



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, VOL. 30, NO. 4 – APRIL 2026



Youth are innovating, uniting and transforming, shaping the road to 2030

From 14 to 16 April 2026, young people will take center stage at the United Nations Headquarters in New York during the ECOSOC Youth Forum, considered the UN's largest annual gathering of young people.

Under the theme "Innovate, Unite and Transform: Youth Shaping the Road to 2030," the Forum will be celebrating the power of youth collaboration and creativity to drive global change. While young innovators, advocates, and leaders are already transforming their communities, the annual Forum will help amplify their voices, connecting them with global decision-makers.

"By empowering young people, we unlock a powerful and effective force for sustainable development, fostering more inclusive and participatory processes, amplifying diverse voices, building trust, and delivering lasting solutions', said UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua as he addressed the International Youth Day last year. "By championing young leaders and change-makers, let us build a more equitable, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for all," Mr. Li said.

Young people are ready to lead, to innovate and transform at the ECOSOC Youth Forum. They will have the opportunity to debate a range of topics, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under review at this year's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The issue of access to safe and clean water and sanitation, a future where clean and affordable energy powers sustainable development for everyone, and where resilient and sustainable infrastructure drive equitable economic growth, will be at the heart of conversations.

Forum participants will also focus on advancing climate-resilient cities and strengthening partnerships to build an inclusive future for LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, marginalized communities as well as support youth mental health and well-being. The ECOSOC Youth Forum is where ideas become action, voices become policy, and youth become leaders of sustainable development.

Be part of the ECOSOC Youth Forum by tuning in to the live broadcast via [UN Web TV](#) and joining the global conversation online. Share your insights, amplify youth voices, and help drive momentum by engaging on social media by using the hashtag #ECOSOCYouth.

Access all the event information at: [2026 ECOSOC Youth Forum](#)

Explore UN DESA's most recent reports focusing on young people:

[World Population Highlights 2026: Youth](#)

[World Youth Report: Youth Mental Health and Well-being](#)

The ECOSOC Youth Forum is organized by UN DESA in close collaboration with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) and the UN Youth Office. It is co-convened by the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO). Learn more about the work of UN DESA's [Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development](#).



EXPERT VOICES



Population, technology and research: Advancing landmark population agenda in a changing world

The digital revolution was only just beginning, when the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was adopted in 1994. Today, rapid technological advances, from digital communication and data systems to artificial intelligence and biotechnology, are fundamentally reshaping societies and development pathways. We spoke with

Yumiko Kamiya in UN DESA's Population Division about the focus of this year's Commission on Population and Development and why it matters.

The theme of CPD59 focuses on population, technology and research in the context of sustainable development. How is technology reshaping demographic research and policy planning globally?

"Technology is changing demographic research in two important ways. First, it is helping countries produce better and more timely population data. Digital census tools, administrative records, geospatial information and new digital data sources can help Governments understand where people live, how populations are changing and which groups are being left behind. That matters because good policy starts with good data. Second, technology enables more connected and responsive policy planning, including through better analysis of a population's spatial distribution, identification of vulnerable groups and assessment of climate risks at the local level. At the same time, technology alone is not sufficient. Without strong governance, ethical standards and a commitment to inclusion, it can deepen inequality rather than reduce it."

Which emerging population challenges do you expect to be most influenced by advancements in technology, and how is the UN preparing Member States to respond?

"Population ageing, sexual and reproductive health, international migration and urbanization will all be profoundly shaped by technology. Digital health, telemedicine, assistive technologies and tools supporting independent living can improve well-being and ease pressure on care systems. In sexual and reproductive health, new diagnostics, contraceptive technologies and digital platforms can expand access and choice. Migration and urbanization are also being transformed through digital identity systems, remittance technologies, geospatial tools and smarter service delivery. At the same time, digital divides, misinformation, misuse of personal data and unequal access to artificial intelligence risk deepening exclusion. UN DESA's message is therefore twofold: invest in innovation, but also in the foundations that make innovation fair and effective, including electricity, connectivity, digital literacy, statistical capacity and rights-based regulation."

Ahead of CPD59, expert consultations highlighted key issues linking population dynamics with digital development. What were the most significant insights from these consultations, and how will they shape the Commission's deliberations?

"Technology can accelerate progress on population and sustainable development, but only if countries have the foundations in place to use it well. Experts highlighted the potential of digital tools, geospatial data, artificial intelligence, telemedicine and assistive technologies to improve population data, expand access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, support healthy ageing and strengthen policymaking. They were equally clear, however, that innovation alone is not enough. Without strong statistical systems, affordable and meaningful connectivity, digital literacy, adequate financing and national capacity, technological advances will remain out of reach for many countries and communities. A second major insight was that inclusion, safety and trust must be central concerns. Persistent digital divides, privacy risks, misinformation and technology-facilitated gender-based violence all demand rights-based governance, ethical standards and safety by design."

How does this year's theme and focus connect to broader UN-wide initiatives such as the Global Digital Compact and UN 2.0?

"The Global Digital Compact, adopted as part of the Pact for the Future, sets out a vision for an open, free, secure and human-centred digital future anchored in universal human rights and the 2030 Agenda. CPD59 brings a population lens to shared priorities: closing digital divides, governing AI responsibly, protecting personal data and ensuring safe participation in digital spaces. UN 2.0 calls for a more data-driven, innovative and future-oriented United Nations. That vision aligns closely with objectives being discussed and promoted during CPD59: stronger national statistical systems, ethical use of emerging data sources and governance frameworks that centre human rights and equity. Technology is not an end in itself. The Commission's role is to ensure that technological

progress serves the over-arching objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda — advancing health, human rights, gender equality and sustainable development for all.”

UN DESA's Population Division leads the efforts coordinating, preparing and supporting the work of the Commission on Population and Development, one of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Learn more about this work [here](#).

For more information: [UN Commission on Population and Development](#)

Photo credit: UN DESA/Yumiko Kamiya



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW



6 things you should know about the world's commitment to realizing financing for sustainable development

Last year, the international community came together in Sevilla, Spain, uniting behind a landmark agreement to secure financing for sustainable development. This month, Member States will gather at UN Headquarters in New York for the inaugural Financing for Development Week to follow up on the commitments made. The 2026 edition of the Financing for Sustainable Development Report will also be launched. Here are 6 things you should know.

1. **3 billion**

This is the number of people who live in countries where governments spend more on debt interest payments than on health and education combined: a stark sign that finance is being diverted from development.

2. **\$4 trillion**

This is the annual SDG financing gap in developing countries. Yet annual investment growth in developing countries fell from 8 per cent to 4 per cent between 2007 and 2020, and official development assistance (ODA) decreased by 6 per cent in 2024, with expectations of further decline of 10 to 18 per cent in 2025, adding pressure to developing countries' finances at exactly the wrong moment.

3. **15,000**

The number of participants from 187 countries who joined the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Sevilla in 2025, including nearly 50 Heads of State and Government, more than 200 ministers, and over 4,000 stakeholders. The scale of participation reflected broad recognition that the world needed a new course correction.

4. **Double**

The Sevilla Commitment includes a commitment by donors to double support for

stronger fiscal systems by 2030 for countries aiming to increase tax-to-gross domestic product ratios, especially those seeking to increase their ratios to at least 15 per cent.

5. Triple

The amount by which countries committed to increase annual lending by multilateral development banks to expand finance for social investment and transformative growth, while advancing measures to reduce borrowing costs and strengthen the voice of debtor countries.

6. 130

The number of initiatives launched through the Sevilla Platform for Action, with more than 80 countries nominating National Focal Points to carry the agenda forward. Countries will come together at UN headquarters in New York during the 2026 FFD Week from 20 to 24 April to lean into solutions to deliver on the promise of Sevilla.

UN DESA's Financing for Sustainable Development Office (FSDO) is organizing the events this month, focusing on following up on the promise of the Sevilla Commitment, including the launch of the Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2026 on 9 April and the inaugural FFD Week on 20-24 April 2026. Learn more about the efforts [here](#).

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Promoting and defending the rights of Indigenous Peoples is more important than ever

By Aluki Kotierk, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The [UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#) serves as a vital platform for Indigenous Peoples from across the world, to engage in dialogue with Member States and the UN system, culminating in a report providing tangible recommendations to advance the rights of Indigenous Peoples. At a time when civic space is shrinking, financial constraints are growing and progress seems to be slowing, the purpose of the Forum is even more critical to the promotion and defense of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The meaningful, full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in relevant UN bodies and mechanisms is critical to ensuring Indigenous Peoples have a voice in relation to matters that affect them. We hear about the barriers to this participation every year at the Forum directly from Indigenous Peoples. Creating formal spaces for Indigenous Peoples to participate, including in environment-related processes, is just the beginning. It must be backed by direct financing to allow the genuine participation of Indigenous Peoples, including that of Indigenous women and youth.

[This year's session of the Forum](#) will explore the special theme, "Ensuring Indigenous Peoples' health, including in the context of conflict". As Indigenous Peoples, we consider health and well-being as more than just physical and mental health: It is interconnected with culture, spirituality, our lands and our environment. The health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples must be understood and initiatives developed in a holistic way. Recognizing and implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the national and regional levels supports and contributes to the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples.

A continued threat to the health of Indigenous Peoples is conflict in all of its forms. With intensifying geopolitical tensions across the world, we are seeing that the impact of armed conflict impacts Indigenous Peoples in complex ways. Conflict is displacing Indigenous Peoples from their lands and territories, disrupting their ways of life, culture, livelihoods and ability to care for their environments. Conflict also causes a surge in

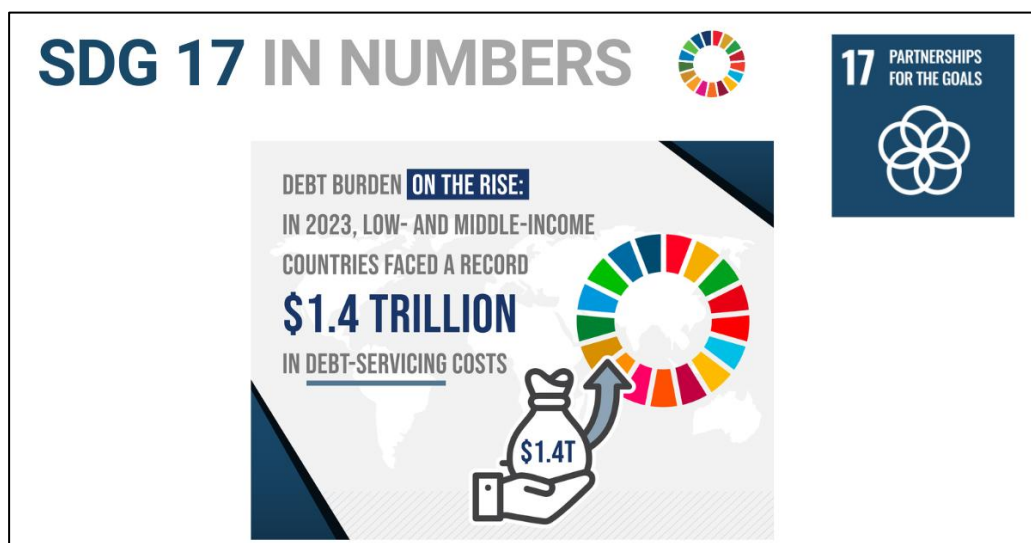
human rights violations perpetrated against Indigenous Peoples. This is why it is critical to meaningfully include Indigenous Peoples in peace processes and conflict resolution.

A shared concern of the Forum is the increasing threats to Indigenous human rights defenders across the world. We hear from Indigenous Peoples who are subjected to criminalization as a result of their advocacy and promotion of their rights. We hear about reprisals including intimidation, threats, killings and enforced disappearance. The Forum reiterates its call to urge States to take the necessary steps to ensure the rights, protection and safety of Indigenous leaders and human rights defenders.

We met with experts in December for the international Expert Group Meeting that explored the theme, “Recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ rights in the context of the climate crisis, biodiversity governance and territorial integrity: focusing on nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, including pastoralists and shifting cultivators”. This was timely in that 2026 was declared the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. Among the experts gathered, a common emphasis that emerged is that the right to self-determination is fundamental for Indigenous Peoples, as it underpins their survival, dignity and ability to govern their own communities according to their values, laws and cultural traditions. Experts recommended that States recognize and respect the historical, cultural and ecological significance of the traditional way of life of mobile Indigenous Peoples, including nomadic and semi-nomadic Indigenous Peoples, such as pastoralists, shifting cultivators, hunter-gatherers, sea nomads and seafarers.

As we look ahead, 2027 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Declaration was a true triumph for justice and recognition of Indigenous Peoples, as distinct rights holders. It sets a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, well-being and dignity of Indigenous Peoples. Yet, its implementation has been uneven. It is our collective obligation, as society, as Member States, the UN system and Indigenous Peoples, to see the Declaration promoted and implemented, across the world, to achieve its ends.

** The views expressed in this blog are the author’s and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of UN DESA.*

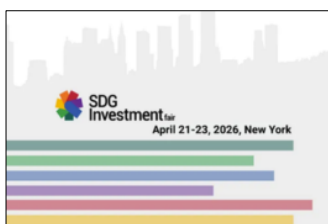
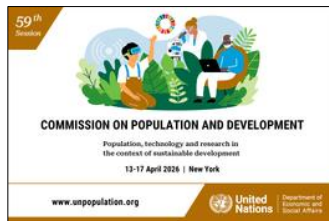




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