offers to host regional review meetings this year. Myriad stakeholders, including civil society, autonomous institutions and academia, were invited to contribute to that process. The Commission has asked the Secretary-General to prepare an analysis of preliminary conclusions, capturing prevalent and emerging issues and presenting policy options.

A wide-ranging resolution on social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development was also adopted. The Commission underscored that rising poverty levels and social exclusion faced by many African countries called for the refashioning of social policies to step up social inclusion, promote economic activity and growth and, among other things, ensure job creation and decent work for all. According to the text, the Economic and Social Council would recommend that the Commission continue to give prominence to the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The Commission for Social Development is devoting the first of its new two-year policy and review cycles to the promotion of full employment and decent work for all. This year, the review cycle included a keynote address by Les Kettledas, the Deputy Director General for Labour Policy and Labour Market Programmes of the South African Department of Labour, and three panel discussions to elaborate on the priority theme. The outcome was a chairperson's summary of these discussions. In 2008, the Commission will take up the policy implications of the employment issue. (*See the February issue of DESA News.*)

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2007.htm>

Myriad events explore violence against girls in women's Commission

The implications of ECOSOC reform for the Commission on the Status of Women to be discussed by the President of the Council on 7 March

Ending the global pandemic of discrimination and violence against girls requires our individual and collective commitment. With this message, the Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro kicked off the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 26 February in New York. The priority theme of this year's session, which continues through 9 March, is the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, a form of violence that is persistent and invisible in all parts of the world.

The Commission's opening meeting served to frame the discussion. Deputy-Secretary-General regretted the fact that violence against girls remains "pervasive, perpetrated by family members, strangers and agents of the State" in all regions of the world, in the public and the private spheres, in peacetime and during armed conflict. In order to put an end to this affliction, she called for "creating an environment where such violence is not tolerated; to work for the full implementation of existing legal norms and policies; to make focused efforts to prosecute and punish perpetrators; to dedicate sufficient resources, and to fully involve men and boys in changing stereotypical attitudes and behaviour."

Looking into the specific work of the Commission, the President of the Economic and Social Council, Dalius Cekuolis, welcomed a decision to review the implementation of policy recommendations in a two to three year period, and praised the Commission's contribution to the work of its parent body. This much was evident from the adoption, in 1997, of the agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming and the systematic follow-up on gender mainstreaming in the time since. The 2006 Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Council's high-level segment, moreover, reinforced the notion that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are pivotal to the achievement of sustainable development, and to combating hunger, poverty and disease.

According to Cekuolis, last year's Ministerial declaration should be "the basis for the Council's future work," whose new mandate stresses national-level implementation. The priority theme of elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence

against the girl child has much to contribute to the Council's upcoming annual ministerial review. Cekuolis is expected to address the Commission on 7 March to discuss Council reform and implications for the Commission.

An innovation in the Commission's methods of work this year was the holding of a parallel event on 28 February to introduce the priority theme for its fifty-second session in 2008, on financing gender equality and empowerment of women. In the words of Cekuolis, this is set to be of much importance to the Council's Development Cooperation Forum.

An emerging issue to be considered by the Commission at this session follow-up to the Secretary-General's in-depth study at national and international levels on elimination of violence against women. A panel of experts will run an interactive dialogue in the afternoon of 1 March. The same day, a parallel event of the Commission and the Statistical Commission will discuss the development of indicators on the girl child and on violence against women in response to the General Assembly resolution on violence against women.

The Commission will also review implementation of agreed conclusions adopted on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality, which were adopted in 2004. The review will take the form of an open exchange of views on 2 March introduced by two keynote speakers. The outcome will be a moderator's summary.

Fifteen to twenty ministers participated in the high-level roundtable discussions on the first day, and over 2,000 NGO representatives are expected to attend the two-week session.

Girls speak out

Hundreds of girls under the age of eighteen are finding a place at the table in this year's session of the Commission. Whether as members of delegations or as participants in some of the dozens of parallel events, girls have arrived in New York to discuss and reflect on the elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Against this backdrop, the Economic and Social Council chamber is hosting the interactive event entitled "Girls speak out" on 2 March, which aims to place girls at the centre of the campaign to promote their rights worldwide. This event will feature girls as advocates, providing them with the opportunity to voice their concerns, act as agents of change in their own lives, families, communities and societies, and raise their visibility.

The interactive meeting is intended to empower girls to engage in policy development at all levels, give to their concerns center stage at the United Nations, and provide a forum to highlight grassroots advocacy strategies for overcoming discrimination and violence. Attendees will be encouraged to bring questions and statements addressing the status of girls and grassroots strategies for combating challenges.

For more information:

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

The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNICEF, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, and the Working Group on Girls of the NGO Committee on UNICEF will host the event. Government delegates, UN staff, NGO representatives, girls registered for the Commission, and youth from New York City have been invited.

For more information on the Commission and events:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/51sess.htm>



Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro pledges to engage the UN system in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women at the opening of the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on 26 February.

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/specialevents/se070226am.rm?start=00:33:05>

Dialogue on climate change and poverty alleviation at the Committee for Development Policy

The ninth session of the Committee for Development Policy will begin on 19 March with a plenary discussion on climate change and sustainable development. The Committee will also examine guidelines for adding newly identified countries to the list of least developed countries and for countries graduating from the list, and address the global partnership for poverty alleviation. The report of the session, which concludes on 23 March, will include policy recommendations for consideration by the Economic and Social Council.

Trends and analysis

UN Forum on Forests: charting the way to 2015

A country-led expert meeting in Bali, Indonesia lays groundwork for UNFF's April session and beyond

More than 150 experts from sixty-six countries, ten international organizations, three regional organizations and eleven major group organizations gathered for an international expert meeting from 13 to 16 February in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia. The meeting was a country-led initiative, co-hosted by the Governments of Indonesia and Germany, during which experts examined the elements of a new multi-year programme of work through 2015 to be adopted at the upcoming session of the UN Forum on Forests in April. Participants were given the opportunity to contribute to three parallel working groups. One group addressed future biennial themes of the Forum. A second reviewed modalities of Forum activities including arrangements for the International Year of Forests in 2011, stakeholder, regional and sub-regional involvement, expected outputs, and monitoring and review mechanisms. The third group explored ways to strengthen the regional dimensions of sustainable forest management in particular through enhanced relations with regional and sub-regional forest management entities.

The Co-Chair's summary report, available online, will be submitted for consideration by delegates to the seventh session of UNFF scheduled for 16 to 27 April in New York.

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

Expanding electronic, and mobile, government

DPADM explains the concept of E/M readiness to policy-makers in Cairo

Increasing electronic and mobile Government readiness is one of the best ways for policy makers to improve the provision of public goods in the twenty-first century. With this idea in mind, known colloquially as "E/M readiness", DPADM is developing regional reports intended to guide policymakers in the future delivery of electronic services. A concept paper on this topic was presented to a group of experts on

information and communications technology indicators meeting in Cairo from 13 to 15 February.

Organized by ESCWA and the Information and Decision Support Centre of the Government of Egypt, the meeting was an opportunity to discuss the best approach for the report with regional stakeholders with an emphasis on the needs of Arab States. ESCWA and other participating organizations at the regional level expressed appreciation for the initiative and an interest in joining DESA in developing the regional report as the project moves forward. The event was attended by decision makers, ICT experts, statisticians, and researchers in the field of measurement of indicators in education and e-government from Arab countries, as well as regional and international organizations, and academic and research institutions.

For more information:

<http://www.escwa.org.lb/wsis/meetings/13-15Feb07/main.html>

Spotlight on debt and finance in developing countries

Experts to meet in London in March to discuss emerging issues in global financial integration

The rise of global imbalances, debt sustainability, and the risk of financial crises are issues that dominate the current debate on globalization, and directly effect prospects for durable development of middle-income and low-income countries. A multi-stakeholder workshop on debt, finance and emerging issues in financial integration – organized by DESA's Financing for Development Office, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and the Commonwealth Business Council – will bring together some sixty high-level participants from around the world to review current issues in international finance in developing countries, and to move the debate further by discussing possible policy options. The meeting, to be held in London on 6 and 7 March, follows from the last round of multi-stakeholder consultations, held in 2005, during which it was agreed that improved mechanisms are needed for orderly debt workouts and that debtors and creditors should be more transparent. While agreement was not reached on a concept of debt sustainability, participants recognized that previous models to assess debt sustainability were incomplete and lacked analytical rigour.

The workshop in London will be attended by experts in finance from the IMF, international agencies, finance houses, and universities. A report and recommendations emanating from the meeting will feed into the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development in 2007 and the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to be held in Doha in the second half of 2008.

For more information:

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

Linking environment and economic development in Asia

A workshop in Bangkok to explore governance challenges in sustainable development

Capturing ways to ensure that sustainable development is reflected in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies will be the focus of a workshop organized by OECD in cooperation with the DESA Division for Sustainable Development, and ESCAP. The workshop, taking place in Bangkok from 8 to 9 March, is expected to gather policy makers from Asia and the Pacific and OECD countries to discuss the challenges of integrating sustainability and development, good governance, and stakeholder engagement.

Representatives of OECD, DESA/DSD, ESCAP, UNEP, UNDP as well as the IMF, World Bank, ADB and Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation will review working arrangements for cooperation at the country level with a view to building support, and ensuring coherence and efficiency.

Economic growth in Asia and the Pacific has been impressive over the past forty years. At the same time, there have been environmental and social costs. Economic growth has raised levels of consumption, pollution and waste to the point where the cost of environmental degradation is estimated at between 4 and 8 percent of GDP in many countries of the region. In addition, a considerable number of the poor are dependent on habitats which are gradually being degraded. What are the main challenges in implementing more ecological approaches to economic growth in the region? What is the relationship between environmental improvements and poverty reduction? How can good governance contribute to sustainable

development? These are some of the questions workshop participants are expected to address.

Discussions are also to deal with persistent problems in many countries in obtaining sufficient political commitment and financial support to advance national sustainable development strategies. Equally, lack of institutional capacity constrains planning processes. The workshop will debate the extent to which capacity-building is needed for each country to be able to develop and implement national sustainable development strategies.

The workshop is the second in a series sponsored by the OECD and the Division for Sustainable Development on enhancing the governance aspects of sustainable development. A conference on Institutionalizing Sustainable Development was held in Stockholm in September 2006. The next event will be held in late 2007 for Latin America and the Caribbean.

For more information:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/34/61/37762264.pdf>

Partners for innovation in governance

Government administrations may need to innovate to achieve internationally agreed development goals

A panel on collaboration and partnerships for innovation in governance and public administration will unfold at the American Society for Public Administration's annual conference in Washington, DC on 26 March. Organized by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management in collaboration with the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, the meeting will raise key issues on innovations in governance and public administration and the extent to which they contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to national development priorities.

Such innovation should, in addition, be built on strong partnerships among governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure sustainable innovations in governance that can improve the quality of life of all citizens.

Guido Bertucci, Director of DPADM, will discuss the role of the United Nations public administration network in promoting reform and innovation. Adriana

Alberti, Chief Technical Adviser in DPADM, and John-Mary Kauzya, are expected to deliver presentations, with Gowher Rizvi, a lecturer in public policy at Harvard, joining the discussion.

For more information:

http://www.aspanet.org/2007conference/page.cfm?name=sessiondetail&id=NC07PROG/NC07_POL07

Towards sustainable development strategies for Asia-Pacific

Government and civil society experts from Asia-Pacific to exchange experiences and practices in Seoul

A shared learning and review process of the national strategy for sustainable development of the Republic of Korea began last year as an initiative of the Government in collaboration with the Division for Sustainable Development. A preparatory meeting held in Seoul in December identified the parameters for review, and now a workshop will be held from 12 to 16 March in the Korean capital to open in-depth discussions and share practices and lessons in national strategies for sustainable development.

International organizations such as OECD, ESCAP and UNEP will also participate in the workshop as observers, sharing their works on the matter and enabling the linkage of local, regional and international dimensions of sustainable development. This shared learning and review process is expected to expand the development and implementation of national strategies for sustainable development in the region and foster regional partnership for sustainable development. The results of the workshop will be presented at the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to be held between 30 April and 11 May.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/nsds/tmKorea/workshop.htm>

Triennial comprehensive policy review

The Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination has begun preparations for the triennial comprehensive policy review of UN system operational activities for development to take place

during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly later this year. The aim of the review is to evaluate the extent to which the UN system provides efficient and effective support to developing countries in the realization of national development strategies and internationally agreed development goals.

As part of the preparatory efforts, a series of country case studies will be carried out in February and early March to gather information from key players engaged in the UN system's operational activities for development at the field level. These country case studies will reinforce the ten thematic analytical studies on issues concerning effectiveness and coherence of the UN operational activities. A global consultation meeting involving UN agencies and Member States will be held in Turin, Italy from 14 to 16 March to validate the findings from both the country case studies and the analytical studies. The outcome of all these preparatory activities will feed in the policy debate on the triennial comprehensive policy review at the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.

For more information:

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

Cross-cultural leadership symposium on Asia's rising giants: China and India

DPADM participated in a panel entitled "State, Party, and People: Can the Center Hold?" and delivered a presentation on its work in the area of e-Government at the ninth annual Tufts University cross-cultural leadership symposium held from 22 to 25 February in Medford, Massachusetts.

For more information:

<http://www.tilip.org/symposium/2007/state.html>

Technical cooperation

Engaging citizens for the achievement of development goals

A capacity-building workshop for the Arab region to be held in Amman from 13 to 15 March

Citizen participation in the policy process matters. It matters to the extent that a number of policymakers have concluded that it is key to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. While Arab countries have yet to win the battle against social and gender inequality, unemployment and illiteracy to attain the MDGs, they have set out to confront these challenges by engaging in partnerships with civil society organizations, and by putting the accent on sustained economic growth with social equity.

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management will be backing the Arab region in this enterprise through a regional capacity-building workshop on the opportunities and challenges of civic engagement in socio-economic policies taking place from 13 to 15 March 2007 in Amman, in cooperation with the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the National Council for Family Affairs, the UNDP Office in Jordan, and the active participation of ESCWA.

Over 60 representatives from 19 Arab States, including several ministers and high-level officials in charge of planning and socio-economic issues, will be brought together with heads of civil society organizations, academia, and the media to exchange experiences and debate on capacity-building interventions for citizen engagement.

In addition to capacity-building and training, the participants will address methodological and institutional issues of civil society-government relations in connection with MDG-related policy development. The expected outputs include an agreement to follow up actions at the country level, the development of broad outlines for plans of action, and the establishment of an Arab regional citizen engagement network – all geared to creating an enabling environment for achieving the MDGs.

For more information:

http://www.unpan.org/directory/conference/guest/browseoneconference.asp?conference_id=1986

Training of future government leaders

The International Task Force on Standards of Excellence in Public Administration Education and Training seeks to improve the quality of education for government leadership

“There is a correlation between capable institutes of public administration providing strong training to future government officials and good performance in governments,” says John-Mary Kauzya, Chief of the Governance and Public Administration Branch in the Division for Public Administration and Development Management. So it seems incongruent that schools of public administration have largely been neglected.

DESA and the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration organized a Task Force on Standards of Excellence in Public Administration in 2005 with the overall aim of improving the quality of education and training in public administration. The idea is that better training can have a significant impact on the development of effective leadership and transparent governance throughout the world.

The Task Force recently carried out a survey on approaches to standards of excellence in public administration education, and will meet in Brussels on 17 and 18 March to discuss the results. So far, the survey has been used to draft strategic guidelines to inspire those involved in promoting standards of excellence in public administration and in training and strengthening of capacities of such institutions.

Participants are expected to put forward proposals and recommendations that address the needs of developing countries in particular where the problem is of greater magnitude. A final report with the Task Force recommendations will be submitted to the seventh global forum on reinventing government taking place in Vienna in June.

For more information:

http://www.unpan.org/directory/conference/guest/browseoneconference.asp?conference_id=2062

First meeting of the Steering Committee of the Network of Innovators in Governance in the Mediterranean Region

The meeting will discuss guidelines for the transfer of innovations in governance

The Steering Committee of the Network of Innovators in Governance in the Mediterranean Region will meet for the first time from 14 to 16 March in Rabat. About forty participants will provide input into the network's action plan for 2007 and 2008. The InnovMed Programme was launched in 2003 to promote innovation in governance in Northern Africa, the Middle East and Western Balkans. The programme specifically aims to bolster the region's public institutions in the areas of human resources, technology, and financial management to enable governments to respond more effectively to citizens' needs.

InnovMed hopes to promote the exchange of experiences in public administration innovation by preparing an inventory of governance programmes in the region, producing national and regional reports, and holding regional meetings. Such exchanges cover both North-South and South-South cooperation. InnovMed also encourages the development of tools and training materials geared to assess the validity of the countries' practices in public administration, and sponsors pilot projects that assist governments with the implementation of innovative practices.

The InnovMed meeting in Rabat is organized by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management. Participants will include government officials, experts, practitioners, and representatives of international, regional and sub-regional institutions.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/innovmed/>

Opportunities of legislative informatics in Africa

ICTs enable citizens' online access to legal and parliamentary documents

The tremendous potential for parliamentary efficiency embodied in the transition from paper to digital documents and records remains to be exploited by African legislatures. An international conference on

the challenges and opportunities of digitization will be held in Abuja from 20 to 22 March to highlight the strategic role that legal informatics can play in legislative processes. More than 200 parliamentarians from 33 countries are expected to attend the meeting, which will stress improvement and automation of the complete life-cycle of legislative documentation. The Division for Public Administration and Development Management is organizing the event in partnership with the National Assembly of Nigeria, under the aegis of the Pan African Parliament and with the support of the Global Centre for ICTs in Parliament.

For more information

<http://nigeria2007.akomantoso.org>

Top government auditors to assess the impact of their own work

About 30 heads of supreme audit institutions from developing countries expected to attend a symposium at the UN's Vienna office

How are national audit institutions performing? What impact are they seeking for their work? The symposium on value and benefits of government audit in a globalized environment, jointly sponsored by DESA and the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions, aims to sensitize audit offices in developing countries on the need to ask themselves these questions and to seek answers. This is the nineteenth interregional symposium on government auditing organized by the two institutions.

The symposium, which will unfold from 28 to 30 March at the UN Office in Vienna, is intended to acquaint heads of supreme audit institutions – whether auditor general, controller general or president of a court of accounts – with current approaches and techniques on the use of key performance indicators in reporting on the value and benefits of government audit processes. This includes those relevant to transparency and their potential to increase the cost-effectiveness and timeliness of audit.

“This exercise is quite innovative,” explains Esther Stern, Interregional Adviser in the Division for Public Administration and Development Management who is responsible for the substantive component of the event on behalf of DESA. “Indeed, the mandate for national audit offices has changed over time, from certifying national accounts to assessing the economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equitability of government activities

and expenditures, as well as looking into issues of accountability and governance.”

Agreement on key performance and result indicators for auditing work is expected to feed in a final report, which will be made available in four languages on the UNPAN website.

For more information:

http://www.unpan.org/directory/conference/guest/browseoneconference.asp?conference_id=1874

UNPAN reaches out to Central America

DESA and ICAP to hold a consultative meeting to expand role of Central American region

DESA and the Central American Public Administration Institute (ICAP) have agreed to cooperate in the implementation of UNPAN in the Central American sub-region. The collaboration will entail creating an electronic virtual network to exchange expertise and share experiences and lessons learned in the areas of public economics, administration and finance, with a view to facilitating capacity-building through the usage of modern technology in Central America and in the Dominican Republic. Specific subject areas to be addressed include: policies and strategies in public sector development, public sector reform, professionalism and ethics in the public sector, legal and regulatory framework, administrative modernization and management innovation, public service financial management, and tax reform, both public and private. DESA and ICAP will meet in San José, Costa Rica from 14 to 16 March to work out the details of the partnership, and begin putting it into action.

For more information:

<http://www.unpan.org/discover.asp>

Developing the information society: the role of Parliaments

The Division for Public Administration and Development Management, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Chamber of Deputies of Italy have joined forces to organize an international conference on the policy-making role of Parliaments in the

development of the information society, to be held in Rome from 3 to 4 March. The conference will address themes such as policy-making, international cooperation and democracy in the information society, the impact of the information society on the economy, the effectiveness of institutional architectures for governing the information society, as well as the protection of rights and the priorities for the development of the information society. The high-level board of the Global Centre for ICTs in Parliament will hold its inaugural meeting during the conference.

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

Publications and websites

Statistical compilations

Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2005 Revision



This online database contains estimates on the number of international migrants in each country or area of the world as of 1 July of the years 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2005.

The estimates are presented for both sexes combined and separately, with information on the estimated number of refugees, the total population, the growth rate of the migrant stock, the percentage of international migrants in the population, the percentage of female migrants among all international migrants, the percentage of international migrants by major area or region, and the percentage of refugees among all international migrants. A CD-ROM version of the database is also available for purchase.

For more information:

<http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp>

To order the CD-ROM:

<http://unp.un.org/details.aspx?entry=E06118>.

Standard International Trade Classification, Revision



This publication provides codes for and descriptions of all of the 2970 SITC, Rev. 4 basic headings and corresponding HS07 subheading codes. Three appendices include correspondence tables correlating the subheadings of HS07 to the basic headings of SITC, Rev. 4, the basic

headings of SITC, Rev. 4 to the basic headings of SITC, Rev. 3, and the basic headings of SITC, Rev. 3 to the basic headings of SITC, Rev. 4. Many countries and national and international organizations continue to use SITC for various purposes, such as for the study of long-term trends in international merchandise trade and aggregation of traded commodities into classes more suitable for economic analysis. Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish editions will be released at a future date. Publication symbol

ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/34/Rev.4. Sales number E.06.XVII.10.

For more information and to order:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regcst.asp?Cl=28>

National Accounts Statistics: Main Aggregates and Detailed Tables, 2004



This print publication contains detailed national accounts statistics in national currencies of 176 countries or areas for the years 1993 to 2004. It has two volumes with 1400 pages for each volume. The national accounts statistics include 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 two volumes contain detailed accounts for institutional sectors from production, generation of income, allocation of primary income, secondary distribution of income, use of disposable income, capital, and financial accounts. Statistics for each country or area are presented in chapters with uniform table headings and classifications as recommended in the United Nations System of National Accounts. A summary of the SNA conceptual framework is included. Publication symbol ST/ESA/STAT/SER.X/35 (parts I and II). Sales number: E.05.XVII.8.

An electronic version of the 2005 yearbook with detailed national accounts statistics of 178 countries or areas for the years 1994 to 2005 can also be purchased online.

For more information:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/nasp.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. LX, no. 12, Dec. 2006,
ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/408

Special features in this issue: retail price indices relating to living expenditures of United Nations officials; fuel imports of developed economies (unit value and volume indices, value); registration of new motor vehicles; external trade conversion factors; manufactured goods exports (unit value indices, volume indices and value).

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

Outreach material

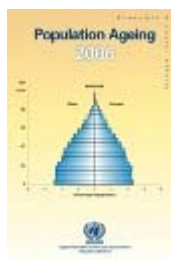
The Road to Doha



A monthly newsletter called The Road to Doha, which is jointly produced by the Financing for Development Office and the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service, was launched in February. The aim of the newsletter is to keep stakeholders informed of the latest developments and events leading to the International Conference to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to be held in Doha, Qatar in the second half of 2008.

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

Population wall charts



The Population Division has recently released a series of wall charts: on urban and rural areas (2005), urban agglomerations (2005), and population ageing (2006).

For more information:
<http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm>

Websites

Searchable archive of publications on environmental-economic accounting



A searchable archive of publications on environmental-economic accounting has been developed by the Statistics Division under the auspices of the UN Committee of Experts on

Environmental-Economic Accounting with the aim of facilitating the work of statisticians, researchers and practitioners in the field. The archive includes bibliographic information on methodological publications and country practices on environmental-economic accounting, as well as the full-text of cited works.

For more information:
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/ceea/archive/Introduction.asp>

Comings and goings

Comings

The following staff members were promoted between 1 January and 28 February

Ms. Robin Carrington, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

Ms. Patricia Codazzi, Administrative Assistant, Division for the Advancement of Women

Mr. Marc-Andre Dorel, Programme Officer, Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination

Mr. Amine Lamrabat, Secretary, Division for Social Policy and Development

Ms. Maria Consuelo Limchoc, Senior Staff Assistant, Office of the Under-Secretary-General

Mr. Garegin Manukyan, Governance and Public Administration Officer, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Ms. Federica Pietracci, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development

Mr. Mario Tuason, Chief of Section, Executive Office

Ms. Jennifer Tungol, Administrative Assistant, Statistics Division

Ms. Rosemarie Waters, Editorial Assistant, Division for Sustainable Development

Goings



Mr. Anatoly Shyshlyaev, Secretary of the Committee for Development Policy in the Development Policy and Analysis Division, retired on 31 January after 19 years with the United Nations. During his tenure with DESA, Mr. Shyshlyaev

variously served as Chief of the Long-term Development Perspectives Branch, contributor to the annual report on the World Economic and Social Survey, and participant in the international network of economists known as Project Link. Prior to joining the UN, he worked at the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow and at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis near Vienna. Mr. Shyshlyaev holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Moscow State University.

The following staff members also retired in January

Mr. Roberto Guimaraes, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Division for Social Policy and Development

Mr. Walter Shearer, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Division for Sustainable Development

The following individuals were transferred from DESA on promotion from the General Service to Professional staff category

Ms. Olga Shumikhina, Computer Information Systems Assistant, Population Division to the Department of Management

Ms. Lynn Thway, Statistics Assistant, Development Policy and Analysis Division to the Economic Commission for Africa

Calendar

March

Commission on the Status of Women

51st session, New York, 26 February-9 March

Statistical Commission

38th session, New York, 27 February-2 March

Development Cooperation with Middle-income Countries

Special conference, Madrid, 1-2 March

DESA/IPU/Italy Conference on the Policy-making Role of Parliaments in the Development of the Information Society

Rome, 3-4 March

DESA/Commonwealth Workshop on Debt, Finance and Emerging Issues in Financial Integration

London, 6-7 March

DESA/UNDP/Jordan Arab Regional Workshop on Opportunities and Challenges of Civic Engagement in Socio-economic Policies

Amman, 13-15 March

Network of Innovators in Governance in the Mediterranean Region Steering Committee

Rabat, 14-16 March

DESA/IASIA International Taskforce on Standards of Excellence in Public Administration Education and Training

Brussels, 17 -18 March

Committee for Development Policy

9th session, New York, 19-23 March

DESA/Nigeria International Conference on African Legal Resources: Challenges and Opportunities of Legislative Informatics

Abuja, 20-22 March

DESA/INTOSAI Symposium on Value and Benefits of Government Audit in a Globalized Environment

19th meeting, Vienna, 28-30 March

April

Commission on Population and Development

40th session, New York, 9-13 April

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

6th session, New York, 10-13 April

Special High-level Meeting of ECOSOC with the BWIs, WTO and UNCTAD

New York, 16 April

United Nations Forum on Forests

7th session, New York, 16-27 April

Commission on Sustainable Development

15th session, New York, 30 April -11May

Observances

International Women's Day

8 March

International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March each year to recognize the fact that securing peace and social progress and the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms require the active participation, equality and development of women; and to acknowledge the contribution of women to the strengthening of international peace and security. For the women of the world, the Day's symbolism has a wider meaning: It is an occasion to review how far they have come in their struggle for equality, peace and development. It is also an opportunity to unite, network and mobilize for meaningful change.

For more information:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/feature/iwd/>

World Water Day

22 March

Coping with water scarcity is the theme for World Water Day 2007, which is celebrated each year on 22 March. This year's theme highlights the increasing significance of water scarcity worldwide and the need for increased integration and cooperation to ensure sustainable, efficient and equitable management of scarce water resources, both at international and local levels.

Equity and rights, cultural and ethical issues are

essential to be addressed when dealing with limited water resources. Imbalances between availability and demand, the degradation of groundwater and surface water quality, intersectoral competition, interregional and international disputes, all center around the question of how to cope with scarce water resources.

For more information:

<http://www.unwater.org/wwd07/flashindex.html>

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.