



*Mr. Ban Ki-moon took the oath of office on 14 December, and as newly appointed Secretary-General pledged to strengthen United Nations work on peace, development and human rights while calling for concerted action to reach the Millennium Development Goals. A recording of the ceremony can be viewed online at <http://www.un.org/webcast/sg.html>.*

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## Feature articles

### Partners for action

*Meeting the Millennium Development Goals means finding common cause on finance and trade*

The world, in one voice, committed itself at the dawn of the new millennium to ambitious goals: halving worldwide poverty by 2015, achieving universal education, promoting gender equality, and among others, creating a global partnership for development. Yet as we approach the mid-point of the implementation period, a glance at the state of goal eight – on partnerships – shows that finance and trade are relative weak spots in international development cooperation. The thematic informal debate on partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals held at the General Assembly in late November made one point clear: Failure to deliver on commitments in the areas of development assistance, debt relief, and, most importantly, access to export markets by developing countries may well compromise attainment of the targets for 2015.

The compact or “global partnership” between developed and developing countries – expressed in the outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development at Monterrey in 2002 – is a partnership of shared responsibilities and obligations. It arises from a recognition that the main responsibility for development rests with developing countries themselves – including through improved governance. However, commitments by industrialized nations to provide more and better development assistance and debt relief, and to reduce trade-distorting subsidies while supporting a more equitable world trading system, are vital enablers of developing country efforts.

Goal number eight, on the global partnership for development, must be strengthened since cooperation among states, civil society and the private sector remains a cornerstone of the development effort.

#### Overcoming financial constraints

For many countries, official development assistance is still an essential catalyst without which economic and social progress would be severely constrained.

Although ODA has steadily increased since the Monterrey Conference, regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania, on current trends, will not be able to meet any of the goals envisaged for 2015, while Southern and Western Asia are not advancing fast enough. These trends could be reversed through a combination of improved policies and more resources in the spirit of global partnership. Yet with eight years to go to the MDG target date, we are still far from reaching the long-standing UN aid target of 0.7 percent of gross domestic product for ODA, today met by only five countries. As the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, José Antonio Ocampo, points out, “Scaling-up development aid flows, strengthening aid effectiveness, and maximizing ODA’s impact on poverty reduction are of critical importance. Indeed, when ODA is not determined by geopolitics, it can have a strong positive effect on long-term growth, essentially because it supports investment in infrastructure and human development.”

The General Assembly concluded 2006 with a key message from its informal thematic debate on partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals: Good intentions remain to be matched by concrete action. Departing Secretary-General Kofi Annan recalled that “many donors are already falling short of their commitments to increase aid – and the longer this shortfall persists, the harder it will be to correct. They must be held accountable.”

Recent agreement at the General Assembly Second Committee to hold a follow-up conference on financing for development to review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Doha, Qatar in the second half of 2008 should serve this purpose of holding countries accountable and to strengthen this pillar of global partnership for development.

External debt relief has been a positive step in that direction in helping liberate the poor countries’ resources for poverty reduction – as the decision to cancel the external debt of 18 heavily indebted poor countries demonstrates, but debt burden still weighs heavily on many developing countries. What is more, the Second Committee passed a month ago a draft resolution expressing concern over failure by some poor countries that have reached the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative to achieve lasting debt sustainability. Another text approved by the Committee emphasized, in this regard, the need for creditors and debtors to share responsibility for warding off unsustainable debt situations.

In any case, when discussing debt relief and emergency aid, it is worthwhile to nuance that neither of them back long-term development. They should, therefore, complement and not replace existing ODA obligations. In support of the Millennium Development Goals, as the DESA [World Economic and Social Survey 2005](#) on financing for development stresses, the call for more development assistance must refer specifically to real cash increases, fresh money, and be targeted to the poorest and least developed countries.

Beyond development assistance, it is encouraging to note how innovative sources of financing are enlarging the resources for financing development. Nineteen countries are already putting in place a solidarity levy on airplane tickets to finance an international drug purchase facility (“[UNITAID](#)”), launched last year at the opening session of the General Assembly. This financial mechanism should facilitate the poorest people’s access to drugs for the treatment of diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria. Another initiative, the International Finance Facility, was launched in November with the support of eight donor countries to fund immunization programs in campaigns against measles, tetanus, and yellow fever through the initial flotation of a USD 1 billion five-year bond.

#### DESA: promoting partnerships from within

While encouraging this partnership among states, DESA also continues to explore ways of promoting partnerships in its own work, not only in support of intergovernmental consensus, but also in the implementation of the UN Agenda. For example, the financing for development process promotes participation of experts from the public and private sectors, international organizations, academia, and civil society in various consultation processes, some of which are directly organized by private sector and civil society partners. Voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiatives in the area of sustainable development were, too, a fundamental outcome of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, where more than 200 partnerships were launched. In this sense, in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2002, Governments designated the UN Commission on Sustainable Development as the focal point for the elaboration of partnerships that promote sustainable development including the sharing of lessons learned and progress made.

DESA’s promotion of partnerships can also be extended to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Forum on Forests and to the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development, a platform for cross-

sectoral dialogue launched less than a year ago with the purpose of integrating ICT into development activities. That task is indeed paramount if the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, are to be achieved in 2015.

### Boost for development cooperation

In general, debates on economic and social issues in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council are all processes with the concept and practice of partnership at the core of their work. The recent approval of a General Assembly resolution that gives the Council two new functions offers, moreover, a reason for optimism in the path toward a genuine global partnership for development. One of these new functions, the Development Cooperation Forum is expected to bring the discussion on aid effectiveness to a truly multilateral arena, so that the forum will be able to bolster the effectiveness of oversight provided by ECOSOC of the global development cooperation system. Effectiveness on this front is crucial to ensure an efficient and effective partnership for development.

Another of ECOSOC's new functions, the Annual Ministerial Reviews, can be a platform for political engagement and be useful to help keep the focus, beyond verbal commitments, on actual implementation. It can also serve to assess progress on the various aspects of the [UN Development Agenda](#), helping determine what works and what should be scaled-up. Reviews with broad participation can, at the same time, be instrumental in unlocking the potential of civil society and the private sector and to set in motion new partnerships for development.

### A partnership for trade with development: more phrase than fact

At the start of a new year, existing challenges still need to be faced. The collapse of the multilateral trade negotiations under the Doha Round in the World Trade Organization shows that "our global partnership for development – to paraphrase departing Secretary-General Kofi Annan – remains more phrase than fact." Obstacles owing to lack of compromise among major parties on export subsidies and domestic supports in the agricultural sectors remain, but it also remains imperative to overcome such an impasse.

This lack of consensus among states was well reflected in the end of the year at the Second Committee. While the Committee adopted more than forty resolutions on a broad range of issues, the inability to reach consensus on the trade and development resolution for the third

consecutive year is precisely "symptomatic of the growing gap between negotiating partners," Under-Secretary-General Ocampo noted in a recent address to the Committee.

Be that as it may, the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round is "a sine qua non" for achieving the international agreed development goals, including the 2015 goals, as outgoing Secretary-General recently highlighted. On current trends, most of the world's poorest countries will miss most of these targets, underscoring the need to match rhetoric with palpable action worldwide. The clock is ticking.

*Data on MDG indicators, including goal eight on the global partnership for development, and other relevant information, can be found at*  
<http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Default.aspx>.

*A webcast of the thematic informal debate on partnerships towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals is available at*

<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ga/61/ga061127pm.rm>.



## Human rights in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

*A groundbreaking treaty affirms the rights of persons with disabilities*

More than two decades ago, under the auspices of the United Nations, disabled people set out to clear obstructions which have throughout history prevented them from enjoying the full benefit of economic and social development. This decades' long effort culminated on 13 December 2006 in the adoption by the General Assembly of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention is being hailed as the first human rights instrument of the twenty-first century. Once ratified by individual countries, the treaty will enable the world's 650 million disabled people to claim internationally-recognized rights as full and equal members of society.

The Convention is a far-reaching instrument in that it requires States to adopt laws prohibiting discrimination based on any form of disability, from blindness to mental illness. It is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit social development dimension. It demands real change through effective legislation and a shift in attitude, calling for a change



of perceptions to combat stereotypes and prejudices, and promote awareness of the contribution that persons with disabilities make to society. It also sets forth the principles on which to base actions in order to create the material conditions necessary for persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights.

#### A neglected development challenge

The treaty urges a series of development interventions intended to put an end to the situation of economic and social exclusion in which persons with disabilities remain mired. A recent study commissioned by DESA found that of 100 leading websites around the world, 97 failed to meet minimum accessibility standards for people who are blind, have low-vision disabilities, or cannot use a computer mouse. Exclusion of the half billion disabled poor living in the developing world is even more pervasive. Up to 98 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school.

With few exceptions, existing development programmes that address disability are limited in focus and endowed with scarce human and financial resources. Moreover, projects that benefit persons with disabilities are frequently viewed as a discrete area of activity. Yet the economic and social exclusion that features in the daily lives of persons with disabilities is a major cross-cutting development issue for all development partners. The Convention clearly recognizes this point. Article 32 stresses that cooperation should aim to ensure that every development programme is inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities. And it calls not for new areas of intervention, but for the integration of disability issues into national development strategies.

The treaty's entry into force will obligate countries to gradually include disability-friendly features in the construction of new facilities; promote and improve access to inclusive health, education and employment;

and, introduce measures that eliminate discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities. Effective legislation, along with a shift in attitude, is vital for bringing about change. Change indeed takes place far more rapidly in countries where relevant legislation has been enacted than in those without such laws as evidence from the forty-five countries with anti-discrimination and other disability-specific laws has demonstrated.

#### A unique negotiation process

Adoption of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would likely have not become a reality without the mobilization of civil society organizations. According to Johan Schölvinck, Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of DESA, "the process of negotiation for the convention was unique. The actual drafting of the text took less than three years with civil society organizations actively participating throughout the negotiations."

Civil society was a powerful force moving the process forward at all stages despite initial reluctance by several countries. The Ad Hoc Committee tasked with negotiating the Convention was supported by the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, housed in the Division for Social Policy and Development, in cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The convention opens for signature in March 2007, and comes into effect thirty days after it has been ratified by twenty nations. Ratification is expected to progress rapidly as most States, even those that were initially skeptical, strongly support the Convention's aims.

*Full information on the Convention, including the full text of the treaty, is available at:*  
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/>.

*Don MacKay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand, takes questions at a press briefing following adoption of the Convention on 13 December:*  
<http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/press-conference/pc061213pm.rm>.



## Global dialogue on development

### Assembly bolsters ECOSOC's role as overseer of global development policy

*Expansion of mandate enables ECOSOC to convene an ongoing Development Cooperation Forum, respond more quickly to humanitarian emergencies, and work with the newly established Peacebuilding Commission*

The Economic and Social Council received a boost from the General Assembly and some fresh direction with the adoption of resolution 61/16 on the "Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council" on 20 November 2006. The Council has been given key new functions in line with recommendations made by the world's leading politicians at the 2005 World Summit.

Global leaders have placed the Council at the center of efforts to monitor and advance implementation of the [United Nations Development Agenda](#). The Council will launch an Annual Ministerial Review, as well as a biennial Development Cooperation Forum, during the 2007 high-level segment of ECOSOC in Geneva in July. Beginning in 2008, the Forum will meet in New York.

The annual ministerial substantive reviews will assess the progress made in the implementation of the UN Development Agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals, whereas the biennial Development Cooperation Forum will review trends and progress in international development cooperation. These new functions undertaken by the Council, "must get off to good starts and enable ECOSOC to serve as a bridge between policy-making and implementation," notes the Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, José Antonio Ocampo.

Resolution 61/16 also allows the Council to respond to humanitarian emergencies as and when they occur. In practice, the Council will convene ad hoc meetings on specific humanitarian emergencies at the request of affected Member States. These ad hoc meetings are intended to raise awareness and promote the engagement of all stakeholders in support of international relief efforts.

The resolution also reinforces linkages between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council's ad hoc advisory groups on countries emerging from conflict. The Assembly calls on the Peacebuilding Commission to "benefit from the Council's experiences in the area of post-conflict peace building and the success of its ad-hoc advisory groups," while reaffirming "the need to address the special needs of countries emerging from conflict" and assist them in laying the foundations for durable recovery, reintegration and reconstruction.

These new functions are expected to help the Council fulfill its Charter mandate, and become a more effective body for coordination, policy review, and dialogue on development issues.

*For more information:*

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/ga10536.doc.htm>

### Spotlight on migration, globalization, right to development and food in the Second and Third Committees

*Forty resolutions on various aspects of development were adopted on the recommendation of Economic and Financial Committee during the 2006 session. The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee was equally engaged.*

The Second Committee (economic and financial) and the Third Committee (social, humanitarian and cultural) of the General Assembly concluded deliberations on 8 December with a renewed impulse to advance the [United Nations Development Agenda](#), including the Millennium Development Goals. Approvals by consensus of draft resolutions on international migration and development and on the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence were complemented by recognition by the Third Committee of the right to development and the right to food.

On the issue of poverty eradication, the Second Committee passed a draft resolution on the Implementation of the first [UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty](#) (1997-2006) acknowledging the observance's contribution to poverty alleviation, and noting an interest on the part of some member States for the proclamation of a second such decade. At the same time, the Committee requested the Secretary-

General to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the first UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty including recommendations for further action.

Building on the 2006 [High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development](#), the Second Committee adopted a resolution on migration recognizing the contribution made by migrants to development. The resolution made note of the multifaceted nature of migration and development, and called for incorporation of migration issues into the UN Development Agenda as well as national development strategies. The migration resolution recognizes the need to have sufficient time to assess the impact of a State-led initiative called the [Global Forum on Migration and Development](#), which will take place for the first time in Belgium this year. In this regard, the Committee further noted the establishment of a [Global Migration Group](#) whose objective is to improve coherence in the UN system response to international migration and development issues.

In 2006, the Committee also devoted considerable attention to globalization and interdependence. It approved, by consensus, a draft resolution on the UN role in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence, in which it affirmed the need for the organization to play a major role in promoting international cooperation for development, in close cooperation with other multilateral institutions. After a gap of two years, the Committee was also able to agree on a theme for next year's report, namely the impact of international factors on national development strategies which is intended to shed light on tensions behind global policy and the shrinking national policy space.

In the area of financing for development, the Second Committee decided that a [follow-up meeting to the International Conference on Financing for Development](#) to review implementation of the Monterrey Consensus will be held in Doha, Qatar in the second half of 2008. This year's biennial General Assembly High-level Dialogue on the Monterrey Conference is expected to set the stage for the preparations of the review.

The Committee also addressed the urgent issue of enhancing the voice and participation of developing countries in the Bretton Woods institutions. The Committee's resolution on the international financial system emphasizes the importance of an early agreement on a credible and time-bound package of quota and voice reforms in the International Monetary Fund.

For its part, the Third Committee, nearing the end of its work, also adopted a draft resolution on the right to development that would have the Assembly call on the Human Rights Council to ensure that its agenda promotes sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It also reminded developed countries of their commitment to the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance and calls for implementation of a desirable pace of meaningful trade liberalization, while encouraging developing countries to ensure that such assistance was used effectively to help meet development goals. Major industrial countries, namely the United States and Finland on behalf of the European Union voted against the proposal citing concern about the prospect of the right to development becoming legally binding.

Meanwhile, the Third Committee passed a draft resolution on the right to food that considers it intolerable that every five seconds, a child under the age of five dies from hunger or hunger-related diseases somewhere in the world, that there are 854 million malnourished people, and that, while the prevalence of hunger has diminished, the absolute number of malnourished people has increased in recent years. This has happened despite the fact the planet could produce enough food to feed 12 billion people – or twice the world's present population, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.

*For more information:*  
<http://www.un.org/ga/61/>

## **New faces, fresh perspectives on the Economic and Social Council**

*General Assembly elects eighteen members*

Last November, the General Assembly held its annual election of eighteen States to serve three-year terms on the Economic and Social Council. States receiving the required two-thirds majority were elected according to the following pattern: five from Africa, four from Asia, two from Eastern Europe, three from Latin America and the Caribbean, and four from Western European and Other states. The new member States are Algeria, Barbados, Belarus, Bolivia, Canada, Cape Verde, El Salvador, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Malawi, Philippines, Romania, Somalia,

Sudan and United States. Their terms will commence on 1 January 2007 and end on 31 December 2010.

On 17 January, the Economic and Social Council will elect its President and Bureau for 2007. The first organizational session is tentatively scheduled for the first week of February.

*For more information:*

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

## **Committee on NGOs to consider 138 applications for consultative status**

Regular session of 2007, New York, 22 January-2 February

When the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations meets for the first part of its 2007 regular session in January, it will consider 101 new applications for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, 37 applications for consultative status deferred from previous sessions, 100 new quadrennial reports, 6 deferred quadrennial reports deferred, and 6 applications for reclassification. The Committee has 19 members, eight of whom begin new terms on 1 January: Angola, Burundi, Dominica, Egypt, Guinea, Israel, Qatar, and the United Kingdom.

*For more information:*

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

## Trends and analysis

### Agreement to manage the world's forests on track for adoption this year

*The instrument provides an articulated and practical framework for sustainable forest management*

More than 300 forestry experts from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and major groups participated in an ad hoc expert group on the consideration of the content of the non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests in New York from 11 to 15 December 2006. The meeting ended on a high note with experts observing that widespread political commitment for the agreement and the positive tone of the discussion indicated likely adoption of the agreement at the next session of the UN Forum on Forests to be held from 16 to 27 April. This constructive attitude and increased awareness of forest issues mirrored the stance of the General Assembly which adopted a resolution on 20 December declaring 2011 as the [International Year of Forests](#).

Forests cover 30 per cent of the world's land area and more than 1.6 billion people worldwide depend on forests for their livelihood. Every day some 350 square kilometers of forest cover are lost worldwide largely as a result of human activity. "The non-legally binding instrument is intended to create awareness of the need to protect and sustainably manage the worldwide forest," says Hans Hoozeveld, Chair of the United Nations Forum on Forests. "It is also intended to provide a well-articulated and coherent framework for sustainable forest management." ECOSOC resolution 2006/49 recognized the agreement's importance, calling for a quick conclusion to negotiations and adoption of the instrument in 2007.

To assist the Forum in its deliberations, the December meeting of experts was held to identify and analyze common elements of the non-legally-binding instrument, and to elaborate its substantive, working and institutional elements.

The instrument highlights the importance of voluntary national measures, policies, actions and partnerships, and will enable countries to better determine their national targets, goals and policies. It provides a global platform for coordination of the myriad forest-related agreements and processes already in existence.

The work of the expert group took into account a compilation of draft indicative elements and other proposals submitted by member States and regional groups. Substantial progress was made at the expert group meeting as participants completed a first reading of the agreement. Strong support emerged on certain issues, among them enhancement of national forest management policies, recognition of the importance of international trade in forest products, and the need for a scientific basis for policy development.

*For more information:*

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/adhoc-nlbi.html>.

### Leading ecologists, economists and social scientists appointed to the Committee for Development Policy

The Economic and Social Council approved on 30 November 2006 the nomination of 24 experts of the Committee for Development Policy for a three-year term beginning 1 January 2007. Biographical information on the newly appointed members is contained in document E/2006/9/Add.18.

*For more information:*

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

### Statistics Division wins UN21 Award for outstanding work in monitoring MDGs

The Statistics Division has worked since 2002 to provide a sound statistical basis for the international political debate on the MDGs and for the development of effective strategies to achieve the goals. The Division has coordinated the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, which is responsible for monitoring global and regional MDG trends, reviewing methodologies and supporting countries in data collection, analysis and reporting for MDG indicators. The Division's coordination efforts have led to an unprecedented level of inter-agency collaboration, contributed to improve the consistency of data disseminated and used by international agencies and facilitated the use of statistics by a wide range of users.



Countries have benefited from the coherent and focused approach taken by IAEG in many ways, including: increased attention by national governments to statistical systems; improved use of statistics in policy making and monitoring; improved understanding of national development priorities, increased adoption by countries of international statistical standards; and improved coordination of statistical capacity building initiatives by international partners.

*For more information:*

[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/un21\\_award/mdg\\_un\\_award.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/un21_award/mdg_un_award.htm)

## Elimination of discrimination against women

New York, 15 January-2 February

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the human rights treaty body in charge of monitoring implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, will hold its thirty-seventh session in New York from 15 January to 2 February. Under article 18 of the Convention, States parties are requested to report periodically on the legislative, judicial, administrative, and programmatic measures they have taken to put the Convention into practice, and on tangible progress achieved in the elimination of discrimination.

During the upcoming session, the Committee will examine the initial report of Tajikistan, and the periodic reports of Austria, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Greece, India, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Peru, Poland, Suriname, and Vietnam. The Committee consists of twenty-three independent experts elected for a four-year term.

The Committee welcomes country-specific information from non-Governmental organizations in the form of alternative or shadow reports which can be submitted prior to or during the session concerned.

*For more information:*

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/37sess.htm>

## Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities

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. The review focuses on the comparative advantage of the UN in the increasingly complex and competitive environment that characterizes globalization.

DESA is engaging in intensive preliminary consultations with a range of partners, among them Member States, the United Nations Development Group, United Nations Evaluation Group, and the OECD Development Assistance Committee. Ten analytical studies will be prepared examining effectiveness, efficiency and coherence, as well as funding development cooperation activities throughout the system. These studies will be completed by late February 2007, and provide information that will feed into the Secretary-General report on Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review due to be released in the fourth quarter.

*For more information:*

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

## Technical cooperation

### An African social policy to manage globalization

*Thirteen African ministers endorse an initiative to tackle cross-border pressures*

Building national social policies in Sub-Saharan Africa is a pressing issue. The vicious circle of rising poverty, unemployment and social exclusion in which many Africans are trapped make the case for inclusive national policies. Yet with limited resources for social spending available to most African States and new, cross-border challenges generated by globalization, there is a compelling need for an African coordinated response. That was the shared view of the thirteen member states of the Southern African Development Community that adopted, on 24 November, the Johannesburg draft document Towards an African Regional Policy, and through it, the decision to join forces to tackle social challenges in the SADC region.

A pioneering exercise in global social policy, the draft document was produced by the Division for Social Policy and Development with inputs from African governments. The draft was finalized in a four-day meeting in Johannesburg arranged by DESA and the Government of South Africa. The debate brought together Ministers and senior officials of social development of thirteen governments of the SADC region. All countries gave a green light to the initiative, opening the way to the creation of specialized regional research centres, prevention of cross-border transmission of diseases, joint programmes for risk pooling – such as crop and cattle insurance, disaster prevention and management – mechanisms for social regulation of services and water, electricity and other utilities, and regional investments such as the creation of funds for addressing common priorities, for example in the area of human rights, social and economic empowerment of women, and inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Sergei Zelenev and Isabel Ortiz, the DESA officials involved in organizing the ministerial meeting, stress that the rationale for a sub-regional social policy is precisely the inability of most countries to put these measures in place on their own due to limited capacity. Zelenev and Ortiz note, however, that “a regional social policy does not deny the concept of national sovereignty” and the two layers of social policy – national and regional – “do not compete with each other” as the financing of the plan of action to

implement the new goals would in principle be undertaken by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the socio-economic programme of the African Union.

The Ministerial meeting underlined the need to strengthen the African Union, NEPAD and SADC institutions dealing with social policy. At the same time, a process has begun which could lead to a future NEPAD action plan on social policy that fast-tracks donor funds for regional initiatives and brings social policy to the top of the African agenda.

*For more information:*

<http://www.socdev.gov.za/media/2006/nov/comm.htm>

### Rebuilding trust in government

*The gap between rulers and the ruled dominates the Regional Forum on Reinventing Government in Africa*

Governments must regain the trust of citizens. With this message in mind, the Regional Forum on Reinventing Government in Africa met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 11 to 13 December to identify ways for African governments to rebuild confidence. The meeting was one of a series organized by DESA and UNDP for different regions in preparation for the seventh global event taking place in Vienna in June. Among the invitees were parliamentarians – in particular Ministers responsible for public service and local government – senior officials from the public sector, representatives of international and regional organizations, and management experts.

According to participants, implementation of the [Charter for Public Service in Africa](#), which stresses consistency and predictability, the importance of ethical behaviour, transparency and accountability, is urgently needed to generate and sustain trust in government among the people of the region. At the same time, no amount of transparency and integrity will convince citizens to put their faith in an administration which is ineffective. Equitable delivery of public goods, and access to high-quality services, are also paramount.

African governments were advised by participants to focus on improving the conduct of public officials, refining electoral processes, using information and communication technology to enhance service delivery, and providing more opportunities for civic participation. Participatory governance indeed implies citizen engagement in administrative reform, whether

this entails, for example, new approaches to government accountability, partnerships between the private and public sectors, or empowerment of women.

The forum discussion unfolded against the backdrop of the challenges facing African governments in implementing global commitments, such as the [Millennium Development Goals](#), the objectives of the [New Partnership for Africa's Development](#), and programmes of the African Peer Review Mechanism, as well as national development strategies including those relating to poverty reduction. Governments that do not trust citizens, or that are not trusted by those whom they serve, will find it difficult to advance. The meeting was hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa.

*For more information:*

[http://www.unpan.org/directory/conference/guest/browseoneconference.asp?conference\\_id=2011](http://www.unpan.org/directory/conference/guest/browseoneconference.asp?conference_id=2011)

## **Mobilizing resources for development: the role of national development banks**

*The DESA Financing for Development Office helps Africa assess the potential of its financial institutions.*

What are the current challenges of national development banks in Africa? How can these institutions enhance their delivery for development? These and other questions were posed in a multi-stakeholder consultation on rethinking the role of national development banks in Africa held by the Financing for Development Office on 22 and 23 November in Johannesburg, in collaboration with the Industrial Development Corporation and the Development Bank of Southern Africa. A general conclusion was that national development banks in various forms are viable and continue to play an important role in economic and social development in Africa. Yet resource mobilization remains a key challenge of development.

Stakeholders discussed functions and mechanisms in mobilizing financial resources to fill development gaps and address market failures, which in turn is the raison d'être of development financial institutions. It was suggested that NDBs should clarify their role vis-à-vis commercial banks, address governance issues to ensure support from multi-lateral development banks, and create alliances with the private sector to share financial risks and ensure capital for development projects.

New partnerships with regional development banks, namely the African Development Bank, were encouraged, especially in the areas of technical assistance and capacity-building. In this vein, the role of NDBs as financial intermediaries between their regional counterparts and small and medium enterprises calls for recognition and support. Empowering entrepreneurs was seen as paramount to bring about development and to help build inclusive financial sectors. Cooperation among the different NDBs on cross-border and in-country financing of projects was also pointed to as an effective channel to pool resources. In this sense, boosting NDBs' capacity to deliver for development means harnessing their networks with a view to joint financing of projects and crowding in the private sector.

The event, which was part of a broader agenda of the Africa Development Finance Week and was co-sponsored by the Association of African Development Finance Institutions and the Development Finance Resource Centre of the Southern African Development Community, made clear the prominent role NDBs have played in employment generation and poverty eradication. NDBs can also be instrumental in influencing policy-making given their role as intermediaries between government and the private sector.

*For more information:*

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

## Publications and websites

### Technical reports



#### World Economic Situation and Prospects 2007

Scheduled for release on 18 January

After a solid and broad-based growth for three consecutive years, the world economy is expected to decelerate in 2007 mainly dragged by a slowdown of the United States, according to the UN's annual forecast of global economic trends, which is due out in January. Growth in Europe and Japan meanwhile will not be sufficient for these economies to act as locomotives of global growth.

The outlook remains mostly positive for developing countries, but a degree of moderation is also expected. Sustained high growth in China, India and a few other major emerging economies seems to have engendered synergy among developing countries so that growth in this group is more endogenous. However, a large number of developing countries remain highly vulnerable to the vicissitudes of commodity prices, and the volatility of international financial markets.

The report highlights the need for greater employment growth which has not kept pace with output growth. In developing countries, high unemployment remains entrenched despite significant increases in GDP. Job creation is a key policy challenge since employment growth is central to poverty eradication efforts.

The global economic outlook also encompasses a number of important downside risks. Of major concern is the prospect of housing bubbles bursts in a number of countries, as well as uncertainties in oil price movements, and the mounting risk of a disorderly unwinding of global imbalances. The report calls for international macroeconomic policy coordination to facilitate an orderly adjustment of global imbalances, and points to systemic reforms of the international monetary system as the way forward in the long-run.

The World Economic Situation and Prospects is a joint product of DESA, UNCTAD, and the five regional commissions.

*For more information:*

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

## Meeting records

### Dialogue of the Economic and Social Council: Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work

Forthcoming

This title is a compilation of statements, issues papers and summaries of high-level roundtable dialogues that took place during the substantive session of the Economic in July 2006 on the creation of an environment conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development. The publication is intended for policy-makers and scholars, as well as a public audience interested in the place of employment within the broader global development agenda.

*For more information:*

<https://unp.un.org/details.aspx?entry=E06234>

## Statistical compilations



### Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS On-line

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

**Vol. LX, no. 10, Oct. 2006, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/406**

Special features in this issue: World shipbuilding; civil aviation traffic: passenger-km, cargo net ton-km; total exports and imports by countries or areas: volume, unit value, terms of trade and purchasing power of exports, in United States dollars.

**Vol. LX, no. 11, Nov. 2006, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.Q/407**

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: volume, unit value indices and terms of trade; world exports by commodity classes and by regions.

*For more information:*

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



**2004 International Trade Statistics Yearbook, vols. I and II**  
ST/ESA/STAT/SER.G/53, sales no. E/F.06.XVII.4

The fifty-second edition of the International Trade Statistics Yearbook provides the basic information for individual countries external trade performances in terms of value as well as in volume and price, the importance of trading partners and the significance of individual commodities imported and exported. Volume I contains detailed data for 182 countries or areas. Volume II contains commodity tables showing the total trade of certain commodities analyzed by regions and countries. This is a bilingual publication, in English and French.

*For more information:*

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/pubs/gesgrid.asp?id=361>



**2003 Demographic Yearbook**  
ST/ESA/STAT/SER.R/34, sales no. E/F.06.XIII.1 H

The 2003 edition of the annual Demographic Yearbook provides statistics on population size and composition, fertility, mortality, infant and fetal mortality, marriages and divorces, along with a detailed set of technical notes explaining the sources, availability, timeliness, quality, reliability and coverage of the data presented.

This issue presents data on deaths by marital status, age and sex, which were last published in 1996. A summary table shows the availability of national demographic data from countries and areas by sex. The primary sources of the data reported in the Yearbook 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 edition of the Demographic Yearbook is also available, in electronic format only.

*For more information:*

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/dyb/dybpub2003.htm>

## Websites



**Statistics Division wins second UN21 Award for excellence in knowledge management**

The Statistics Division has received the prestigious UN21 award in the category of knowledge management for COMTRADE, a comprehensive online trade commodity database with more than a billion trade data series. COMTRADE is the repository of the most authoritative global commodity trade statistics from over 150 countries classified by commodity and partner countries. The trade series covers 40 years of data and more than 5000 different products. This comprehensive collection of online statistics features a user-friendly interface with various options for data mining, exploration and visualization.

The database is updated daily and receives more than 200,000 page views each month. It has become a model for other international organizations such as OECD and FAO for the production of specialized commodity trade data.

*For more information:*

[http://unstats.un.org/unsd/un21\\_award/UN21\\_comtrade.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/un21_award/UN21_comtrade.htm)



**Division for the Advancement of Women launches new website on technical cooperation**

The Division for the Advancement of Women has launched a new technical cooperation section on its website that highlights its advisory services and technical assistance on gender issues to developing countries. DAW provides such assistance, upon request by Governments, to strengthen national capacity for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcome of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, and the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The Division's technical cooperation programme is closely linked to its work in policy formulation and implementation. Activities are commonly implemented in collaboration with other United Nations entities, in particular the regional commissions, and include areas such as women's human rights, women's roles in peace and security, gender mainstreaming, and strengthening

the catalytic roles of the national machineries for the advancement of women. The Division also has a programme of support for countries emerging from conflict to enhance implementation of the Convention.

The Division welcomes requests from Governments for technical support and encourages Governments and other donors to contribute towards, and support, the Division's capacity-building efforts.

*For more information:*

<http://www.womenwatch/daw/TechnicalCooperation/index.htm>

## Comings and goings

### Comings



**Ms. Marion Barthelemy** was appointed Chief of the Development Cooperation Policy Branch of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination on 1 October. She joined the United

Nations in 1987, variously serving in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of DESA, as Special Assistant to the Deputy Secretary-General, and as Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Interagency Affairs. Before coming to New York, Ms. Barthelemy was based in Vienna, first in the Division for the Advancement of Women and later in the UN Drug Control Programme where she monitored drug abuse and drug trafficking in South Asia and Africa.



**Mr. Thomas Buettner** was named Assistant Director and Chief of the Population Studies Branch of the Population Division effective 1 November. He joined the Population Division in 1992 and has worked

on a range of population issues including mortality, migration, and population estimates. Prior to his assignment with DESA, Mr. Buettner provided consulting services on population affairs to the Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva, and was head of a research group on demographic forecasting at the Academy of Sciences of Berlin. Mr. Buettner holds a Ph.D. in demography and has published numerous articles on ageing and mortality.

*The following staff members were also promoted between 1 October and 30 November:*

Mr. Tarcisio Alvarez-Rivero, Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development

Mr. Joel Andrianoasy, Computer Information Systems, Division for Social Policy and Development

Ms. Elvira Doyle, Programme Assistant, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Ms. Guillermina Dumlalag, Research Assistant, Division for Social Policy and Development

Ms. Leah Kennedy, Research Assistant, Development Policy and Analysis Division

Ms. Adriana Ribeiro, Information Technology Assistant, Division for Public Administration and Development Management

Ms. Imelda Santa Maria, Administrative Assistant, Executive Office

Mr. Geneve Zewge, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, Division for Sustainable Development

Ms. Phillicia Waite, Staff Assistant, Development Policy and Analysis Division

### Goings



**Mr. Larry Heligman**, Assistant Director of the Population Division, retired from the United Nations on 31 October after more than twenty years with the organization.

*The following staff members also retired from the organization between 1 October and 30 November:*

Mr. Vladimir Demidov, Statistician, Statistics Division

Ms. Saroja Douglas, Technology Cooperation Assistant, Division for Sustainable Development

Ms. Julie Griffith, Finance Officer, Executive Office

Mr. James Rajanayagam, Statistics Assistant, Statistics Division

## Calendar

### January

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

[37th session](#), New York, 15 January – 2 February

**Economic and Social Council**

Organizational session of 2007, election of the Bureau, New York, 17 January

**Press launch of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2007**

New York, 18 January

**Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations**

Regular session of 2007, New York, 22 January-2 February

### February

**Commission for Social Development**

[45th session](#), New York, 7-16 February

**DESA/UNDP International Workshop on e-Access for All**

Bangalore, 8-9 February

**DESA/NGO Roundtable Discussions on the Elimination of Discrimination against the Girl-child**

Preparatory meetings for the [51<sup>st</sup> session](#) of the Commission on the Status of Women  
New York, 15 and 20 February

**Commission on Sustainable Development**

Intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the [15th session](#), New York, 26 February-2 March

**Commission on the Status of Women**

[51st session](#), New York, 26 February-9 March

*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.*

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