

VOICE

UN DESA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, VOL. 28 – JUNE 2024



Transforming public administration to unlock accelerated delivery of the SDGs

The public sector plays a crucial role in addressing societal challenges and fostering inclusive and sustainable development. As we face increasingly complex and interconnected global challenges, public institutions must transform to anticipate future development needs and be more responsive and adaptive to the communities they serve.

In this context, the upcoming [UN Public Service Forum 2024](#) will focus on fostering innovation and transformation in the public sector to confront our shared challenges and enhance the capabilities of public administrations across the world.

“Investing in the next generation of public service leaders is an imperative for all governments,” said Ms. Ciata Stevens d’Almeida, Executive Director of the President’s Young Professionals Program in Liberia (PYPP). As one of the participants of the upcoming Forum, she explained that the Program, which has been running for 15 years, emphasizes the critical role young public servants play in transformative public administration in Liberia and in training young public service leaders is actively “building a new generation of policymakers”.

The Forum will culminate by highlighting innovative public sector initiatives through the [UN Public Service Awards](#) ceremony, which will recognize the recipients of the 2024 award for excellence in public service delivery. Past award winners have featured game-changing initiatives like a hands-on mobile ICT classroom truck in Ghana, providing sanitary pads to women and girls in need in the Republic of Korea and equipping young people from disadvantaged communities in Brazil with job training.

Held under the theme 'Fostering Innovation amid Global Challenges: a Public Sector Perspective', the Forum will delve into topics such as gender responsive public service delivery and women's leadership, changing mindsets in public institutions, climate action and artificial intelligence. The Forum will also explore the High Impact Initiative of the United Nations on 'FutureGov', which focuses on fostering innovation, building public sector skillsets, and changing mindsets to build public sector capabilities for the future. A focus will also be placed on the important role young public servants play in driving the innovation and transformation needed for an agile, responsive and effective public service.

Co-organized by UN DESA and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea, the Forum will take place in Incheon, Republic of Korea from 24 to 26 June 2024. It will provide a platform for hundreds of public administrators, government officials, representatives of civil society, academia and youth and practitioners in the field to come together to share experiences in the realm of public administration and service delivery.

For more information: [UN Public Service Forum 2024](#)



EXPERT VOICES



“Our goal is to make global SDG data accessible and understandable for everyone”

Later this month, UN DESA will be releasing the latest data tracking progress of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). What goes into the work of collecting, monitoring and analyzing the data and what can we expect the latest report to show? Ahead of the launch, we spoke with UN DESA's Heather Page who explains.

What do you want readers to know about the work of tracking SDG progress around the world?

“Monitoring and reporting SDG progress is a massive global effort, requiring significant resources, expertise, and collaboration among governments, international organizations and other stakeholders. Despite challenges, countries are strengthening their SDG monitoring and providing data to custodian agencies on more and more SDG indicators as the years progress. Over 50 international and regional agencies then process and

compile data and prepare analysis for the global SDG database and annual SDG reports. UN DESA's Statistics Division plays a crucial role in coordinating the global SDG reporting process, compiling data and storylines on over 220 SDG indicators and disseminating them in a variety of ways in order to reach diverse audiences -- from data experts to the general public. Our goal is to make the global data and insights on SDGs accessible and understandable for everyone."

What can we expect from the SDG Progress Report this year?

"The report will show that the clock has not stopped but we're grappling with significant challenges to make substantial strides towards the SDGs. The world has faced severe headwinds since 2020 and the latest data and insights do not yet show the determined, sustained comeback that we need. It will detail areas with setbacks while also showcasing where tangible progress has been made, for instance, in reducing global child mortality, preventing HIV infection, and access to energy and mobile broadband. The report highlights where action must accelerate, particularly in critical areas undermining SDG progress - climate change, peace and security, inequalities among and between countries, among others."

How can the report be used for developing recommendations or solutions to advance SDG progress?

"The annual SDG report serves as a foundational resource by providing the latest data and evidence for developing recommendations and solutions to advance progress towards the SDGs. It not only identifies gaps and challenges but also provides valuable insights into their causes and solutions. By offering a comprehensive assessment of our current standing, it enables the global community to prioritize areas for accelerated action and targeted policies. The report underscores the urgency of addressing stalled progress, particularly in developing countries and among vulnerable populations, and emphasizes the need for greater speed and scale in our efforts. Given the continued commitment of governments to the 2030 Agenda, we are still hopeful to achieve our shared goals."

Stay tuned for more updates on the launch of the latest SDG Progress Report on this page: [Sustainable Development Goal indicators website](#)



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



4 things you should know about rethinking disability inclusion

The world is currently experiencing several crises, and the upcoming United Nations conference on persons with disabilities is focused on rethinking how we can better include persons with

disabilities to build a more resilient and equitable future. With over 1.3 billion persons with disabilities worldwide, this conference is of great importance to advance and

protect their rights. Here are four things you should know about rethinking disability inclusion:

1. Technology and innovation for an accessible future

International cooperation is crucial to accelerate technology innovation and transfer for an inclusive future. Imagine AI that understands diverse communication styles or virtual reality training accessible to everyone. We need joint efforts to develop and share such technologies, ensuring they empower, not exclude.

2. Inclusive emergency preparedness

When emergencies and disasters hit, persons with disabilities are often disproportionately affected. Essential requirements such as accessible evacuation routes and emergency information in formats like sign language are frequently neglected. The conference will emphasize the need to reconsider emergency preparedness by implementing inclusive disaster risk reduction plans that have been developed globally to guarantee that assistance is provided to everyone.

3. Unlocking equal employment opportunities

Having a decent job that is gratifying, fair and provides opportunities for self-determination is important for sustainable development. However, persons with disabilities are often marginalized due to discrimination and lack of access to workplaces. One important goal is to find ways to eliminate barriers to employment, such as creating a global job platform that emphasizes accessibility, offers skill development tailored to various needs, and thereby establishing ways for persons with disabilities to find fulfilling employment.

4. Fostering a resilient, disability-inclusive world

Ultimately, you should know that the goal of this conference is to promote international cooperation in order to build a more resilient and equitable world where disability is recognized as a strength. By focusing on innovation and technology, preparedness for emergencies, and economic empowerment with a disability-inclusive perspective, we can develop systems that support a variety of abilities and requirements. For more information:

[17th Session of the Conference of States Parties \(COSP17\) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)

Photo credit: UNDP Sierra Leone / Janet Alamisi Dabire





SDG BLOG



Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA,
Secretary-General of the SIDS4 Conference



Stepping Up for Small Island Developing States: Time to Implement the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda

By Li Junhua, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; Secretary-General of the SIDS4 Conference

As the curtains close on the [4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States \(SIDS4\)](#) it is time to hope for a brighter future for SIDS.

This gathering - hosted with warmth and grace by the government and people of Antigua and Barbuda - was attended by over 3,000 participants from around the globe, including heads of state and government, ministers, and representatives from various sectors, showcasing an unwavering commitment to the people of small island developing States.

The adoption of "[The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS](#)", or "ABAS" for short, marks a pivotal moment in the journey towards sustainable development for these vulnerable nations. It makes clear the focus areas that must be prioritized over the next 10 years to make headway on SIDS development journey, outlining actions for both national and international actors.

But, as the Secretary-General emphasized at the [opening](#) of the Conference, now is when the real work begins. The solution lies not in crafting agendas but in translating them into tangible actions that make a meaningful difference in the lives of people on the ground.

This is not the first time that we have committed to meet SIDS where they are in delivering our support to their development needs. Since 1992, the international community has acknowledged SIDS unique vulnerabilities, and successive SIDS Conferences in Barbados, Mauritius and Samoa have delivered declarations of international support. But our delivery, as an international community, has not matched up with the reality of SIDS' needs.

Our next steps cannot be "business as usual". The ongoing crises and escalating climate emergency add even greater urgency.

We must step up to stand alongside SIDS in support of their efforts to meet their unique challenges.

To me – as head of UN DESA, and in my role as Secretary-General of the SIDS4 Conference – this means five things:

- **Firstly, the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS must be acknowledged and integrated into development assistance frameworks.** The growing endorsement of the [Multidimensional Vulnerability Index](#) signifies a step towards quantifying and addressing these vulnerabilities. It's a call for international financial institutions to align their support with the needs identified by SIDS.
- **Secondly, the pressing issue of the debt crisis cannot be ignored.** Urgent action is needed to alleviate the burden of unsustainable debt, allowing governments the fiscal space to invest in their own sustainable development. SIDS need access to fairer borrowing terms.
- **Thirdly, efforts to implement the ABAS must be accompanied by a scaling-up of climate action and finance.** The existential threat posed by climate change is disproportionately borne by SIDS who are among the least contributors to global warming.
- **Fourthly, the leadership and innovation demonstrated by SIDS themselves cannot be overlooked.** The implementation of the ABAS must be driven by SIDS-led solutions, leveraging initiatives like the Centre of Excellence for SIDS and the Debt Sustainability Support Service.
- **The international community must show, with action, true solidarity with SIDS.** Fifteen heads of UN entities participated at the SIDS4 Conference, each committed to advancing the ABAS. UN DESA will spearhead the UN process to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the ABAS to help measure progress and guide implementation. We will be there with SIDS every step of the way.

The conference in Antigua and Barbuda served as a beacon of hope and determination. It is a testament to what we can do when nations come together with a shared purpose. We will take this spirit into the [Summit of the Future](#) in September in New York and its focus on a renewed multilateral system.

As delegates said farewell to Antigua and Barbuda, I believe they carried with them not just memories of a successful conference. They also carried with them important connections to be built upon, innovative solutions to be explored, and a renewed sense of purpose to turn promises into action.





MORE FROM UN DESA

- World Oceans Day: A call to action to save our ocean
- Integrated big data informs policies on climate change and sustainable development
- World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: Spotlight on older persons in emergencies

COMING UP



MORE EVENTS

FIND US ALSO ON:

