



# HIGHLIGHTS 2025

# Towards Sustainable Development For All





# HIGHLIGHTS 2025



**United  
Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

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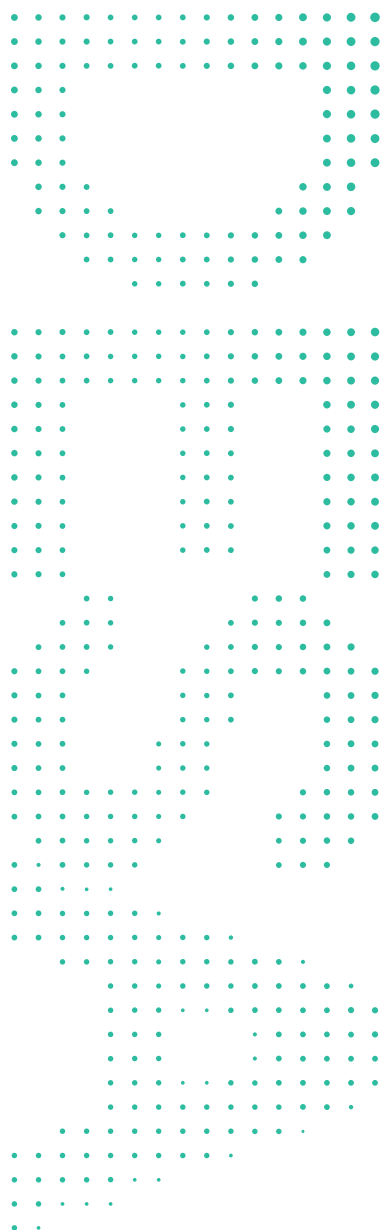
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United Nations, New York





## About the UN DESA Annual Highlights Report

The UN DESA Annual Highlights report is a tool to communicate the contributions of the Department to the realization of internationally agreed development goals and shared social, economic, and environmental aspirations. It showcases the Department's role in gauging trends, building capacities, and shaping solutions. UN DESA Highlights 2025 covers activities over the period of the 79th Session of the General Assembly (September 2024–August 2025) and reflects the Department's response to the set priorities and expressed needs of Member States. Over the course of the 79th General Assembly UN DESA put its expertise to the task of supporting Member State efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda amidst multiple, intertwined, compounding crises, building their capacities to respond effectively and shape a transformative recovery that builds their resilience for the future.

The UN DESA Annual Highlights is produced by the Strategic Planning and Communication Services in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, drawing on input authored across the Department. Acknowledgements go to the team of dedicated focal points who helped pull it all together: Adriana Alberti, Anni Haataja-Beer, Michaela Konstanze Brunner, Elie Hobeika, Kenneth Iversen, Riina Jussila, Stephen Kisambira, Amine Lamrabat, Meng Li, Ryo Nakamura, Monica Nogara, Grace Puliye, Anjali Rangaswami, Mariana Trujillo Sanchez, Daniela Sinobad and Nancy Snyder.

The design of the UN DESA Annual Highlights has benefited from the skill and artistry of a series of interns and consultants who have worked on the report since its initiation in 2019. Thanks go to Jihye (J) Kang and Huafeng Fan for their input to and design of the original 2018–2019 report, Yihang Ouyang, Yawen Yao, Siyuan Li and Haoting Yao for their work on the following editions from 2020 to 2023, and Rachel Babruskinas for her work on the 2023–2024 and 2025 editions.

The UN DESA Annual Highlights is available on UN DESA website at: <https://www.un.org/en/desa/highlights-report-2025>. It can also be accessed through the QR code on the left.



# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ABAS</b>	Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS	<b>FINS</b>	Financing for SIDS
<b>AI</b>	Artificial intelligence	<b>FTI</b>	Frontier Technology Issues
<b>AIS</b>	Atlantic, Indian Ocean and South China Seas	<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>APRM</b>	African Peer Review Mechanism	<b>GFGs</b>	Global Forest Goals
<b>BBNJ</b>	Marine Biodiversity Agreement	<b>GISD</b>	Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance
<b>CBD</b>	Convention on Biological Diversity	<b>GSDR</b>	Global Sustainable Development Report
<b>CDP</b>	Committee for Development Policy	<b>HESI</b>	Higher Education Sustainability Initiative
<b>CLEWs</b>	Climate, Land, Energy, and Water systems	<b>HLAB</b>	United Nations High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs
<b>COP</b>	United Nations Climate Change Conference	<b>HLPF</b>	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
<b>COSP</b>	Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	<b>IAEG-GS</b>	Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019	<b>IATT</b>	UN Interagency Task Team on STI for the SDGs
<b>CPF</b>	Collaborative Partnership on Forests	<b>ICPD</b>	International Conference on Population and Development
<b>CSocD</b>	Commission for Social Development	<b>ICT</b>	information and communications technology
<b>DCF</b>	Development Cooperation Forum	<b>IDI</b>	INTOSAI Development Initiative
<b>DGC</b>	United Nations Department of Global Communications	<b>IDLO</b>	International Development Law Organization
<b>DLC</b>	Digital Learning Centre	<b>IGF</b>	Internet Governance Forum
<b>DSLNL</b>	Data Science Leaders Network	<b>IGS</b>	Secretary-General's Independent Group of Scientists
<b>ECA</b>	Economic Commission for Africa	<b>INCOSAI</b>	International Congress of SAls
<b>ECE</b>	Commission for Europe	<b>INFFs</b>	Integrated national financing frameworks
<b>ECOSOC</b>	Economic and Social Council	<b>INTOSAI</b>	International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions
<b>EGMs</b>	Expert Group Meetings	<b>IOE</b>	International Organisation of Employers
<b>ESCAP</b>	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	<b>KM-GBF</b>	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
<b>FFD</b>	Financing for Development	<b>LDC</b>	Least developed country
<b>FFD4</b>	Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development	<b>LLDC</b>	Landlocked developing country
		<b>LRGF</b>	Local and Regional Governments Forum
		<b>MGoS</b>	Major Groups and Other Stakeholders



UN DESA

<b>MIC</b>	middle-income country	<b>UN-OHRLS</b>	United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
<b>MSMEs</b>	Micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises	<b>UN-Water</b>	Interagency mechanism for coordinating the UN's work on water and sanitation
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization	<b>UNCTAD</b>	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
<b>NSO</b>	national statistical office	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>OAS</b>	Operational Activities for Development Segment	<b>UNEN</b>	United Nations Economist Network
<b>ODA</b>	official development assistance	<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>OG</b>	overlapping generations	<b>UNFF</b>	United Nations Forum on Forests
<b>QCPR</b>	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>SAI</b>	Supreme Audit Institution	<b>UNITAR</b>	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal	<b>UNOC3</b>	Third United Nations Ocean Conference
<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States	<b>UNPOG</b>	United Nations Project Office on Governance
<b>SIDS4</b>	Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States	<b>UNU-WIDER</b>	United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research
<b>SNA</b>	System of National Accounts	<b>VLR</b>	Voluntary Local Review
<b>STI</b>	Science, Technology and Innovation	<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>TFM</b>	UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism	<b>VSRs</b>	Voluntary Subnational Reviews
<b>UN</b>	United Nations	<b>WBCSD</b>	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
<b>UN DESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>UN-ENERGY</b>	United Nations' mechanism for inter-agency collaboration in the field of energy	<b>WSIS+20</b>	UN World Summit on the Information Society
<b>UN-GGIM</b>	UN Global Geospatial Information Management	<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization
<b>UN-IGIF</b>	United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework		

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# INTRODUCTION

Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua (left) speaks at the opening session of the Third UN Ocean Conference, presided by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres (second from left), Rodrigo Chaves Robles, President of Costa Rica (third from left), and Emmanuel Macron, President of France (fourth from left), alongside other high-level participants. | UN DESA



In a world marked by escalating conflicts, intensifying climate shocks, deepening debt distress, and widening inequalities, the path to sustainable development has grown increasingly complex. Yet, UN DESA has remained resolute in its mission to support Member States in navigating these turbulent times. Building on the Political Declarations of the SDG Summits in 2019 and 2023—and further guided by the Pact for the Future and the Sevilla Commitment—UN DESA is reinforcing its efforts to advance a renewed vision for inclusive, effective multilateralism that delivers for people and planet.



# DRIVING CHANGE THROUGH MULTILATERAL ACTION

With just five years left to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the work of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has never been more critical. The period from 2024 to 2025 has been marked by unprecedented global challenges—converging crises and heightened geopolitical tensions that have tested our collective resolve and threatened progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Yet, as this report demonstrates, it has also been a time of bold innovation, strengthened partnerships, and renewed momentum for multilateral cooperation. Through the landmark Pact for the Future, the historic Sevilla Commitment, and other groundbreaking initiatives detailed in these pages, UN DESA has continued to serve as the heart of the UN system’s development pillar—delivering evidence-based solutions and cultivating the partnerships essential for transformative change.

This report captures the breadth, depth, and strategic impact of UN DESA’s contributions across seven critical areas of sustainable development, each representing a cornerstone of our shared mission to build a more equitable, resilient, and prosperous world for all. It also reflects our commitment to deploying the UN 2.0 principles and the associated “Quintet of Change” to drive innovation and transformation across the Department.

In Chapter 1, we showcase the Department’s role as the intergovernmental nexus of the UN development pillar, supporting Member States through pivotal moments, including the Summit of the Future and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The Pact for the Future, adopted by consensus in September 2024, marked a watershed moment in revitalizing global cooperation. The 2025 HLPF, which welcomed over 6,000 participants, showcased accelerated efforts in SDG localization, science and technology innovation, and multistakeholder partnerships.

Chapter 2 demonstrates our continued efforts to tackle deep-rooted inequalities. This includes the bold call for a new global policy consensus centred on equity, economic security and solidarity in our *World Social Report 2025*. The chapter also highlights our support for the Commission for Social Development, the advancement of disability inclusion through the Conference of States Parties, and initiatives to empower marginalized communities through inclusive economic models.

In Chapter 3, we highlight UN DESA’s pivotal role in reshaping the SDG financing landscape. This includes the historic Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Sevilla, Spain, where over 15,000 participants—including nearly 50 Heads of



State and Government—adopted the landmark Sevilla Commitment by consensus. The chapter also shows breakthrough achievements in international tax cooperation and our tailored assistance to small island developing States through the Financing for SIDS (FINS) initiative.

Chapter 4 presents the Department’s crucial work in advancing robust data systems for evidence-based policymaking, anchored by our flagship *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*. The report reveals that while nearly one in five SDG targets have been met or are on track, an equal number have regressed. The chapter also presents major statistical milestones, including the endorsement of the new 2025 System of National Accounts, the launch of the 2030 World Population and Housing Census Programme, and groundbreaking work to mainstream gender perspectives in official statistics.

Chapter 5 highlights UN DESA’s support for building effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. The chapter highlights the 2025 United Nations Public Service Forum in Uzbekistan, the launch of the E-Government toolkit to provide guidance and best practices to policymakers, and our leadership of the Internet Governance Forum, which drew a record 11,000 participants in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

In Chapter 6, we demonstrate the Department’s integrated approach to addressing the triple planetary crisis through transformative environmental action. This includes the third United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, where over 170 countries adopted the ambitious “Our ocean, our future” declaration, mobilization of over US\$1.4 trillion in Energy Compact commitments, climate leadership through Global Conferences on Climate and SDG Synergies, forest conservation efforts including UNFF20, and recognition of Indigenous stewardship through the *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples* report.

In Chapter 7, we highlight UN DESA’s commitment to strategic foresight and anticipatory action in navigating global uncertainty. The chapter showcases our flagship *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025* report, the UN Economist Network’s “Futures and Foresight” series, innovative AI-powered tools for transforming foresight across the UN system, macroeconomic



modeling support for Member States, youth engagement initiatives, and the piloting of an “SDG Chat” AI solution for enhanced stakeholder engagement.

Together, these seven chapters illustrate the interconnected nature of sustainable development challenges and the comprehensive, forward-looking approach required to address them. From accelerating SDG implementation and reducing inequalities to ensuring sustainable financing, strengthening data systems, building effective governance, protecting our planet, and preparing for the future, UN DESA’s work lays the foundation for transformative global action.

As we enter the final five years of the 2030 Agenda, the message is clear: progress remains possible when we act with shared purpose, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to multilateralism. UN DESA will continue to support Member States and all stakeholders on this transformative journey.

Li Junhua  
Under-Secretary-General for Economic  
and Social Affairs and Head of UN DESA

# WHAT DOES UN DESA DO?

UN DESA is a vital interface between global policies and national action in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Our main activities focus on promoting progress towards global development priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UN DESA's work falls into three broad categories:

- **Intergovernmental support:** By facilitating major global conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, as mandated by UN Member States, UN DESA assists countries as they find common ground, set norms, and take decisive steps forward.
- **Analysis:** UN DESA, generates, analyses and compiles and monitors a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and statistics to inform and advise Member States and other stakeholders

on recommendations for shaping effective development policy and practice.

- **Capacity-building:** UN DESA aids in translating policy frameworks developed in UN conferences and summits into programmes at the country level. Through technical assistance and advisory support, the Department supports Member States to build capacities in policy formulation and implementation, data collection and data application, to translate internationally agreed commitments, standards, policies and programmes into action on the ground.

In executing these functions, UN DESA helps governments and other stakeholders take integrated and networked approaches to decision-making, organising and supporting consultations with a range of stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society.

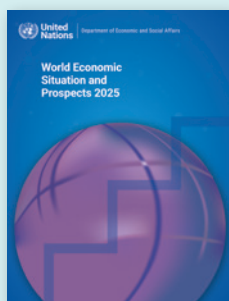
## MAJOR DATABASES

- [UN Data Commons](#)
- [UN Data](#)
- [UN E-Government Knowledge Database](#)
- [UN Global SDG Indicators Database](#)
- [UN LDC Data](#)
- [Ocean Voluntary Commitment Database](#)
- [Water Action Agenda Commitment Database](#)
- [UN Public Service Awards Database](#)
- [Population databases](#)
- [2023 SDG Summit Acceleration and Accountability Platform](#)
- [SDG Actions Platform](#)
- [SDG Acceleration Action Database](#)
- [SDG Good Practices Database](#)
- [SIDS Partnerships Database](#)
- [UN Comtrade International Trade Statistics Database](#)
- [UN System SDG Implementation Database](#)
- [Voluntary National Reviews Database](#)

## MAJOR PUBLICATIONS



**World Social Report**



**World Economic Situation and Prospects**



**The Sustainable Development Goals Report**



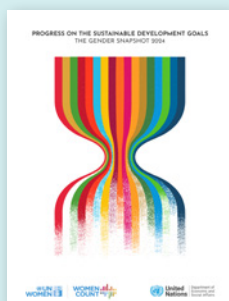
**State of the World's Indigenous Peoples**



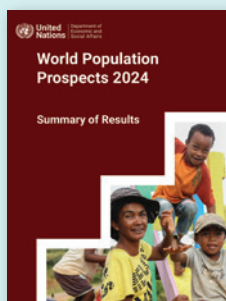
**Financing for Sustainable Development Report**



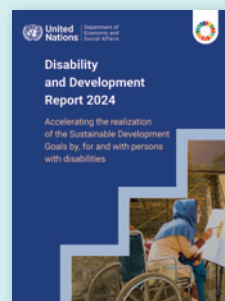
**United Nations E-Government Survey**



**The Gender Snapshot**



**World Population Prospects**



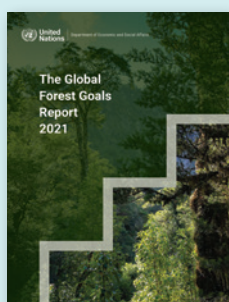
**UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development**



**Global Sustainable Development Report**



**World Public Sector Report**



**The Global Forest Goals Report**



**World Youth Report**



**International Migration Report**



**The World's Women**

# SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESSES AND INTER-AGENCY AND MULTISTAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

## General Assembly

### Intergovernmental Processes Supported by DESA

- Economic and financial committee (Second Committee)
- Social, humanitarian and cultural committee (Third Committee)

### Related high-level events and special thematic meetings supported by UN DESA in 2024–2025

- Summit of the Future
- Third United Nations Ocean Conference
- Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
- Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

## Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

### Intergovernmental Processes Supported by DESA

#### Commissions

- Commission for Social Development
- Commission on Population and Development
- United Nations Forum on Forests
- United Nations Statistical Commission

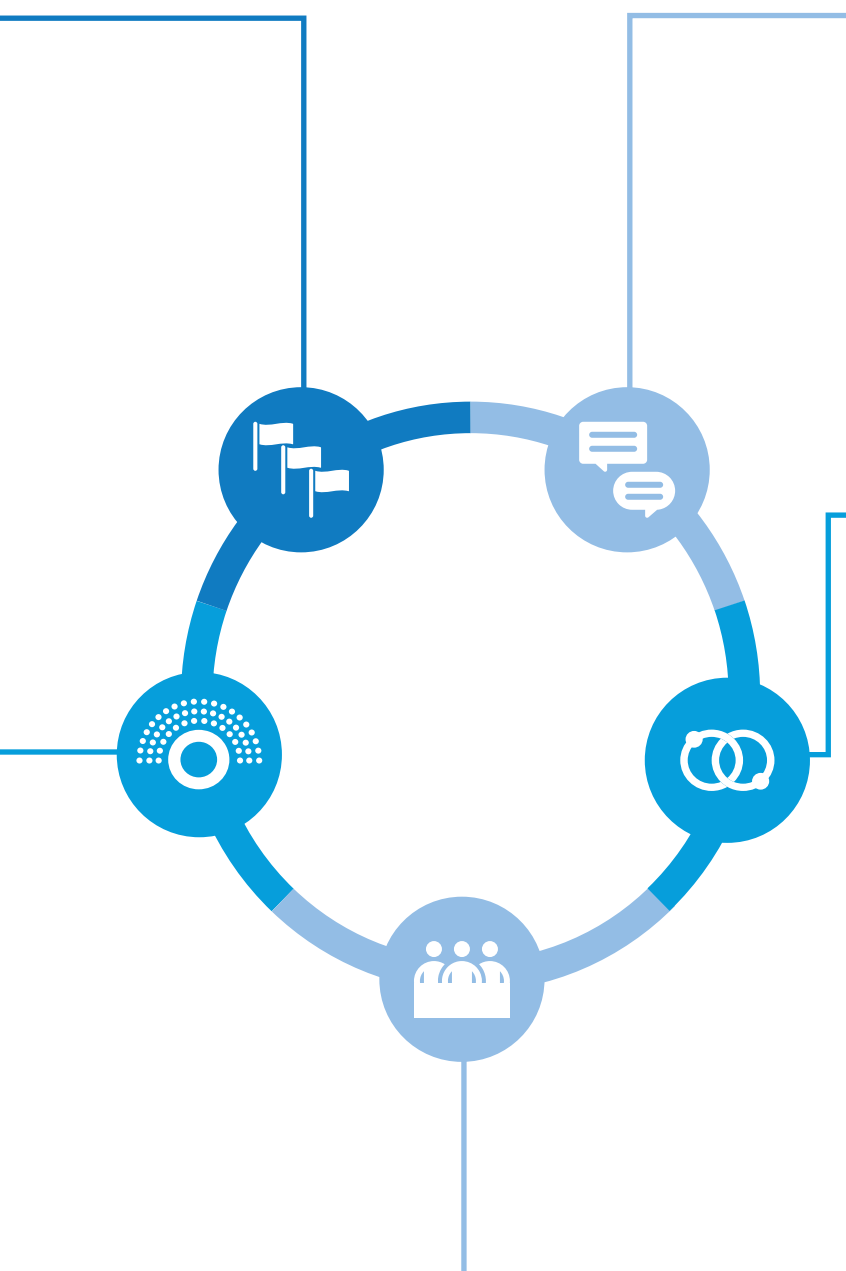
#### Committees and Advisory Bodies

- Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
- Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
- Committee of Experts on Public Administration
- Committee for Development Policy
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
- United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

### Related high-level events and special thematic meetings supported by UN DESA in 2024–2025

- Summit Special Meeting on Artificial Intelligence
- Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
- Special Meeting on Forced Displacement and Refugee Protection
- Special Meeting—Haiti's Children Cannot Wait
- Joint Meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission

United Nations intergovernmental processes and multistakeholder mechanisms support policy reflection and peer learning, galvanize political will, and help mobilize international cooperation and solidarity for moving development forward. UN DESA supports these processes through preparation of thematic reports, stakeholder consultations, and other input and advice to meetings and negotiations.



## High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

## Forums

- Development Cooperation Forum (ECOSOC)
- Financing for Development Forum (ECOSOC)
- Internet Governance Forum
- Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (ECOSOC)
- Partnership Forum (ECOSOC)
- Sustainable Development Goals Investment Fair
- UN World Data Forum
- World Summit on the Information Society Forum
- Youth Forum (ECOSOC)

## UN Collaborative Mechanisms

- Collaborative Partnership on Forests
- Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs
- High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-building for the 2030 Agenda
- Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators
- Inter-agency Consultative Group on SIDS
- Inter-agency Focal Points on HLPF, ECOSOC and GA-related matters
- Inter-agency Group on Ageing
- Inter-agency Network on Youth Development
- Inter-agency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Inter-agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues
- Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development
- Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs
- UN Economist Network
- UN-Energy
- UN Network on Migration
- UN-Oceans
- UN Task Force on Leveraging Partnerships towards the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda
- UN-Water



# UN DESA IN NUMBERS

## CAPACITY BUILDING

**100+ 123**

Countries

across  
the globe

Capacity-building projects,  
project offices and activities

run by UN DESA

**105+**

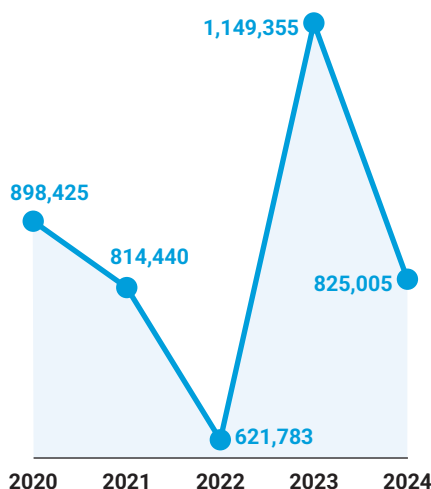
Requests

received from  
Member States in 2024 for  
capacity-building support

## PUBLICATIONS OUTREACH

In 2024, UN DESA's top 5 most popular publications were downloaded a combined

**825,005 times**



Top 5 downloaded UN DESA publications in 2024

Sustainable Development Goals Report

495,805

Financing for Sustainable Development Report

92,150

World Social Report

82,633

World Population Prospects

78,727

World Public Sector Report

75,690

## SOCIAL MEDIA

X (2024)

**931,277**

Combined followers across  
accounts managed by UN DESA

FACEBOOK (2024)

**2,360,120**

Combined page Likes across  
accounts managed by UN DESA

## PARLIAMENTARY DOCUMENTS

**223** Parliamentary documents were submitted by DESA from January to December 2024, including:

**58** Reports of the Secretary-General

**50** NGO Statements

**39** Notes by the Secretary-General

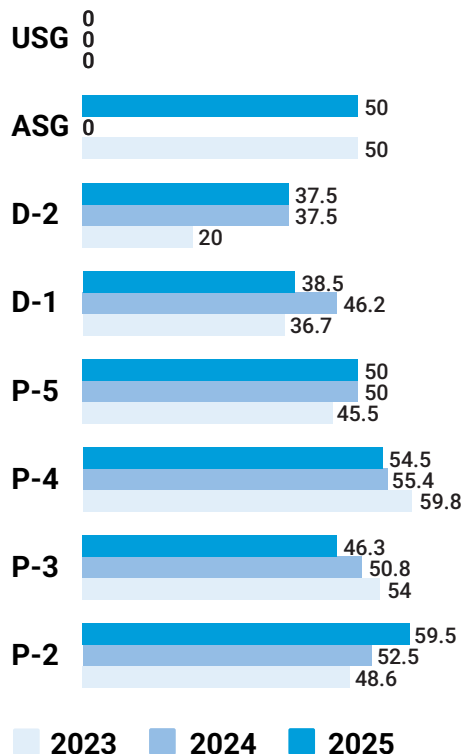
**33** Notes by the Secretariat

**23** Reports of expert group and other meetings

**20** Procedural documents – Agendas and Programmes of work

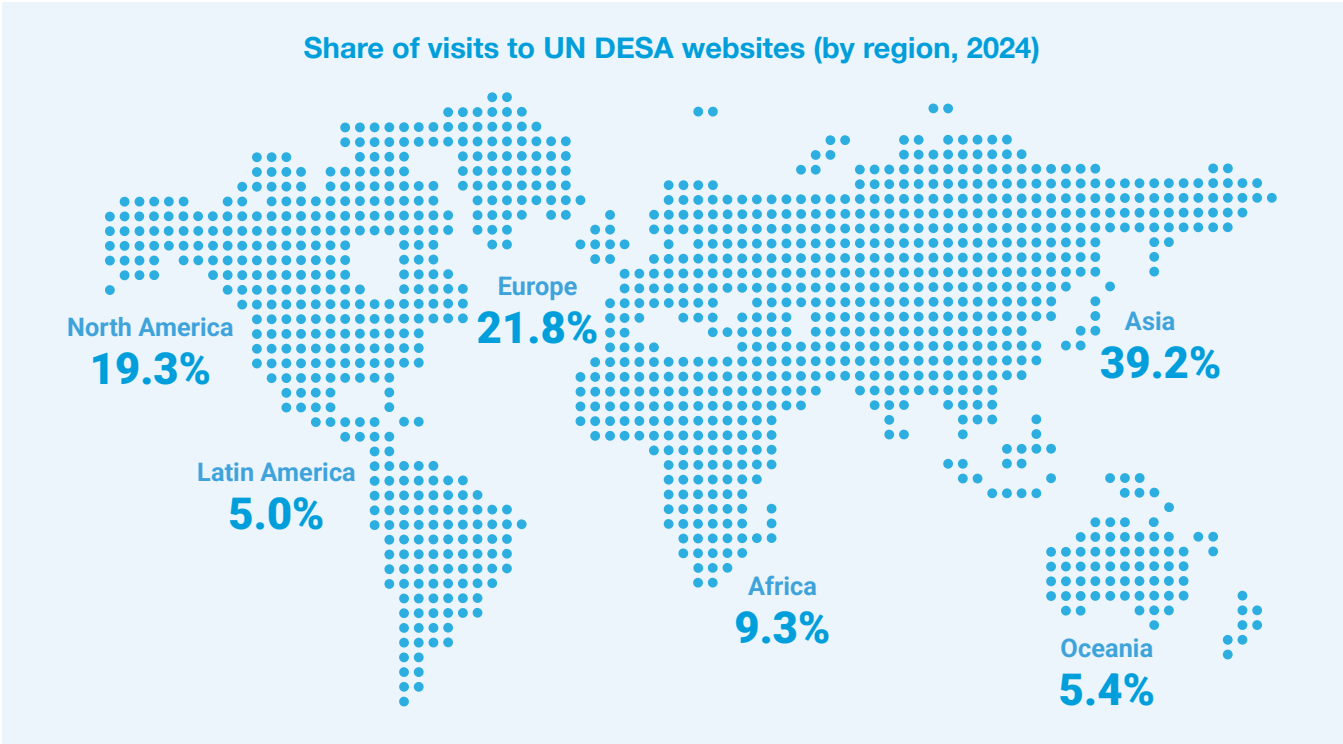
## INSIDE DESA

UN DESA staff represent more than **96** countries worldwide, from all world regions  
% of staff in professional categories who are female (2023–2025)



# UN DESA ON THE WEB

In 2024, UN DESA website was visited more than **55 million** times



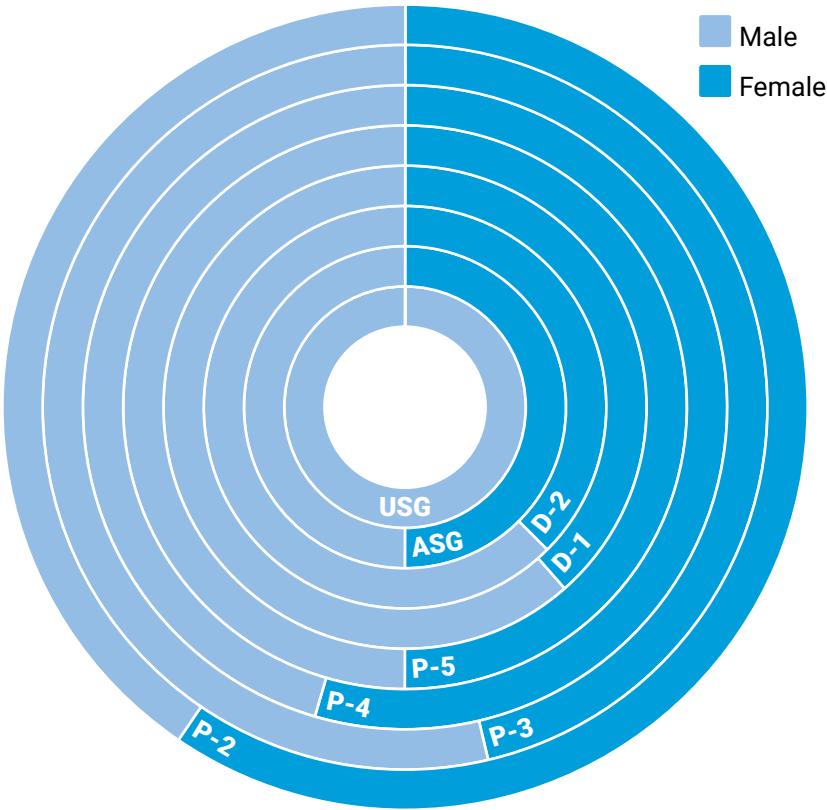
## Progress towards gender parity at the Professional level in UN DESA

As of 30 June 2025, **50%** of UN DESA staff in professional categories identified as female.

UN DESA has so far met or exceeded gender targets at the ASG, P-5, P-4 and P-2 levels.

Females represent more than 50% of staff at each level in general service categories.

The Department remains committed to the promise of gender parity and women's empowerment within its workforce, operations and substantive approach.





# ACCELERATING ACTION FOR THE SDGS

## ...to advance sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

In 2024–2025, UN DESA continued to advance SDG implementation and safeguard multilateralism through its support to Member States and its engagement with UN system partners and other stakeholders in intergovernmental and multistakeholder platforms.

### UN DESA...

- Continued to serve as the central hub for the UN system's intergovernmental support to Member States for its development pillar, including to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).
- Delivered data, analysis, policy recommendations, and expert guidance to ensure a successful Summit of the Future and HLPF, including supporting intergovernmental consultations on the Ministerial Declaration of the HLPF and the in-depth reviews of the five SDGs in focus in 2025.





UN PHOTO/LOEY FELIPE

- Supported implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including through the ECOSOC forums on youth, financing, science, technology, and innovation (STI), and partnerships.
- Enhanced UN system-wide coordination, coherence, and accountability in support of the SDGs through the convening of ECOSOC segments on coordination, operational activities, management, and others.
- Facilitated the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with ECOSOC in intergovernmental deliberations and provided guidance and support to those seeking consultative status.
- Supported Member States undertaking Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of their sustainable development

efforts through preparatory workshops, webinars, and peer-learning exchanges such as VNR Labs.

- Scaled up efforts to advance SDG localization, working closely with local networks and providing on-demand support for Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).
- Fostered inclusive stakeholder engagement and expanded partnerships with the private sector, local authorities, and higher education institutions, among others, to promote SDG awareness and ownership.
- Applied UN DESA's analytical and technical expertise to support Member States and other actors in enhancing evidence-based policymaking and accelerating SDG implementation.

# 01

## ACCELERATING ACTION FOR THE SDGS

*Amidst converging global challenges, including poverty, hunger, inequality, climate change, and conflicts—coupled with escalating geopolitical tensions and policy uncertainties—progress towards achieving the SDGs has come under increasing strain. Developing countries and vulnerable groups need special attention and support from the international community to ensure that no one is left behind. Throughout 2024–2025, UN DESA continued to serve as the intergovernmental hub for the development pillar of the UN system, driving multilateral engagement through the Summit of the Future, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the various forums and segments of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and other relevant intergovernmental processes. Building on these efforts, the Department supported Member States in advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.*

### **Delivering the commitments of the Pact for the Future**

The landmark Pact for the Future declaration—adopted by consensus at the Summit of the Future in September 2024—marked a pivotal step toward revitalizing global cooperation and accelerating efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since its adoption, UN DESA has actively supported the implementation of numerous Pact commitments by providing logistical, analytical, and technical expertise. This includes work in key areas such as accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs; facilitating the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, reforming the international financial architecture and ensuring sustainable finance for the SDGs; strengthening international cooperation on science, technology, and innovation (STI); promoting social development, universal social protection and the well-being of youth and future generations; and developing metrics that

go beyond Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to more holistically reflect sustainable development progress.

Ahead of the Summit of the Future, UN DESA played a crucial role in co-organizing the Summit of the Future Action Days on 20 and 21 September 2024 in collaboration with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, bringing together nearly 10,000 participants from across sectors and regions and building a solid support foundation for the Pact for the Future. Unprecedented youth participation, with more than one-third of participants under the age of 30 and over 200 under the age of 18, signals a powerful generational commitment to shaping the future. Leveraging its convening power, UN DESA led the end-to-end coordination of the event—managing registration, orchestrating more than 150 in-person and virtual side events, and serving as the central liaison with organizers. More than 50 events were held at UN Headquarters, with 45 broadcast live via UN WebTV, significantly expanding global reach and engagement.



# HLPF IN NUMBERS

## 2025 HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC

**Theme:** Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind

9

Days

5

SDGs under review

35

Countries presented VNRs

### Who was there?

About 100

Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Vice Ministers and Ministerial-level Officials

91

High-level speakers

189

Statements delivered in general debate

### to talk about



Approximately

6,000

participants attended the Forum and its related events, comprising **800** representatives from MGoS and NGOs, as well as 300 children and youth.

12

Special Events

13

VNR Labs

187

Side Events  
66 in person  
and 121 virtual

15

Exhibitions



From left: José Antonio Ocampo, Advisor of Club de Madrid; Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders and former President of Ireland; Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator; John Kerry, former U.S. Secretary of State, and Rania A. Al-Mashat, Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Egypt, engage in a panel discussion at the Sustainable Future for All event of the Summit of the Future Action Days. | UN DESA/PREDRAG VASIC



## Reviewing a decade of progress on the SDGs

Marking the 10th anniversary of the 2030 Agenda, UN DESA led the organization of the July 2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), welcoming two Heads of Government and more than 100 ministers and other high-level officials, along with many other stakeholders, to UN Headquarters in New York to review the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, with a focus on SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals). The 2025 HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC culminated in the adoption of a focused Ministerial Declaration that outlines key actions to accelerate SDG implementation,

builds on recent summits and conferences, and reaffirms international political will to deliver the 2030 Agenda. The HLPF and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC featured 91 high-level presenters, global experts, and



Participants wait outside the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters during the first Summit of the Future Action Day. | UN PHOTO/MANUEL ELÍAS

UN system representatives who shared their experiences and showcased sustainable, inclusive, science-driven, and evidence-based solutions to advance the SDGs.

On the margins of the 2025 HLPF, in addition to 187 side events, UN DESA also curated a series of 12 high-profile Special Events in collaboration with key partners. These events featured the launch of flagship reports and dynamic thematic discussions, fostering broad engagement and strengthening multi-stakeholder ownership of the SDGs across diverse constituencies—from higher education institutions and the private sector to local governments, parliamentarians, and scientific communities—demonstrating the power of inclusive dialogue in advancing sustainable development.

To support the in-depth review of the SDGs in focus ahead of the HLPF, UN DESA convened a series of Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) in the spring 2025, in close collaboration with UN entities and subject matter experts. These meetings mobilized a wide range of expertise and perspectives—from governments, the UN system, civil society, academia, and the private sector—fostering rich dialogue and an exchange of cutting-edge research, practical solutions, and policy insights.



Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua speaks at the opening of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2025, New York. | UN DESA

### Facilitating peer-learning to share good practices for SDG implementation

The year 2025 marks the 10th anniversary of Member States' Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of national implementation of SDGs at the HLPF. All 35 countries that presented VNRs this year had done so at least once before, with half submitting their third report, reflecting maturing institutional frameworks, improved



Speakers for the interactive panel focused on the theme “unlocking means of implementation: mobilizing financing and science, technology, and innovation, for the SDGs.” | IISD/ENB-KIARA WORTH



## Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)



**190**

**countries plus EU have  
presented at least one VNR**



**402 VNRs**

**will have been presented  
by July 2025**



**148 countries**

**have presented two VNRs  
or more**



**~2 VNRs**

**global average per country**

monitoring systems, and deeper stakeholder engagement. As of July 2025, a total of 402 reviews have been conducted, with close to 150 countries having conducted two or more reviews.

An inter-divisional team of UN DESA colleagues worked collaboratively to strengthen Member States' capacities to conduct inclusive, evidence-based reviews of their SDG progress at the national level. To support the 2025 VNR countries, UN DESA organized workshops in Incheon, Republic of Korea, Berlin, Germany, and New York, USA that featured sessions on institutions, stakeholder engagement, data and statistics, financing and means of implementation, among other topics.

Additionally, 13 VNR Labs were convened during the 2025 HLPF, covering selected aspects of the reviews in more granular detail as an informal platform for experience-sharing and reflection on the VNR process.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), UN DESA

co-convened [SDGs in Practice](#), a series of 12 virtual and in-person capacity-building and knowledge-sharing training sessions as one of the Special Events held at the margins of the 2025 HLPF.



### **Accelerating localization of the SDGs**

UN DESA continued to join efforts with partners to accelerate the localization of the SDGs. In July 2025, the Department supported the 2025 Local and Regional Governments Forum (LRGF) held as a Special Event during the HLPF, which showcased successful localization policies and high-impact coalitions, with special attention to the SDGs under in-depth review in 2025. Participants highlighted advances in reporting and monitoring mechanisms, such as Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs), in alignment with national-level reviews. The LRGF strengthened multilevel governance



Local government and youth representatives participate in a VLR exercise on 16 October 2024 in Eswatini. | MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, ESWATINI

by promoting collaboration across all levels of government and stakeholders, helping to close persistent implementation gaps.

UN DESA also advanced SDG localization across Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean by strengthening local capacities and promoting integrated, multilevel approaches to the implementation of the SDGs. In Eswatini, UN DESA played a central role in developing a nationally anchored approach to SDG monitoring and reporting, enhancing coordination across sectors and between national and local governments. In partnership with national authorities, UN DESA organized a series of webinars and national capacity-building workshops to equip municipal planners, national government officials, and stakeholder representatives with the tools and knowledge to align local development planning with the SDGs. These efforts helped bridge coordination gaps and fostered cross-sectoral collaboration, engaging institutions responsible for planning, statistics, urban development, housing, and gender equality. As a direct outcome, Eswatini used the insights gained from its first VLRs to inform its VNR, which was presented at the 2025 HLPF. Seven municipalities have participated in their first VLRs, marking a first-of-its-kind synchronized review process in the country. This innovative, multilevel effort contributed to a more cohesive and inclusive approach to SDG implementation, reinforcing both horizontal and vertical coordination and setting a model for transformative, whole-of-government engagement.

## Leveraging science, technology, and innovation to accelerate SDG implementation

As global challenges grow more complex, science, technology, and innovation (STI) have become essential drivers of progress towards the SDGs. In 2024–2025, UN DESA intensified efforts to harness STI for SDG acceleration and inclusive development, contributing not only to the 2025 HLPF, but also to key global processes including the follow-ups to the Summit of the Future, the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in 2024, the third UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3), as well as the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) in 2025.

Through its leadership of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), UN DESA, working with the Inter-agency Task Team on STI for SDGs (IATT) and other partners, led the organization of the 10th annual Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology, and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) on 7 and 8 May 2025. The Forum highlighted the transformative potential of science, technology, and innovation (STI) in advancing the SDGs. It also explored pathways for follow-up to the Pact for the Future, with a focus on bridging digital and technological divides in emerging areas such as artificial intelligence (AI). A key feature of the Forum was the presentation of innovative solutions by 10



Vladimir Crnojević, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, and members of the Secretary-General's 10-Member Group, present during the 2025 STI Forum in the ECOSOC Chamber at UN Headquarters in New York in May 2025. | UN EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

entrepreneurs from least developed countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and middle-income countries (MICs)—many of whom were women leaders or co-leaders. These solutions addressed SDGs under review at the 2025 HLPF, including:

- **ECOBANA (Kenya):** Biodegradable sanitary pads promoting menstrual health and environmental sustainability.
- **Elzian (Sri Lanka):** Precision aquaponics systems enhancing food security and resource efficiency.
- **Laboratoria (Latin America):** Inclusive tech training programs empowering women in the digital economy.

UN DESA played a key role in supporting the ECOSOC Special Meeting on Artificial Intelligence (AI), held on 6 May 2025—the day before the STI Forum. During the meeting, Member States expressed a shared sense of urgency to close the digital divide, establish robust governance frameworks, and address the ethical implications of AI development. The discussions underscored AI’s immense potential to drive progress across the SDGs, while also spotlighting the need for strategic investments, inclusive partnerships, and global co-operation—especially to strengthen capacities in the Global South. Crucially, the meeting did not shy away from the risks and challenges posed by AI. Ethical concerns, governance gaps, and uneven access were at

the forefront, underscoring the international community’s responsibility to guide this technological transformation in a manner that is equitable, inclusive, and beneficial to all.

Beyond the STI Forum, UN DESA continued to advance global collaboration on science, technology, and innovation by co-organizing the Addis Ababa Workshop on STI for SDG Roadmaps. The workshop introduced a proposal for a Global STI Partnership aimed at closing research and development gaps and fostering mission-driven cooperation across borders.

Regional priorities took center stage—ranging from digital connectivity and climate resilience to youth-led innovation. These themes were further supported through ongoing updates to the [STI for SDGs Roadmaps Guidebook](#), which provides practical and adaptable tools to help countries implement their national STI strategies more effectively.

### Advancing science-driven, evidence-based solutions through the science-policy interface

UN DESA continued to champion a science-driven, evidence-based approach to accelerate SDG progress, notably through its support to the [Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#). Published every four years by the Secretary-General’s Independent Group of



Participants at the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2023 Regional Launch and Operationalization Workshop for Asia and the Pacific, gather in New Delhi, India, in October 2024. | DEUTSCHE GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INTERNATIONALE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GIZ) GMBH.



Scientists (IGS), the GSDR serves as a vital tool to inform global decision-making at the SDG Summits.

As part of the global outreach for the latest GSDR from 2023, UN DESA hosted a regional launch and hands-on workshop for Asia and the Pacific in October 2024, in New Delhi, India. The event brought together more than 70 participants, including members of the 2023 IGS, government officials preparing VNRs for the 2025 HLPF, and representatives from civil society, academia, and the private sector.

Through interactive sessions, participants explored the GSDR's transformation framework and learned how to apply it in national and local SDG strategies. Participants explored how to apply the framework in real-world planning, identified key areas for capacity building, and shared experiences and lessons learned from their contexts. The workshop fostered peer learning and cross-sector collaboration, helping stakeholders identify capacity-building needs, share real-world experiences, and strengthen their planning processes. Insights and recommendations from the event will help shape UN DESA's support to the next group of scientists tasked with developing the 2027 GSDR ahead of that year's SDG Summit.



In 2024–2025, UN DESA intensified its efforts to foster inclusive, results-driven collaboration in support of the SDGs. A standout moment was its role as the substantive secretariat of the 2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, which brought together a diverse array of stakeholders to explore how multistakeholder partnerships can accelerate progress on the SDGs under review.

The Forum itself was the product of a highly collaborative process—shaped by a Global Online Stakeholder Consultation and guided by the ECOSOC President's informal Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group, which helped

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**Each of us is different. Each of us is small. But when we come together to take small steps, we can make a big difference.**

**Dayana Blanco Quiroga**

Keynote speaker for the 2025 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, 2023 Future Rising Fellow from Bolivia, and founder of the Uru Uru Team, an initiative focused on saving Uru Uru Lake from harmful pollution through Indigenous traditional knowledge

”

define its scope and agenda. It featured four dynamic SDG Action Segments and a multistakeholder panel titled *“Investing in Partnerships: Catalyzing Action for SDG 17,”* co-organized with key UN entities and stakeholder networks. In addition, 19 side events enriched the dialogue and exchange of ideas.

To spotlight real-world impact, UN DESA also launched a Partnership Snapshot, showcasing inspiring examples of partnerships that are making a tangible difference in SDG implementation around the world.

UN DESA continued to strengthen transparency and accountability in SDG implementation by managing the global repository of registered multistakeholder partnerships and SDG actions. Through the SDG Acceleration Actions Platform and the SDG Actions Platform, governments and stakeholders are encouraged to register their initiatives year-round—helping to track progress and uphold commitments made in support of one or more SDGs. These platforms serve as vital tools for promoting shared responsibility and showcasing concrete efforts to advance sustainable development.

In 2025, UN DESA further expanded its impact by stewarding the SDG Summit Acceleration and Accountability Platform, which welcomed six new commitments from Member States and one from an Observer State—bringing the total to over 40 national commitments. The Department also reviewed and published progress updates from five countries, reinforcing the importance of

transparency in driving meaningful change. Building on this momentum, UN DESA analysed the national commitments made during and after the 2023 SDG Summit to identify emerging policy trends and practical strategies for achieving the goal of leaving no one behind. These findings were captured in a dedicated UN DESA policy brief, offering real-world examples of inclusive policies and approaches that can help ensure sustainable development reaches everyone, everywhere.

### Enhancing coordination and coherence across the ECOSOC system to advance the SDGs

As the substantive secretariat of the Economic and Social Council, UN DESA continued to play a key role in supporting the 2025 ECOSOC Coordination Segment. This high-level gathering brought together representatives from ECOSOC subsidiary bodies, UN entities, Member States, civil society, and other stakeholders to

promote integrated, inclusive, and evidence-based approaches to SDG implementation.

The segment featured seven dynamic panel discussions and a record number of Ambassadors serving as lead discussants—many in their roles as chairs of country groups or facilitators of key intergovernmental processes. These discussions broke down silos, fostered institutional collaboration, and generated forward-looking, science-based recommendations to advance the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future.

Civil society voices added depth and diversity to the dialogue, reinforcing the importance of inclusive engagement. The event highlighted the need for enhanced coordination across the UN system to address urgent priorities, including scaling up climate action and sustainable ocean governance, improving data quality and digital literacy, and investing in equitable and resilient health systems.



UN DESA Assistant Secretary-General Bjørg Sandkjær (left), Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed (centre), and Secretary-General António Guterres (right) at the 2025 Operational Activities for Development Segment in May 2025 in New York. | UN DESA





Youth delegates interact with the President of ECOSOC at its 2025 session, H.E. Mr. Bob Rae (Canada), at the 2025 ECOSOC Youth Forum in April 2025 in New York. | UN DESA

Participants also called for reform of the global financial architecture, the promotion of digital innovation, and the integration of strategic foresight to better anticipate future crises. The importance of data-driven policymaking, inclusive partnerships, and whole-of-society engagement was repeatedly emphasized—reaffirming ECOSOC’s central role in driving policy coherence and translating global commitments into tangible action.

### **Strengthening the UN development system’s support for sustainable development**

UN DESA played a central role in shaping the future of the UN development system through its evidence-based support to the negotiations of the General Assembly resolution on the Quadrennial

Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR). This resolution, set to guide the system through 2028, aims to boost the efficiency of operational activities, enhance policy expertise at the country level, and address pressing global challenges such as internal displacement, digital divides, and the integration of humanitarian, development, and peace efforts.

To support Member States in these negotiations, UN DESA organized a series of informal briefings that covered key topics, including the UN development system’s country-level operations, operational efficiencies, regional collaboration, and SDG implementation in complex settings. These sessions, complemented by online resources, provided a comprehensive snapshot of the current landscape, enabling Member States to make informed, forward-looking decisions.

In partnership with UNITAR and the Government of Switzerland, UN DESA also co-organized a QCPR training series, providing timely updates to Member States on ongoing reforms and aligning discussions with core QCPR priorities. To further ground these efforts in real-world insights, the Department conducted global surveys in 2024 targeting programme country governments, UN entities, resident coordinators, donors, and UN country teams. The findings provided valuable insights into how effectively the system supports SDG implementation, coordination, and alignment with national priorities.

UN DESA also led the organization of the 2025 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment (OAS), held in May 2025. As the first OAS following the adoption of the new QCPR resolution, it marked a key milestone in strengthening the UN development system's effectiveness. Over three days, Member States engaged in high-level dialogues with the Secretary-General and UN leadership, focusing on strategic priorities for delivering the 2030 Agenda.

Key discussions explored how to scale up SDG financing at the country level, support countries grappling with internal displacement, and better connect development and peacebuilding in fragile contexts. The segment also spotlighted the critical role of Resident Coordinators in frontline development work and reviewed recent UN evaluations and accountability measures—including efforts to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment.



The ECOSOC Youth Forum—UN DESA's premier platform for youth involvement in global policymaking—reached a milestone in April 2025, welcoming nearly 1,000 youth leaders and activists in person, alongside almost 100 ministers and senior government officials from around the world.

Organized in collaboration with the Major Group for Children and Youth, the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations, and the UN Youth Office, the Forum provided a dynamic space for young people to voice their ideas, influence policy debates, and offer actionable recommendations to advance the SDGs under review at the 2025 HLPF.

Throughout the Forum and over 120 side events, youth participants addressed urgent global challenges—from armed conflicts and the digital divide to gender inequality and regional disparities. Their insights not only highlighted critical issues but also helped shape innovative solutions and reinforce youth ownership of the 2030 Agenda.

### **Prioritizing youth agency for SDG acceleration**

On International Youth Day (IYD), 12 August 2025, UN DESA brought the world's attention to the agency of young people in translating the SDGs into local realities. Together with UN-HABITAT, UN DESA hosted the global commemoration of International Youth Day 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme, "Local Youth Actions for the SDGs and Beyond." The event called on the global community to move beyond symbolic support and to take concrete steps to empower young people as partners in development. Local youth actions are not isolated activities; they are integral to broader efforts to achieve national development plans and the SDGs. By highlighting and supporting these initiatives, the international community can help bridge the gap between top-down policy frameworks and bottom-up implementation, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Through its United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG) in the Republic of Korea, UN DESA also strengthened youth engagement by coordinating the eighth annual Youth Forum on SDG Implementation, providing a dynamic platform for young people to shape conversations on the 2030 Agenda. Held under the theme "Empowering Young People as Digital Innovators

to Realize the SDGs” and co-organized with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety and Incheon Metropolitan City, the Forum spotlighted youth as key drivers of innovation and sustainability, amplifying their voices through fresh solutions to accelerate SDG progress. With 412 registrations from youth all over the world, the Forum launched the “Ideas for Change Contest,” encouraging young people to share innovative project proposals to help accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.



### **Bridging business and policy to drive sustainable development**

UN DESA continued to strengthen collaboration with leading private sector umbrella organizations, creating meaningful opportunities for business-driven solutions to be integrated into global policy discussions. A noteworthy example was the 2025 SDG Global Business Forum, co-hosted with the UN Global Compact, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), held alongside the HLPF in July 2025 as a Special Event.

The Forum convened government officials and business leaders for a focused dialogue on how more innovative policies and stronger partnerships can fast-track progress toward the SDGs as the 2030 deadline approaches. Discussions explored the enabling policy environments and institutional capacities needed to scale up sustainable private sector action, particularly in support of the Pact for the Future.

Participants highlighted innovative, locally grounded solutions that are already making measurable impacts on the SDGs. These real-world examples demonstrated how demand-driven, scalable innovations—when supported by the right policy frameworks—can unlock transformative change.

Insights from the Forum will feed into the follow-up process of the Pact for the Future and inform key upcoming intergovernmental milestones, including the Second World Summit for Social Development and beyond.

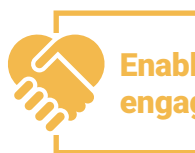


### **Strengthening higher education's alignment with sustainable development**

UN DESA continued to lead efforts to mobilize higher education institutions around the SDGs through its co-chairmanship of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI). This open partnership between the United Nations and the academic community fosters collaboration, innovation, and action to strengthen the role of universities in advancing sustainable development.

In May 2025, the inaugural HESI Networking Forum was held virtually, bringing together over 140 participants from universities, student organizations, UN agencies, and regional networks. The Forum laid the groundwork for more coordinated and collaborative engagement across the sector.

These efforts culminate annually at the HESI Global Forum, a special event of the HLPF, which showcases the transformative potential of higher education to deliver inclusive, science-based solutions for the SDGs. Through these platforms, UN DESA and its HESI partners are working to elevate the visibility of academia in global policy discussions, strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement, and support institutions in equipping learners with the knowledge and skills needed to build a more sustainable future.



### **Enabling broader NGO and civil society engagement at the United Nations**

UN DESA continued to play a essential role in supporting the growing involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society in UN processes. As the substantive secretariat to ECOSOC's 19-member Committee on NGOs, the Department facilitated Member States' review and approval of applications for ECOSOC consultative status—a key gateway for NGOs to participate meaningfully in UN decision-making. In





UN Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua participates in the SIDS Civil Society Engagement Forum at UN Headquarters in New York on 12–13 May 2025. | UN DESA/ PREDRAG VASIC

2025, UN DESA received over 1,100 new applications, marking a 34% increase from the previous cycle and underscoring a surge in global civil society engagement.

In a targeted effort to strengthen civil society participation from SIDS, UN DESA convened the SIDS Civil Society Engagement Forum in New York on 12–13 May 2025. Supported by the Governments of Maldives and Latvia, and funded by Ireland, the Forum brought together 26 representatives from the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, and South China Sea (AIS), Caribbean, and Pacific regions. Participants developed practical proposals to advance

the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), adopted at SIDS4 in 2024. These included recommendations to raise awareness of ABAS, reform funding mechanisms, build institutional capacity, establish regional coordination structures, and enhance collaboration with governments and the private sector.

The proposals generated at the Forum played a key role in shaping the final recommendations for Member States, ensuring that civil society voices from across SIDS were meaningfully reflected in the implementation of ABAS commitments.



UN DESA has played a critical role in mobilizing coordinated UN support to advance sustainable development priorities for SIDS, as identified at the SIDS4 in May 2024. Serving as joint secretariat alongside UN-OHRLLS, the Department was instrumental in supporting the Secretary-General's Inter-agency Task Force in developing the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the ABAS. This Framework, owned and led by SIDS, will be a key tool for tracking progress,

promoting accountability, and accelerating action toward the SDGs.

At the same time, UN DESA actively supported the co-chairs of the UN Steering Committee on Partnerships for SIDS in crafting recommendations to strengthen the SIDS Partnerships Framework. Drawing on extensive consultations with Member States, UN entities, and a wide range of stakeholders, these efforts focused on enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of partnerships. The goal was to ensure that partnership initiatives are better aligned with ABAS priorities and deliver tangible, measurable development outcomes for SIDS.

UN DESA is taking concrete steps to embed the principles of UN 2.0 and the Quintet of Change into its intergovernmental support, analysis, and capacity-development work. These efforts ensure that the Department is agile, data-driven, and people-centred to support sustainable development towards 2030 and beyond.

## DATA



*Building modern data skills and culture is integral to our mission. It means enhancing our capabilities to gather, process, and use data from diverse sources. It is about transforming raw data into valuable insights that drive smarter decisions and impact.*

### Fifth UN World Data Forum

UN DESA delivered the Fifth UN World Data Forum in November 2024 in Medellín, Colombia. The forum produced the Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development, marking a pivotal moment for global data-driven development (see Chapter 4 for more).



### United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians and the Data Science Leaders Network

UN DESA organized webinars and a symposium to strengthen the capabilities of national statistical offices to harness AI and data science for economic statistics. This includes automating business processes and developing indicators for emerging issues (see Chapter 4 for more).

## BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE



*Nurturing behavioural science skills and promoting a culture of behavioural insight goes beyond understanding human actions. It is about applying knowledge of human behaviour to design evidence-based strategies and interventions that encourage positive change.*

### Mindset change of public service delivery for the SDGs

UN DESA promoted mindset transformation as a key driver of governance innovation for the SDGs. Capacity development workshops in Africa and the Caribbean engaged officials in re-thinking leadership, agility, and citizen-centred service delivery.

## DIGITAL



*Developing digital skills and culture means embracing technological advancements and integrating them seamlessly into our work processes. It is about leveraging digital tools and platforms to enhance efficiency, foster collaboration, and amplify results.*

### ECOSOC special meeting on Artificial Intelligence

UN DESA supported the President of ECOSOC in delivering a 2025 Special Meeting on Artificial Intelligence. The meeting addressed the urgent need to bridge the digital divide, establish robust governance systems, and address ethical considerations in AI development (see Chapter 1 for more).

### Digital Learning Centre (DLC)

UN DESA is scaling digital learning and foresight to strengthen institutional capacity for the SDGs. Through its Digital Learning Centre (DLC), over 9,450 participants from 185 countries have accessed flexible, high-impact training to drive sustainable, future-ready development (see Chapter 7 for more).



## FORESIGHT



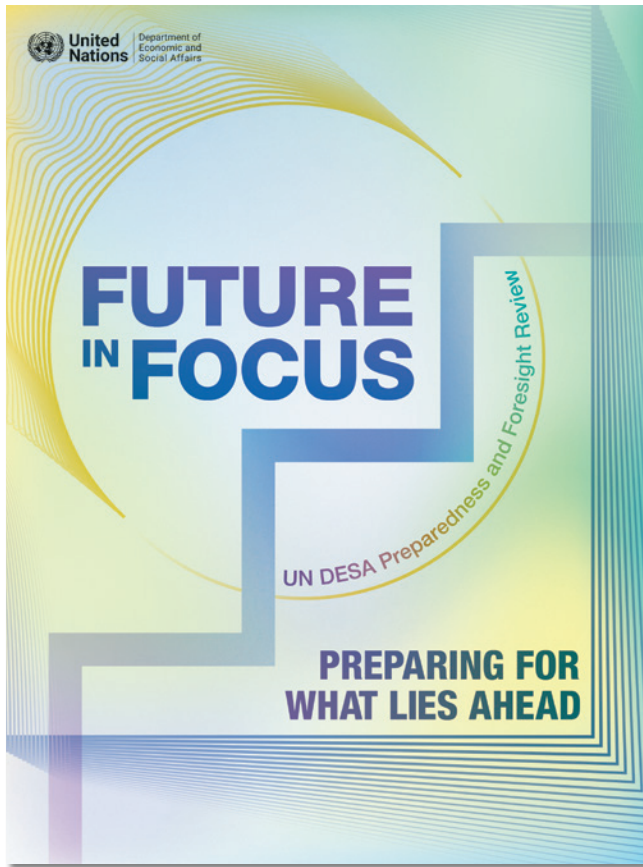
*Instilling a culture of foresight means equipping ourselves with the capacities to discern emerging trends, anticipate potential shifts, and respond proactively. It signifies a commitment to long-term thinking, strategic planning, and readiness for a spectrum of possible futures.*

### Future in Focus review

UN DESA's Future in Focus review highlights how economic and demographic forecasts, capacity-building, and just transition efforts support strategic, long-term decision-making for a more inclusive and resilient future (see Chapter 7 for more).



# AND THE QUINTET OF CHANGE

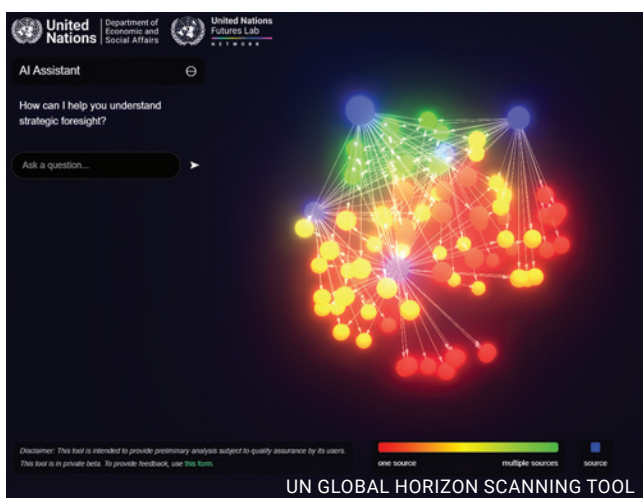


## The United Nations Economist Network (UNEN)

Convened by UN DESA, the United Nations Economist Network (UNEN) produced strategic foresight briefs on the future of work, digital transformation, climate, and governance—offering actionable options to inform anticipatory policymaking (see *Chapter 7* for more).

## UN global horizon scanning tool

UN DESA and the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub unveiled an AI-powered foresight tool at the 2025 STI Forum, consolidating horizon



scanning insights from across the UN system. It marks a breakthrough in institutional learning, collaboration, and reinforcement learning for future-ready governance (see *Chapter 7* for more).

## INNOVATION



*Cultivating innovation skills and culture is about fostering environments that encourage creativity, risk-taking, and continuous learning. It goes beyond simple problem-solving—it's about viewing challenges as opportunities for groundbreaking ideas and solutions.*

## 10th annual STI Forum and STI Action Day

UN DESA, with IATT and global partners, led the 10th STI Forum and inaugural STI Action Day; positioning science, technology, and innovation as key drivers of SDG progress (see *Chapter 1* for more).

## SDG Chatbot

UN DESA piloted SDG Chat, an AI-powered tool offering instant access to SDG insights from its reports and platforms (see *Chapter 7* for more).

## SDG Chat



## Welcome to SDG Chat.

From classrooms to boardrooms and local communities to global capitals, leaders worldwide are embracing the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and spearheading innovative efforts to build sustainable societies.

Learn all about the Global Goals with SDG Chat, our intelligent assistant dedicated to educating global citizens about the purpose, progress, and impact of the SDGs through an intuitive, natural language chat experience.

Get Started →



# REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

## ... to ensure a just and inclusive world

In 2024–2025, UN DESA intensified its efforts to tackle deep-rooted inequalities and amplify the voices of the most vulnerable. By supporting inclusive policymaking, strengthening data and analysis, and building capacity where it is most needed, the Department helped countries expand access to social protection, promote decent work, and bridge the digital divide. Special attention was given to the needs of older persons and youth—especially in fragile and transitional settings—ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected.





UNFPA MYANMAR/BENNY MANSER

## UN DESA...

- Called for a new policy consensus to accelerate social progress, in gearing up for the Second World Summit for Social Development.
- Assisted developing countries in navigating and addressing structural vulnerabilities, ensuring no country is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development.
- Pushed for intergenerational equity, the reframing of caregiving, and the need to recognize better the role of the family in advancing sustainable development.
- Amplified the voices of those left furthest behind, reaffirming our global promise to break cycles of exclusion and inequality.
- Promoted inclusive economic opportunities through the creative economy, cooperatives, and micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), with a focus on empowering women, youth, persons with disabilities, and Indigenous Peoples.
- Rallied global support for urgent humanitarian and development challenges, including in Haiti and regions affected by forced displacement.

# 02

## REDUCING POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

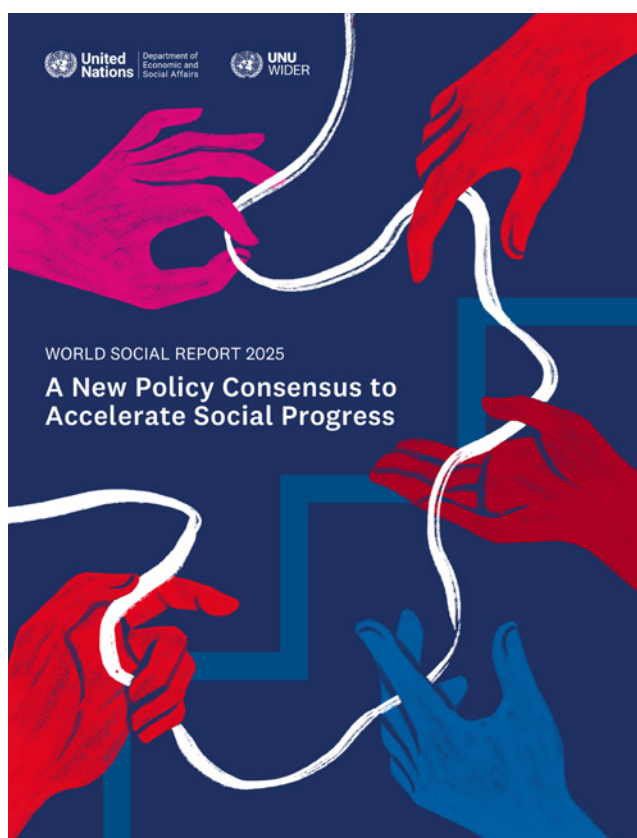
*As momentum grows toward the Second World Summit for Social Development in November 2025 in Doha, Qatar, UN DESA has been at the forefront of global efforts to keep poverty eradication and inequality reduction high on the international agenda. The Department has strengthened its support to Member States, regional organizations, and civil society, helping shape and implement transformative, inclusive development policies that enhance social inclusion, empower marginalized groups, and promote equitable development pathways.*

### **Calling for a new policy consensus to accelerate social progress**

UN DESA makes a bold call for a new global policy consensus based on equity, economic security, and solidarity in the *World Social Report 2025*, produced with UNU-WIDER. It calls for transformative policymaking



Launch of the World Social Report 2025 on "A New Policy Consensus to Accelerate Social Progress", 24 April 2025 | UN DESA







Musicians perform at an event at UN Headquarters in New York commemorating the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October 2024. | UN DESA

to tackle rising inequalities, enhance resilience, and rebuild public trust.

Drawing on both quantitative data and qualitative accounts of people's lived experience, the report shows that economic insecurity is widespread and reveals that over half of the world's population has little or no trust in their government. It highlights how structural inequality, precarious work, social exclusion, and the digital divide are hindering progress, while climate change and technological disruption exacerbate social divides.

The report also provides actionable recommendations for Member States and serves as a reference to inform a bold and forward-looking outcome for the Second World Summit for Social Development. The Summit will be a key opportunity to evaluate progress, identify gaps, and

renew political commitment to place people at the centre of development, aiming to integrate social progress and inclusive development into the core of the global agenda. It will also create space to turn the principles of Copenhagen into transformative practices that accelerate social progress in today's complex global landscape.

### Advancing social justice through global advocacy

Throughout the year, UN DESA highlighted the urgent global need for social justice and inclusion. The observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October emphasized that poverty extends far beyond a lack of income. It is a complex, multidimensional issue rooted in systemic inequalities, discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities.



Opening session of the 63rd Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD), February 2025, New York | UN DESA

By amplifying the voices and experiences of people living in poverty, the event called for coordinated global action to break cycles of exclusion and dismantle the structural barriers that perpetuate deprivation.



### Fostering social inclusion and cohesion

UN DESA supported Member States to advance structural reforms and inclusive policies, reinforcing its commitment to building resilient societies and equitable opportunities for all. At the 63rd session of the Commission for Social Development, held from 10 to 14 February 2025, Member States reaffirmed the importance of addressing the root causes of inequality as a foundation for lasting social transformation. The Commission underscored the need to empower individuals and foster inclusive environments where every voice is heard and valued. The session brought together senior government officials and ministers, UN entities, and over 500 civil society organizations, creating a vibrant platform for dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collective action. It reaffirmed the global commitment

to advancing social inclusion and cohesion as key drivers of sustainable development.

### Promoting healthy ageing and intergenerational equity

UN DESA worked to ensure that both ageing populations and younger generations can thrive together in a rapidly evolving world. In February 2025, the Department hosted a side event during the 63rd session of the Commission for Social Development to explore how



Experts explore how AI can advance social equity across generations at a CSocD side event by UN DESA on youth, ageing, and inclusive development. | OLUSIMI VIJAY AFUN-OGIDAN



AI is reshaping both the opportunities and risks faced by youth and older persons. Sponsored by Chile and Portugal, and co-organized with the International Telecommunication Union, the Global Coalition on Aging, and Tech Runway Africa, the discussion highlighted the importance of inclusive AI design, digital literacy, and global cooperation to ensure that digital transformation fosters social cohesion and intergenerational equity.

Through the United Nations Inter-Agency Group on Ageing, the Department also produced an advocacy brief, calling for greater recognition of how population ageing impacts sustainable development.

### Advancing disability inclusion in social development

UN DESA hosted the largest global forum dedicated to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in

development. The 18th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, held in June 2025, drew over 1,000 participants to United Nations Headquarters, with a record-high 164 speakers, including 48 at the ministerial level or higher. Representatives from Member States, the UN system, other international organizations, national human rights institutions, and civil society delivered powerful statements during the general debate.

Discussions explored critical issues impacting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities. These included innovative financing, leveraging AI, and the rights and role of Indigenous persons with disabilities. The Conference generated a strong social media impact, with the hashtag #COSP18 reaching an estimated 39.9 million people—highlighting widespread support and enthusiasm for the Conference’s focus on inclusion and the rights of persons with disabilities.



Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed (standing) speaks with a participant during the 18th Session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, June 2025. | UN PHOTO/LOEY FELIPE



UN DESA staff and participants gather to commemorate the International Day of Families on 15 May 2025, New York. | UN DESA AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR FAMILY DEVELOPMENT (IFFD)

## Focusing on the role of families in sustainable development

UN DESA highlighted the critical role families play in advancing the 2030 Agenda, hosting a special event to commemorate the International Day of Families on 15 May 2025. As preparations continue for the Second World Summit for Social Development, the event emphasized how family-oriented policies can address

poverty, reduce inequality, and promote social inclusion. Through expert discussions, participants explored key findings from VNRs, highlighted regional best practices, and emphasized the importance of enhancing social resilience in a rapidly changing world. The 2025 observance also drew on insights from the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, with a focus on work-family balance, intergenerational solidarity, and the far-reaching impacts of megatrends such as technological change, migration, and climate challenges.



## Recognizing caregiving as central to sustainable development

UN DESA helped elevate caregiving as a pressing global social and economic issue. In collaboration with US public television station WETA, healthcare company Otsuka, the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation, and the Global Coalition on Aging, the Department co-hosted one of three flagship



UN DESA co-hosted a flagship screening of the PBS documentary *Caregiving*, executive produced by Bradley Cooper (right), to spotlight caregiving as a vital social and economic issue. | COREY SOPKIN FOR CRAIG WARGA





Geraldine and her family appreciate the support they've received at Jesús Está Vivo church, which includes medical care for her daughter and son | UN OCHA/VINCENT TREMEAU

screenings of the new PBS documentary *Caregiving*, executive produced by Oscar-nominated actor Bradley Cooper. The event featured a high-level panel discussion and drew a diverse and influential audience, including ambassadors, philanthropic and private sector leaders, civil society advocates, and major media representatives. It served as a powerful platform to raise awareness and foster dialogue on the critical role of caregiving in shaping inclusive and resilient societies.

### Addressing displacement and refugee protection

As the world witnesses an unprecedented displacement crisis and reduced funding by donor countries, the gap between humanitarian needs and available resources continues to widen. In response, UN DESA

brought together Member States, UN partners, international financial institutions, civil society, and observers to explore sustainable, long-term solutions for refugees and host communities, as well as ways to address the global displacement crisis. In April 2025, the Department supported the President of ECOSOC in convening a Special Meeting on Forced Displacement and Refugee Protection at UN Headquarters in New York. Countries that have shown leadership in hosting and integrating refugees shared experiences, highlighting best practices and lessons learned. The meeting emphasized the importance of international cooperation, shared responsibility, and long-term strategies that link humanitarian aid with development goals. ECOSOC reaffirmed its commitment to advancing comprehensive solutions that protect displaced populations and support inclusive, resilient communities.



Stakeholders at a UN DESA national capacity-building workshop in November 2025, in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe | MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS, COMMUNITY, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT OF ZIMBABWE

UN DESA delivered a series of capacity-building workshops in Zimbabwe from 19–22 November 2024. Organized at the request of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SME Development, the workshops benefited entrepreneurs and policymakers, with a strong focus on entrepreneurship and digitization. The workshops also reinforced the Department's commitment to gender-responsive economic empowerment, where more than half of the participants were women entrepreneurs. The sessions validated a training guidebook designed to enhance MSME resilience, which will inform Zimbabwe's national capacity-building programmes.



### Empowering micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises

Recognizing the crucial role micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) play in creating jobs, reducing poverty and driving inclusive economic growth,



### Fostering an inclusive economy for sustainable development

UN DESA continues to champion inclusive economic models that empower marginalized communities and promote sustainable development. In partnership with the Government of Indonesia and other stakeholders,



UN DESA co-hosted a dynamic workshop on the creative economy and inclusive social development from 24–26 June 2025 in Bali, Indonesia. | MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CREATIVE ECONOMY OF INDONESIA





President of ECOSOC at its 2025 session, H.E. Mr. Bob Rae (Canada), addresses the special meeting on the theme "Haiti's Children Cannot Wait: Supporting Stability, Resilience and Prosperity in Haiti," December 2025, New York. | UN PHOTO/ESKINDER DEBEBE

the Department advanced the implementation of a UN General Assembly resolution to promote the creative economy for sustainable development. Through capacity-building workshops in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Bali, and in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office and Country Team, participants explored how creative industries such as performing arts, culinary arts, software development and publishing—comprising more than 50 million people worldwide, especially youth, women, and marginalized groups—can drive inclusive growth. These efforts emphasized the creative economy's role in reducing inequality and empowering those in vulnerable situations, particularly in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.

UN DESA also leveraged the International Day of Cooperatives 2025 to position cooperatives as critical actors in advancing sustainable and inclusive development.

The Department, through its role as co-chair of the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, worked together with partners—the United Nations Federal Credit Union and the New York City Department of Small Business Services—to commemorate the Day. Held at UN Headquarters in New York, the event showcased how cooperatives foster social and economic inclusion, create decent work, and promote sustainable business practices.

### **Rallying support for Haiti**

Haiti, which is both an LDC and a SIDS country, faces a complex crisis with political, security, human rights, development, and humanitarian challenges. In



Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, addresses the General Assembly on behalf of the Like-Minded Group in support of Middle-income Countries at the high-level meeting on Middle-Income Countries, 1 April 2025. | UN PHOTO/LOEY FELIPE

2024–2025, UN DESA played a key role in galvanizing international attention and action to address the crisis facing Haiti, with a particular emphasis on the urgent needs of children and youth. The Department provided substantive support to the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, and building on the work of the Group, facilitated to organize a special ECOSOC meeting, “Haiti’s Children Cannot Wait,” held on 2 December 2024. The meeting issued a Call to Action to rally the international community to strengthen support for Haiti’s stability, resilience, and prosperity. Building on this momentum, the Department also contributed to the joint ECOSOC–Peacebuilding Commission meeting held in June 2025, which reinforced the need to align peacebuilding,

humanitarian, and development efforts, and called for sustained, coordinated international support to help Haiti achieve a more secure and prosperous future.

### **Supporting LDC graduation and middle-income country challenges**

UN DESA supported countries on the path to sustainable development, driving forward tailored international support mechanisms to eradicate poverty and achieve the SDGs. Its work with the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), for example, has been critical in



**“**  
**CDP’s rigorous technical oversight, as evidenced in its reports, remains indispensable in upholding the integrity of the LDC category while navigating evolving global challenges.**

**H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa**  
Permanent Representative of Nepal,  
Chair of the LDC Group

**”**

tracking the progress of countries transitioning out of the LDC category. While 11 countries under enhanced monitoring remain on track for sustainable graduation, they continue to face significant hurdles—including climate change impacts, armed conflict, the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and declining official development assistance (ODA). To strengthen the graduation process, the Department’s work led to an updated process for the CDP’s triennial review of the list of LDCs, making it more transparent and responsive to possible disruptions in graduation processes. At the same time, UN DESA ramped up its support to middle-income countries, offering in-depth analysis and convening policy discussions to tackle persistent structural barriers holding back their progress.



# ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

## ... to facilitate an SDG investment push

In 2024–25, UN DESA supported Member States and other stakeholders to overcome SDG financing challenges. In a challenging global context, the Department's role was instrumental in catalysing efforts to reshape the SDG financing landscape by driving inclusive negotiations, mobilizing diverse actors, and laying the groundwork for transformative reforms. This culminated in the landmark Sevilla Commitment at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4).

## UN DESA...

- Coordinated a dynamic and participatory preparatory process for FFD4, engaging thousands of stakeholders in the preparatory committee, 2025 FFD Forum, and dedicated tracks for academia, and civil society, alongside hundreds of side events.



# 4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT SEVILLA 2025

المؤتمر الدولي الرابع  
لتمويل التنمية  
إشبيلية 2025

第四次国际会议  
发展筹资问题  
2025年 塞维利亚

4<sup>e</sup> CONFERENCE INTERNATIONALE  
FINANCEMENT DU  
DÉVELOPPEMENT  
SEVILLE 2025

4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
FINANCING FOR  
DEVELOPMENT  
SEVILLA 2025

4th CONFERENCE INTERNACIONAL  
FINANCIACIÓN PARA  
EL DESARROLLO  
SEVILLA 2025



UN PHOTO/RICK BAJORNAS

- Supported Member State negotiations for the FFD4 outcome document, shepherding a broad-based, inclusive process that resulted in an ambitious outcome document.
- Facilitated the contributions of knowledge and evidence from the international system through a series of policy briefs by members of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development.
- Strengthened private sector engagement with FFD4 by establishing a Business Steering Committee, which led the organization of the International Business Forum.
- Enabled historic progress on inclusive global tax governance by supporting the adoption of the Terms of Reference for a UN Framework Convention on International Tax

Cooperation and establishing the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

- Supported the milestone 30th Session of the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, marking two decades of shaping global tax norms and policies.
- Supported the biennial high-level Development Cooperation Forum, addressing reforms in international development cooperation to confront climate emergencies, debt burdens, and shrinking ODA.
- Strengthened SIDS' resource mobilization capacity through its FINS initiative, enabling access to climate finance and other funding aligned with national priorities and the SDGs.

# 03

## ENSURING SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

*With five years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDG financing gap has surged to over \$4 trillion per year. This gap has widened even further due to declining aid, rising trade barriers, and a deteriorating economic outlook. In this challenging environment, UN DESA has played a central role in preparing the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4), a milestone moment in global efforts to reshape the financing landscape for sustainable development.*



### Renewing global financing for development framework

UN DESA led the coordination of the UN system support to the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4), held from 30 June to 3 July in Sevilla, Spain, which culminated in the adoption by consensus of the historic Sevilla Commitment (*Compromiso de Sevilla*). This was a once-in-a-decade opportunity to fulfil the promise of the SDGs and chart a path to a fairer future—reaffirming the vital role of global cooperation. The Conference hosted more than 15,000 participants, including nearly 50 Heads of State and Government and over 200 ministers. The ambitious outcome document outlines concrete steps to scale up sustainable development investment, address the growing debt crisis, and amplify the voice of developing countries in shaping global financial governance.

In a strong display of unity and resolve, coalitions of Member States, international institutions, and

stakeholders launched 130 high-impact initiatives through the Sevilla Platform for Action to drive implementation of the Sevilla Commitment. These initiatives will help turn commitments into reality by mobilizing public and private finance, strengthening tax systems, and enhancing domestic resource mobilization. FFD4

**“The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development opens the door for world leaders to adopt ambitious reforms to deliver affordable long-term financing at scale—and deliver the SDG Stimulus.”**

**António Guterres**  
UN Secretary-General





UN Secretary-General António Guterres (third from left at podium and on screen) addresses the plenary meeting of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4). | UN PHOTO/MARISCAL



Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua (centre right), Mr. Rémy Rioux, CEO of the French Development Agency and Chairman of Finance in Common (centre left), Mr. Serge Ekué, President, Banque Ouest Africaine de Développement and Chair of the IDFC (left) and Ms. Mariana Mazzucato, Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value, University College London (right) gather at the FFD4 special event "Mobilizing development banks to uplift SDG financing" | UN DESA



UN Secretary-General António Guterres speaks at the opening of the ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum Follow-up, April 2025 | UN DESA

was further energized by diverse voices and inclusive participation. The Civil Society Forum, Feminist Forum, Youth Forum, International Business Forum and SDG Investment Fair took place in parallel to the Conference, reflecting a whole-of-society approach to financing sustainable development. Over 470 side events and special events enriched the programme—generating momentum, forging partnerships, and inspiring new solutions.

UN DESA played a pivotal role in shaping the Sevilla Commitment and securing a broad consensus around an ambitious global financing framework. As the Secretariat of FFD4, the Department supported Member States' negotiations in the lead-up to the Conference through its support to the Preparatory Committee sessions, which were attended by thousands of stakeholders, including ministers and senior government officials from capitals and representatives of international organizations. This inclusive and participatory approach

helped shape a forward-looking outcome document that reflects shared priorities, actionable commitments, and a renewed global pledge to drive global momentum for financing sustainable development.

### Reinforcing global dialogue to advance financing solutions

UN DESA supported the milestone 10th edition of the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up in April 2025, reaffirming the Forum's critical role to advance SDG financing solutions. The 2025 Forum brought together around 30 Ministers from developing and developed countries, along with senior officials and representatives from capitals and international organizations to explore concrete and practical solutions to pressing challenges, including lowering debt costs, strengthening development cooperation, enhancing trade and technology access, mobilizing





Panelists at the FFD4 International Business Forum | UN PHOTO/MANUEL ELÍAS

private investment, and improving data for informed policymaking. A special high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods Institutions, WTO, and UNCTAD featured a dynamic exchange between ambassadors and the Executive Directors of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, with a shared focus on shaping and advancing the FFD4 outcomes.



### Unlocking private finance and investment for sustainable development

UN DESA promoted private sector engagement at FFD4 to explore concrete actions that can enhance private capital mobilization and align the investment ecosystem with sustainable development, through the International Business Forum. Held in parallel with the Conference,

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**If we want to close the development financing gap, we need practical solutions that work on the ground. The Business Sector Communiqué lays out concrete steps the private sector can take—now—to unlock investment where it's needed most.**

**Shinta Kamdani**

CEO of Sintesa Group, Co-Chair of the Business Steering Committee and Co-Chair of the GISSD Alliance.

”

the Forum gathered Heads of State and Government, ministers, leaders of multilateral development banks and standard-setting bodies, alongside top private sector leaders. Developing countries also utilized the platform provided by the SDG Investment Fair to pitch investment opportunities and projects worth over \$5 billion to investors and development finance actors.

UN DESA also established the FFD4 Business Steering Committee and coordinated its work, bringing together leaders across the private sector. The Committee launched the Business Sector Communiqué at the International Business Forum, laying out priority areas to mobilize additional private investment for sustainable development. Co-chaired by the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance and the International Chamber of Commerce, the Committee brought together all major relevant business organizations, as well as UN system-related initiatives for the first time. During the FFD4 preparatory process, the Business Steering Committee shared recommendations for scaling private investment for sustainable development, many of which were incorporated into the Sevilla Commitment.



UN DESA ensured unprecedented international organization and academic engagement in the financing for development process. Our efforts included setting up a dedicated Academic Track, creating a powerful bridge between evidence and policy. The centrepiece of this effort was the “Financing for Development Dialogues: From Evidence to Action,” held alongside the second session of the FFD4 preparatory committee in December 2024. Modelled on academic conferences but designed to foster direct engagement between scholars and policymakers, the event featured 19 expert-led panels. More than 400 registered participants generated fresh insights and practical recommendations on key issues, including debt sustainability, international tax cooperation, climate finance, and gender-responsive fiscal policy. Special efforts were made to ensure the participation of scholars from the Global South, enriching the discussions with diverse perspectives and highlighting region-specific challenges. In addition, through



UN Tax Committee at its 30th Session, March 2025, New York | UN DESA/PEDRAG VASIĆ



the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, UN DESA facilitated the presentations of data and analysis from the international system through an extensive series of policy briefs prepared for Member State delegates negotiating the FFD4 outcome.

### **Advancing a holistic shift toward inclusive global tax cooperation**

UN DESA supported Member States in achieving a breakthrough in international tax cooperation and advancing toward a more inclusive and equitable global tax system. In December 2024, the General Assembly adopted the Terms of Reference for a UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation and established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to draft the Convention and two early protocols. The Convention aims to strengthen international tax cooperation by addressing issues such as tax avoidance, evasion, illicit financial flows, and the need for greater transparency and fairness in global tax governance. At a time when closing the financing gap and addressing systemic challenges is more urgent than ever, the Department's expert analysis, policy guidance, and coordination in this area underscores its critical role in strengthening international cooperation and shaping a fairer global tax architecture.

### **Celebrating two decades of shaping fair and inclusive international tax norms**

The 30th Session of the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters marked its 20th anniversary in shaping fair, effective, and inclusive international tax rules, especially for developing countries. Supported by UN DESA, the Committee has delivered practical guidance and policy tools that help countries strengthen their tax systems and mobilize resources to achieve the SDGs. Over the past two decades, the Committee has evolved to address emerging issues, including transfer pricing, environmental taxation, wealth and indirect taxes. Its most recent membership (2021–2025) advanced an ambitious agenda,

**The two Sessions [29th and 30th] are a testament to the collegiality, results focus, practical approaches, and developing country awareness which this Committee always seeks, to fulfil the mandate given to us by ECOSOC. The UN capacity development work on tax has relied heavily on Committee guidance products and the lessons from that work have also fed back to improve our guidance. ... | am extremely proud of the tremendous work that the Committee has achieved, and | especially want to thank the UN DESA secretariat support without which this work would have been very, very difficult.**

**Excerpts from Statement by Co-Chair of the Committee, Liselott Kana, on behalf of the Co-Chairs**  
ECOSOC Management Segment meeting, 10 June 2025.

including an innovative proposal to allow taxation of cross-border digital business activities.

Thanks to financial support from partners such as Norway, Denmark, Sweden, the European Union, and India, UN DESA has expanded its work in support of the Committee, its multi-stakeholder subcommittees, related capacity building activities, as well as fostered the participation of developing countries, including LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS in international tax fora. The Department's tax experts help translate the Committee's guidance into real-world impact, connecting global policy with country-level implementation and ensuring that the needs of developing countries shape the agenda. A



At the opening of the Development Cooperation Forum, UN Under-Secretary-General Cristina Duarte, Special Adviser on Africa to the Secretary-General, called for bold action, stressing that “the time for incremental fixes is over” and “urging a reimagining of global governance centred on people, not profits.” | UN DESA

new membership for 2025–2029 was appointed by the UN Secretary-General in July 2025, setting the stage for the Committee’s continued leadership in building a more equitable global tax system.

### **Transforming international development cooperation through action and impact**

UN DESA organized the biennial high-level ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) in March 2025, which brought together representatives from governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to chart a new course for international development cooperation in the face of converging global crises. In the lead-up to FFD4, the DCF delivered concrete, action-oriented recommendations to improve the quality and impact of all forms of development cooperation—traditional and South-South, bilateral and multilateral, financial and non-financial—focusing on transformation and long-term resilience. UN

DESA also launched the 2025 DCF Survey Study during FFD4, achieving the highest response rate since inception with inputs from 75 countries, and providing deep

**“International cooperation must rise to meet the moment. The Development Cooperation Forum is a vital space for ensuring that global commitments translate into real impact for developing countries.**

**Iraq on behalf of G77 and China**



High-level representatives from the Government of the Dominican Republic and UN DESA convene during a Financing for Small Island Developing States (FINS) workshop. | UN DESA.

insights on realigning international development cooperation with developing countries' needs and priorities.

### **Strengthening financing systems in SIDS through tailored national support**

UN DESA, with support from Italy and Denmark, is helping small island developing States (SIDS) unlock more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable financing pathways through the innovative Financing for SIDS (FINS)

initiative. As a key channel to deliver tailored assistance, FINS builds on the integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs) to provide hands-on, country-specific support. It integrates financing advisors into national planning teams, working directly with governments to design and implement financing strategies aligned with national development plans and the SDGs. FINS has been actively supporting the Dominican Republic, Seychelles, Fiji, and Vanuatu, contributing to a wide range of efforts, from SDG budget tagging and financing strategy development to post-disaster recovery planning and capacity-building.





### ... for evidence-based decision-making

UN DESA continued measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals during the critical final stretch to 2030. The Department released the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*, highlighting global progress and persistent inequalities, while strengthening statistical foundations through revised national accounts and census guidelines. UN DESA drove digital transformation by leading innovation initiatives and convening forums on emerging technologies for sustainable development. The Department also supported the development of new frameworks for measuring well-being beyond GDP and enhanced national statistical capacities, particularly in developing countries.

### UN DESA...

- Highlighted global progress and persistent inequalities, calling for urgent action in six priority areas to accelerate implementation in the final stretch to 2030 in the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025.





UN DESA

- Supported the development of a Framework for Inclusive and Sustainable Well-Being, ensuring new indicators that account for quality of life and sustainability beyond GDP.
- Established revised statistical standards to better reflect today's complex economies through the 2025 System of National Accounts (SNA) and the revised Population and Housing Census Guidelines.
- Drove innovation by leading the UN Datathon, showcasing the potential of young data scientists in solving urban sustainability challenges through AI, geospatial tools, and non-traditional data.
- Accelerated digital and geospatial transformation by convening forums and symposia on the role of AI, data science, and geospatial technologies in achieving the SDGs and building climate resilience.
- Increased the global recognition of unpaid labor by publishing a manual for integrating unpaid household service and care work into national economic statistics.
- Strengthened global health and demographic data by convening a high-level panel to identify gaps in evidence for monitoring the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda, ensuring more data-driven policymaking.
- Released a report highlighting the role of international migration in advancing the SDGs, including poverty reduction, health, gender equality and education.
- Strengthened national statistical capacities by delivering enhanced technical support and updating manuals, empowering national statistical offices (NSOs), particularly in developing countries.

# 04

## MAKING DATA COUNT

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*Robust, inclusive, and forward-looking data systems are needed more than ever to support sustainable development. UN DESA is advancing key initiatives to provide access to global datasets of demographic indicators, strengthen the capacity of Member States to monitor population trends and address current and emerging population issues, strengthen national statistical capacities aligned with updated international standards, and mainstream gender and well-being metrics into global statistical frameworks. The Department reinforced these efforts through multi-stakeholder partnerships, technological innovation, and the integration of non-traditional data sources.*

### Tracking global progress on the SDGs

As the world enters the final five years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN DESA spotlighted progress and urgent challenges in the [\*Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025\*](#). Since 2015, the world has made notable strides in expanding access to education, improving maternal and child health, and bridging the digital divide. Effective prevention efforts have significantly reduced the burdens of infectious diseases. Access to electricity has continued to grow, and renewable energy is now the fastest-rising source of power worldwide.

Yet, progress remains fragile and deeply unequal. Millions still face extreme poverty, hunger, inadequate housing, and a lack of basic services. Women, people with disabilities, and marginalized communities continue to face systemic disadvantages. Escalating conflicts, climate chaos, rising inequalities, and soaring debt servicing costs are holding back further advancements. Despite these setbacks, the Report highlights national and local success stories that prove accelerated progress is possible and is already underway. It calls

for urgent action in six priority areas: food systems, energy access, digital transformation, education, jobs and social protection, and climate and biodiversity. Through this report, UN DESA calls for ambition, cooperation, and investment to deliver on the promise of the SDGs.

### Advancing statistical standards for sustainable development

UN DESA supported milestones in global statistical collaboration with the launch of the 2030 World Population and Housing Census Programme and the endorsement of the new 2025 System of National Accounts (SNA). These innovations will shape how countries capture critical data on population, sustainability, and the evolving economy over the next decade and more.

The 2030 Housing Census Programme, a decennial work plan spanning the period 2025–2034, will update international standards and methodological guidelines, and enhance national capacity for census planning and execution through capacity building, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing platforms. The fourth revision of the Principles and Recommendations for



## Key highlights from the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025

The world experienced notable progress:

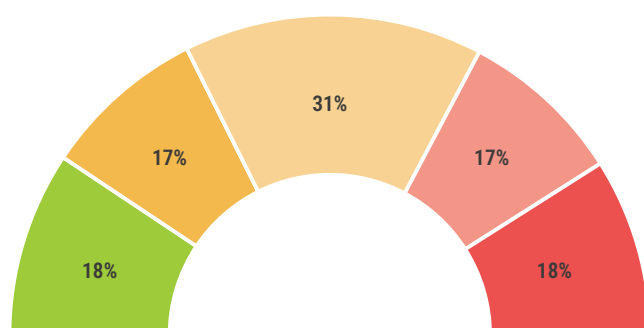
- New HIV infections have decreased by nearly 40 per cent since 2010.
- Malaria prevention efforts have saved more than 12 million lives since 2000.
- 54 countries have eliminated at least one neglected tropical disease.
- An additional 110 million children have enrolled in school since 2015.
- Access to electricity has reached 92 per cent of the global population, with 45 countries achieving universal electricity access in the past decade.
- Internet use has increased by 70 per cent—reaching 68 per cent today.

However, challenges remain:

- Over 800 million people remain trapped in extreme poverty.
- Billions of people lack access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- Women continue to devote 2.5 times as many hours to unpaid domestic and care work as men.
- Climate change is accelerating, with 2024 marking the hottest year on record at 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels.
- Low- and middle-income countries faced record-high debt servicing costs of 1.4 trillion US dollars in 2023.

### Overall progress across targets based on 2015–2025 global aggregate data

■ On track or target met   
 ■ Moderate progress   
 ■ Marginal progress  
■ Regression   
 ■ Stagnation



Source: UN DESA, 2025 SDG Progress Report, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025>.

Population and Housing Censuses was also endorsed by the Commission in 2025, providing countries with a robust and comprehensive toolkit to guide the successful implementation of the 2030 census round.



Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua addresses the 56th session of the UN Statistical Commission in March 2025, New York. | UN DESA

The System of National Accounts is the global standard for measuring economic performance, including gross domestic product (GDP), and is key to facilitating economic and policy analyses. The 2025 revision introduces treatments for new aspects of the economy that have gained prominence—such as digitalization and the informal economy—while expanding the framework to better reflect well-being and sustainability better.

The Statistical Commission tackled a wide range of pressing topics, from SDG indicators, environment, and demographic statistics to big data and modernization of statistical systems. It brought together 585 delegates from 116 countries and 48 observers, including international agencies and civil society organizations, reaffirming the Commission's role as a vibrant hub for the global statistical community.

## Charting the future of data for sustainable development

The Fifth UN World Data Forum marked a pivotal moment for global data-driven development. The Forum, delivered by UN DESA in Colombia in November 2024, launched the Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development, outlining key priorities and actions to secure high-level commitments for transformative change. The Forum reinforced the global commitment to harnessing data for informed decision-making. It emphasized the importance of robust ethical and legal frameworks to ensure the responsible use of data in addressing global challenges.



Participants from more than 120 countries gathered in Medellín, Colombia, to spur data innovation, nurture partnerships, mobilize high-level political and financial support for data, and build a pathway to better data for sustainable development at the Fifth UN World Data Forum | UN DESA

## **Incorporating a gender perspective in official statistics**

The statistical community, with the support of UN DESA, made significant strides toward embedding a gender lens across the global statistical landscape at the 18th meeting of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS), in December 2024. Members reviewed progress in mainstreaming gender perspectives within the work of the UN Statistical Commission. They highlighted innovative initiatives that are transforming how we assess the lives of women and girls. Key discussions included advancements in methodologies for measuring violence against women and a deeper exploration of the gendered dimensions of care and well-being.

UN DESA also unveiled a compelling data story from the 2022 Global Survey of National Gender Statistics

Programmes, now featured on the Global Gender Data Hub. Regional Commissions and UN agencies shared ongoing efforts to strengthen gender data systems. At the same time, country representatives emphasized the power of integrating statistical and geospatial information to produce more granular gender statistics for policymaking. A strong call was made for a comprehensive statistical framework to measure care work, with time-use statistics highlighted as a powerful tool to capture well-being and track progress beyond GDP.

## **Producing innovative solutions for sustainable tourism**

The UN Datathon 2024 demonstrated the power of bringing together young data scientists to address urban challenges through data innovation. Co-organized by UN DESA, the City of Medellín, and Colombia's





Teams of data scientists working at the UN Datathon: Innovating for Sustainable Tourism in November 2024, in Medellín, Colombia | UN DESA

national statistical office (DANE), it brought together over 300 data scientists across 108 teams. Forty teams successfully delivered creative proposals that tackled local challenges across three key dimensions of sustainable tourism—socioeconomic impact, environmental sustainability, and linkages to the SDGs. The grand prize went to the Data Science Lab of Mexico’s National Statistical Office (INEGI), which showcased its integrated use of travel time analytics, crime pattern analysis, and environmental monitoring through innovative use of geospatial information—offering a robust decision-support tool for urban planners. Participants were mentored by experts from the private sector, research institutions, and DANE, fostering a collaborative environment.

### **Enhancing national capabilities in the use of innovative AI and data science applications**

UN DESA advanced the capabilities of national statistical offices (NSOs) in harnessing AI and data science for economic statistics. Through two targeted

webinars, organized in collaboration with the United Nations Network of Economic Statisticians and the Data Science Leaders Network (DSLN)—a body established by the UN Statistical Commission in 2022—participants explored how AI and data science can revolutionize statistical operations. These sessions highlighted practical applications such as automating business processes, enhancing efficiencies, and developing rapid indicators to respond to emerging issues.

Building on this momentum, an international symposium was convened by the Network and DSLN in Dubai from 20 to 22 January 2025, to examine the policy applications of AI and data science, with a particular focus on the impact of digital transformation on economic decision-making. With around 70 participants from 28 countries and 10 international organizations, the symposium featured interactive formats, including gallery walks, mapping exercises, storyboard development, lightning talks, and peer-learning talks, which fostered rich dialogue and collaboration. Insights from the symposium, hosted by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Center of the United Arab Emirates,





Panelists discuss the policy use of AI and data science and the impact of digital transformation on economic decision-making at the International Symposium on AI and Data Science for Economic Statistics, in January 2025 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates | UN BIG DATA

served as inputs to the DSLN playbook, equipping NSOs with cutting-edge tools and methodologies for modern statistical production.

## **Harnessing geospatial innovation for national resilience and sustainable development**

The 7th High-level Forum on UN Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), organized in October 2024 by UN DESA and the Government of Mexico, represented by its National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), marked a major step forward in harnessing geospatial innovation to drive national progress on social, economic and environmental fronts. Over 200 high-level policymakers and senior government officials gathered with scientists, engineers, innovators, entrepreneurs, as well as representatives of science and technology communities, the UN system and international organizations to strengthen partnerships for sharing and disseminating knowledge, good practices, approaches and strategies towards advancing the 2030 Agenda. The Forum addressed the use of geospatial information to understand, communicate and manage climate-related challenges and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs

through the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF). The Forum also explored strategies on developing geospatial capacity, leveraging innovative tools and technologies, and fostering partnerships towards delivering positive national social, economic and environmental outcomes.

## **Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages**

UN DESA helped shed light on key advances in health and demographic data collection since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). On the sidelines of the 58th session of the Commission on Population and Development in April 2025, the Department convened a side event in which panellists presented compelling data on mortality, fertility, and family planning, identifying gaps in global health and demographic monitoring. They emphasized the indispensable role of robust, data-driven approaches in shaping policies aligned with the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda. The event brought together representatives from Member States, UN system entities—including UN DESA, UNICEF, and WHO—and civil society organizations, fostering a collaborative dialogue on leveraging data for impactful



Opening keynote session at the 7th High-level Forum on UN Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), October 2024, México City, Mexico | UN DESA

decision-making. This exchange showcased how global datasets drive informed policymaking and advocacy, reinforcing the importance of continued investment in data collection to support equitable and sustainable health outcomes worldwide.

## **Integrating unpaid household service work into national economic statistics**

UN DESA has taken a significant step toward addressing gender disparities in economic measurement with the publication of the *National Time Transfer Accounts Manual: Measuring and Analysing the Gendered Economy* in January 2025. The Manual provides a methodology to integrate unpaid household and care work, predominantly performed by women, into national economic statistics, ensuring a more comprehensive

understanding of economic contributions beyond traditional measures like the GDP. By capturing gender and age-based economic contributions through time-use data, the Manual offers valuable perspectives on gender equity, intergenerational support, and population ageing. The refined metrics have the potential to reshape public policy by exposing the true costs of raising children, supporting older persons, and maintaining households, fostering more inclusive and equitable economic planning.

## **Providing data and research to inform global policy on migration**

UN DESA has strengthened the global understanding of migration dynamics through two key publications: the *International Migration and Sustainable Development* report (released in December 2024) and the *International Migrant Stock 2024 dataset* (released in





Migration Resource Center in Kathmandu, Nepal | ILO/MARCEL CROZET

January 2025), providing crucial evidence to support informed policy decisions and sustainable development strategies. The *International Migration and Sustainable Development* report highlights the significant contribution of migration to multiple SDGs, including poverty reduction, health, education, and gender equality. It underscores the urgent need for comprehensive, reliable migration data, as outdated or incomplete information can lead to ineffective policies and erode public trust.

The *International Migrant Stock 2024 dataset*, offered detailed estimates of migration patterns across 233 countries and areas from 1990 to 2024. The findings reveal that the global migrant population has nearly doubled since 1990, reaching 304 million in 2024, including a record of 51.7 million refugees and asylum seekers displaced across borders. Although there is

much uncertainty around future trends, it is expected that the complexity and significance of international migration will increase in the coming decades due to demographic changes and global challenges like climate change.



### Advancing inclusive policymaking through stronger global migration data

The Fourth International Forum on Migration Statistics, held from 16 to 18 June 2025 in Malmö, Sweden, marked a major step forward in strengthening global migration data for inclusive and evidence-based policymaking. Co-organized by UN DESA, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development





Speakers at the Fourth International Forum on Migration Statistics in June 2025 in Malmö, Sweden | UN DESA

(OECD), and hosted by the University of Malmö, the Forum convened more than 230 speakers from diverse regions and disciplines, showcasing innovative approaches to enhance migration data and strengthen evidence-based policymaking. UN DESA offered practical guidance on implementing the revised

UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration. The Forum also explored how data innovations can support regular migration pathways, strengthen national capacities for data use in decision-making, foster partnerships, and advancing migration forecasting tools.

# STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS



## ...to improve people's lives

By fostering innovation and promoting accountability and digital government, UN DESA supported Member States in ensuring that governance systems are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all, including those in vulnerable situations. These efforts better equip public institutions to meet current and future challenges, accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



UN DESA

## UN DESA...

- Accelerated public sector transformation and developed new capacities of public servants by applying the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change through strategic foresight, changing mindsets and innovation, data governance, and digital government.
- Promoted digital government transformation, including in the areas of data governance, digital cooperation, and inclusion worldwide, and technology-driven capacity-building of public servants.
- Strengthened Member States' capacity to implement the 11 principles of effective governance for sustainable development.
- Brought together stakeholders to advance peace, justice, and institutions for sustainable development, and championed women's leadership in public governance.
- Launched new Standards of Excellence in Public Administration education and training to mainstream the SDGs and reflect new developments in public administration.



# 05

## STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

*Reimagining governance is essential to accelerating sustainable development. UN DESA supported Member States in strengthening governance systems and advancing effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions to promote the SDGs. It helped countries build capacities in systems thinking, strategic foresight, innovation, digital government transformation, digital data governance, and new public sector mindsets—enabling governments to navigate complex and emerging challenges better. The Department also strengthened global accountability for the SDGs through deeper collaboration with Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs).*



### **Accelerating effective governance for sustainable development in Africa**

Through a series of new strategy guidance notes, UN DESA helped accelerate the implementation of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development across Africa by equipping countries with practical tools and peer learning platforms that directly support the achievement of the SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The Department offered concrete guidance addressing key dimensions of effective governance, such as beneficial ownership registries, lobby registers, open government data, equitable fiscal and monetary policies, and public workforce diversity. The Department also developed a practical toolkit to ensure the guidance remains relevant in African contexts.

The Fifth Annual Continental Workshop on Strengthening Institutional Capacities in Africa brought together UN entities and African partners in a vibrant setting that

fostered peer learning, the exchange of best practices, and strengthened regional cooperation. Held in October 2024 in South Africa, the workshop once again showcased the power of collaboration across divisions and institutions, including with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). It served as a vital platform for advancing shared goals under both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, reinforcing the collective commitment to sustainable development across the continent.

### **Leveraging the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change for effective governance**

SDG 16 serves as the driving force behind the effective implementation of all other SDGs by promoting more effective, accountable, and inclusive public institutions. Throughout the year, UN DESA has played a pivotal role in helping Member States build strong public institutions through strategic foresight, mindset change, innovation, digital government, digital transformation, and data governance. These efforts have helped improve public



Participants at the “Changing Mindsets for Innovation, Digital Transformation, and Improved Public Service Delivery for SDGs Implementation” workshop in the Dominican Republic. | UN DESA

service delivery and promote the well-being of people, especially those at risk of being left behind.

For example, UN DESA’s 2024 webinar series on “Effective Governance and the Quintet of Change for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals” brought together policymakers, public servants, and stakeholders from around the world to explore governance strategies for achieving the SDGs. The series provided hands-on tools, global case studies, and expert insights, empowering participants to apply innovative and citizen-centred approaches to governance, with a special emphasis on youth, women, and vulnerable populations as central actors in building equitable and effective institutions. Through dialogue and knowledge sharing, the series helped strengthen the capacity of participants to lead change within their institutions and communities.



UN DESA has advanced global efforts to foster innovation, digital transformation, and changed mindsets, as well as improved public service delivery, in support of SDG implementation through a wide range of capacity development initiatives. In Africa, the Department organized a workshop on “The Future of Governance and New Mindsets, Knowledge, and Competencies Fit for the 21st Century” within the framework of the eighth edition

of the African Forum of Territorial Managers and Training Institutes. In the Dominican Republic, one workshop emphasized the need for mindset shifts in local governance to promote innovation, agility, and citizen-centred services, engaging over 300 participants in peer learning. Elsewhere in the Caribbean, interactive dialogues in the Bahamas and a workshop in Saint Lucia facilitated frank discussions among officials and stakeholders on transforming mindsets for long-term institutional change, aligning with national digital strategies. These meetings leveraged the [Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs](#) developed by UN DESA.



The 2025 United Nations Public Service Forum convened global leaders to strengthen public institutions and civil servants’ capacities—human, institutional, and technological—to meet the evolving demands of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Ministers, senior officials, and public servants explored innovative and inclusive approaches to improve public service delivery, address emerging challenges, and foster transformation at all levels of governance. Held by UN DESA in collaboration with the Government of Uzbekistan in Samarkand from 23 to 25 June 2025, the Forum introduced strategic foresight and systems thinking as tools to overcome institutional fragmentation,



Assistant Secretary-General Navid Hanif speaks at the UN Public Service Forum 2025, held from 23 to 25 June in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. | UN DESA

misaligned planning, and gaps in service delivery. It also emphasized behavioural and cultural shifts in governance, advocating for adaptability, cross-sector collaboration, and a proactive mindset. These efforts directly support the Pact for the Future and accelerate progress on the SDGs by building governance systems that can anticipate and respond to complex, interlinked challenges.

### **Bringing stakeholders together for effective governance and AI-driven innovation in Asia-Pacific**

The eighth Regional Symposium on Effective Governance and AI Transformation for the 2030 Agenda in fall 2024 explored how AI technologies can transform public service delivery and accelerate progress towards the SDGs. The Symposium highlighted the growing role of AI in improving governance, efficiency, resilience, and service delivery in the public sector. It explored how AI and innovation could address both current and emerging challenges in public administration while advancing

SDG implementation. It also emphasized the connection between governance, AI, digital inclusion, and sustainable development, aiming to foster systemic change and inspire innovation. A key outcome of the event was Mongolia's advancement in its data governance framework, an essential step toward developing a National Strategy for Big Data and AI. Co-organized by UN DESA, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety of the Republic of Korea, and Incheon Metropolitan City, the Symposium brought together more than 1,500 participants from 120 countries, fostering exchange of ideas and actions to drive more inclusive and effective governance across the Asia-Pacific region.

### **Driving action on digital government transformation and digital data governance**

Building on the insights of the *2024 UN E-Government Survey*, which highlighted the vital link between digital transformation and sustainable development, UN DESA





The eighth Regional Symposium on Effective Governance and AI Transformation was held in Incheon, Republic of Korea from 30 October to 1 November 2024. | UN DESA

launched the E-Government Toolkit Resource Center in September 2024 to provide essential guidance and best practices for both national- and local-level policymakers, supporting digital government transformation and digital data governance. The [National E-Government Toolkit](#) provides best practices for enhancing online public services at the national level. At the same time, the [Local E-Government Toolkit](#) helps municipalities strengthen citizen engagement, transparency, and service delivery.

The Department also supported the development of data governance in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region by organizing global and regional conferences, as well as national workshops, in December 2024 in Mongolia and in February 2025 in The Gambia.



Participants brainstorm data security-related policies during a national data governance workshop in February 2025 in Mongolia. | UN DESA

The 19th Internet Governance Forum (IGF), held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 15 to 19 December 2024, marked a milestone in global digital cooperation, drawing a record 11,000 participants and 200 high-level delegates, including ministers, tech CEOs, digital experts, international legislators, and youth. It laid the critical foundation for the implementation of the Global Digital Compact, adopted at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, and the 20-year review of the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), thereby reinforcing the IGF's role as the primary multi-stakeholder platform for inclusive internet

governance. The 2024 Forum culminated in a strong call for global cooperation and governance to ensure that the internet remains open, free, and secure for all.

The Forum also commemorated a landmark session at the 20th IGF, held in Lillestrøm, Norway, from 23 to 27 June 2025. IGF celebrated two decades of advancing open, inclusive, and secure digital development by convening more than 9,000 participants—on-site and online—from across the world and various sectors, including policymakers, civil society, academia, youth, and business leaders. The gathering took place at a pivotal time for the SDGs and global digital governance, as countries deliberated on implementing the Global Digital Compact and took stock of the 20 years since WSIS+20, which will be reviewed at a high-level event in December 2025. The Forum concluded with an emphasis on addressing the rising challenges in the digital landscape, including the erosion of digital trust, misinformation and disinformation, and the emergence of generative AI, while advocating for an internet that is open, secure, inclusive, and centred on human dignity and rights.

### **Advancing peace, justice, and strong institutions for sustainable development**

The sixth SDG 16 Conference, held in May 2025, showcased how investing in SDG 16 yields measurable

**“The Global Digital Compact also recognizes the Internet Governance Forum as the primary multistakeholder platform for discussing internet governance issues. As the world implements the Compact, the work and voice of your Forum will be critical. Together, let’s keep building an open, free, and safe Internet for all people.”**

**António Guterres**  
UN Secretary-General

benefits for governments and communities, helping them advance their development goals. The conference brought together stakeholders to mobilize action and partnerships, with SDG 16 serving as a catalyst to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implement the Pact for the Future. It also featured the presentation of the



Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the Internet Governance Forum in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 2024. | IGF SECRETARIAT



“

**Beyond WSIS+20, the IGF should remain the primary global arena for the multistakeholder dialogue and open inclusive and informed discussions on internet governance challenges and opportunities.**

**The IGF should continue to develop policies and practices that ensure that the Internet remains a force for positive change, innovation and global connectivity.**

**Torgeir Micaelsen**

State Secretary of the Ministry of Digitalization and Public Governance, Government of Norway

”

2025 Civil Society Declaration on SDG 16+. The Conference’s key recommendations for promoting peace, justice, and effective institutions were shared as inputs to the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) and the 2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The event was organized by UN DESA, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), and the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations.

### **Strengthening accountability for SDG implementation**

Throughout the year, UN DESA strengthened global accountability for the SDGs by deepening collaboration with Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and building their capacity to audit SDG implementation. For example, the Department, in partnership with the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI), organized the SDG Auditor Initiative meeting to enhance auditors’ competencies to audit the SDGs through professional education and



Speakers and participants at the SDG 16 Conference in May 2025 in New York. | UN DESA

audit support. The Department also collaborated with SAIs in the development of the 2025 edition of the World Public Sector Report, which will be disseminated at the XXV International Congress of SAIs (INCOSAI) in October 2025, highlighting the critical contributions of SAIs to SDG implementation, follow-up, and review. Furthermore, the Department also launched new on-line training courses on ethics and public integrity, and on the role of oversight institutions in strengthening accountability and combating corruption.

### **Driving effective governance from national to local levels**

UN DESA, through its United Nations Project Office on Governance (UNPOG), supported countries in translating national development visions into local action. In Rwanda and Nepal, targeted workshops led to the creation of concrete action plans and roadmaps aligned with the 2030 Agenda and national priorities. In Southeast Asia, UN DESA promoted public sector innovation by helping Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam develop integrated governance strategies. Through hands-on training and collaboration with local institutions, these efforts equipped public officials with the tools and knowledge to implement more responsive, inclusive, and sustainable governance practices. These initiatives reflect the





Participants of the SDG Auditor Initiative. | SAI BRAZIL, INTOSAI DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

Department's commitment to scaling practical solutions that address complex governance challenges and strengthen institutional capacity at all levels—ensuring that effective governance becomes a driving force for achieving both global and national development goals.

### **Empowering women as leaders in public institutions**

UN DESA supported Bhutan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, and Senegal in advancing public administration, with a focus on increasing women's leadership at national and local levels.

“  
**If anyone would like to become a professional planner, this workshop has certainly been one of the best. ... The knowledge gained here will be helpful in the coming years for the planning process, particularly in incorporating the implementation of the SDGs.**  
 ”

**Participant of the Capacity Development Workshop on Effective National-to-Local Governance for Sustainable Development Goals Implementation**  
 Rwanda, December 2024

Through a capacity-building project, the Department helped identify structural barriers and develop national action plans to promote women's participation in decision-making roles. South-South peer learning and collaboration across Africa and Asia-Pacific enriched the initiative, enabling countries to share experiences and strategies through peer reviews and joint activities. To sustain momentum, an online platform was launched, offering continued access to resources, reports, and discussions—ensuring long-term impact and engagement.

By synthesizing lessons from the project, UN DESA further helped identify and address barriers to gender parity in public decision-making across four countries, focusing on key areas—legal and policy frameworks, civil service rules, gender-responsive recruitment, leadership and ICT training for women, and improving accountability through better gender-disaggregated data systems. The study emphasized that political will, cultural transformation, and sustainable financing are essential to achieving gender parity in public decision-making, which are integral parts of good governance and directly aligned with SDGs 5 and 16.

**“On behalf of the NCWC, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your continued support and collaboration throughout this important initiative aimed at advancing women's leadership within public institutions. The successful adoption of Bhutan's national action plan is a direct outcome of the valuable partnership between UN DESA, UNDP, and all the stakeholders involved, reflecting our collective commitment to promoting gender equality in public administration.”**

**—Wangchuk Zangmo**  
Senior Programme Officer, National Commission  
for Women and Children (NCWC), Bhutan



Participants in the Capacity Development Workshop on Effective National-to-Local Governance for Sustainable Development Goals Implementation work together in Rwanda. | UN DESA



## ENDING THE WAR ON NATURE

### **... by driving synergistic and integrated policymaking and action globally**

In 2024–2025, UN DESA spearheaded integrated and cross-cutting efforts to accelerate implementation of global commitments across key sectors—energy, climate, transport, forests, the ocean, and water. By supporting Member States and stakeholders through capacity-building and strategic partnerships, the Department fostered stronger alignment of national policies with the 2030 Agenda and unlocked synergies across the SDGs to deliver transformative results.





UN DESA

## UN DESA...

- Successfully organized the third United Nations Ocean Conference, which resulted in over 170 countries adopting the “Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action” declaration as part of the Nice Ocean Action Plan.
- Mobilized over US\$1.4 trillion in Energy Compact commitments by bringing together hundreds of global stakeholders through the EnergyNow SDG 7 Action Forum, driving momentum towards universal access to sustainable energy.
- Led the preparatory process for the Implementation Plan of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport, catalysing multistakeholder collaboration and coordination, mobilizing action and delivering targeted capacity-building support to advance sustainable mobility.
- Fostered stronger links between climate action and the 2030 Agenda by co-convening the fifth and sixth Global Conferences on Climate and SDG Synergies, actively contributing to the preparations of COP29 and COP30.
- Supported Member States in accelerating progress towards the Global Forest Goals, helping harmonize global forest and biodiversity goals at national levels, and facilitating multistakeholder partnerships for forest-based climate actions.
- Paved the way for the 2026 UN Water Conference, by supporting preparations and operationalizing the first-ever United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation, setting the stage for coordinated global action on water.

# 06

## ENDING THE WAR ON NATURE

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*Across the globe, communities are increasingly affected by the impacts of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and the rapid decline of biodiversity. These interconnected threats underscore the indispensable role of nature in achieving sustainable development. In response, UN DESA champions integrated solutions to today's most urgent global challenges, helping to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals. The Department works to address the systemic drivers of environmental degradation, advocating for a transformative shift in energy and transport systems, and the sustainable, long-term stewardship of vital natural ecosystems—from forests and the ocean to freshwater resources and beyond.*

### **Catalysing multilateralism to reinforce ocean action**

The third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), held in Nice, France, from 9 to 13 June 2025, marked a milestone moment to accelerate action and mobilize actors to protect the ocean. The high-level gathering brought together a diverse array of stakeholders, including Heads of State, scientists, Indigenous Peoples and civil society, all underscoring the ocean's vital role in regulating the climate, sustaining food security and livelihoods, and preserving biodiversity. More than 170 countries adopted an intergovernmentally agreed declaration called *Our ocean, our future: united for urgent action*, which commits to urgent action to conserve and sustainably use the ocean. The declaration—together with bold voluntary commitments by States and other entities—constitutes the Nice Ocean Action Plan, which successfully concluded the Conference with a commitment to boost multilateralism. In addition, 19 more States ratified the Marine Biodiversity Agreement (BBNJ Agreement) and

20 more signed it during the conference, bringing the total number of signatures to 136 and ratifications to 50 States plus the European Union.

### **Advancing united action for water and sanitation**

The first-ever United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation marks a major milestone in decades of global efforts to ensure safe water and sanitation for all, reinforcing its place as a key global priority. Developed in response to the momentum generated by the 2023 UN Water Conference, the Strategy is designed to boost stronger collaboration and coordination across the UN system. It supports countries in accelerating progress on national plans, global water goals, human rights to water and sanitation, and solutions to pressing water challenges. Since the launch of the Strategy at the High-level Political Forum in 2024, UN DESA, through its support to UN-Water, has been developing a Collaborative Implementation Plan to guide the Strategy's operationalization,



Nicolas Entrup of OceanCare (left), Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean (centre), and Fabienne McLellan of OceanCare (right) participate in a handover ceremony for a petition to protect ocean health. | UN DESA

localization, and monitoring. This Strategy lays a critical foundation for unified UN action on water and sanitation, setting the stage for bold, coordinated outcomes at the 2026 UN Water Conference.

### Mobilizing global action to achieve sustainable energy for all

UN DESA galvanized governments, the UN system, and civil society—including youth organizations—to strengthen political will and accelerate action on sustainable energy. As the Secretariat of UN-Energy, the Department directed efforts to implement the UN-Energy Plan of Action, driving coordinated, system-wide efforts to achieve three bold targets: universal energy access, tripling renewable energy, and doubling

energy efficiency to achieve SDG 7 by 2030 and beyond. Through the EnergyNow SDG7 Action Forum, UN DESA brought together hundreds of stakeholders worldwide, mobilizing Energy Compact commitments totalling over US\$1.4 trillion. It also led the charge in implementing the UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All and successfully advocated for its extension to 2030—a powerful reaffirmation of global resolve to realize SDG 7. UN DESA also launched in June the 2025 edition of *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report*. This was followed by a series of insightful SDG 7 Policy Briefs unveiled during the 2025 High-level Political Forum in New York on 16 July, where both the Energy Progress Report and the Policy Briefs were presented to high-level policymakers, reinforcing the political momentum for transformative energy action.





Participants discuss the role of bioeconomy as a key economic paradigm for tackling climate change, promoting sustainable development, and restoring forests during a thematic discussion on regenerating nature at the fifth Global Climate and SDG Synergies Conference in September 2024 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. | IISD



## Advancing climate and SDG synergies on the road to COP30

Demonstrating global leadership in aligning climate action and the 2030 Agenda, UN DESA, together with UNFCCC, co-convened the fifth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies, 5–6 September 2024, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Building on the 2024 Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies, the conference showcased evidence-based and forward-looking solutions to bridge climate and development goals, setting the stage for COP29 and the Summit of the Future. The fifth conference brought together high-level representatives from more than 30 countries, with strong participation from youth, civil society, and UN leadership. At

COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, the Department also organized the SDG Pavilion in collaboration with UNFCCC and DGC, engaging more than 120 partners across more than 100 events to spotlight integrated solutions and transformative partnerships that drive both climate and sustainable development progress.

The momentum continued with the sixth Global Conference on Climate and SDG Synergies, hosted by Denmark, 27–28 May 2025. The sixth conference further advanced this agenda by promoting concrete pathways toward equitable transitions and nature-based resilience, helping to shape the global conversation in the lead up to COP30 and beyond. Together, these efforts underscored the urgency of integrated, inclusive, and ambitious action to tackle climate change while advancing all 17 SDGs.



USG Li Junhua speaks at the opening of the SDG Pavilion at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. | UN DESA

## Boosting global collaboration on sustainable transport

UN DESA continued to lead global efforts on sustainable transport, playing a pivotal role in preparing the Implementation Plan of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport, which is set to begin in 2026. Through inclusive and collaborative engagement with Member States, the United Nations system, multilateral development banks, think tanks, civil society, and other stakeholders, the Department helped forge a unified global commitment to sustainable mobility. More than 110 organizations across 45 countries also contributed ideas to co-create and shape an ambitious Implementation Plan.

In parallel, UN DESA strengthened national capacities by delivering targeted support to Member States on sustainable transport. For example, a workshop for landlocked developing countries was held in January 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The conversations contributed to a dedicated policy brief addressing the unique transport challenges faced by these countries. Another workshop, co-organized with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in June 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland, focused on empowering developing countries to effectively implement sustainable transport policies and contribute to the Decade's initiatives.





Participants gather at a session on “Strengthening multilateral action for forests through universal and inclusive dialogue” at UNFF20 in New York in May 2025. | UN DESA

## Advancing global forest action towards 2030

UN DESA organized the 2025 session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF20), a key milestone in the global effort to achieve the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) by 2030. The Forum served as a critical platform to assess progress, identify implementation gaps, and chart strategic pathways forward, culminating in a set of concrete proposals to inform both the HLPFs in 2025 and 2026 as well as UNFF21 in 2026. At the Forum, participants highlighted the need to strengthen several key measures, including leveraging the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF). The Forum also

featured a series of interactive panel discussions, which explored critical issues such as the valuation of forest ecosystem services to better integrate the economic value of forests into national policies and strategies, the development of a global hub on forest financing to mobilize and coordinate resources more effectively, and the crucial role of dryland forests in climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable livelihoods. These discussions not only deepened understanding of key forest issues but also generated actionable insights to support countries in translating global forest commitments into tangible results on the ground.





Speakers at a Forest Day event during CBD COP16 present a new joint initiative by the UNFF and CBD secretariats under the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, promoting integrated implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. | UN DESA

## **Harmonizing global forest and biodiversity goals into national policies and strategies**

Responding to Member States' call for stronger collaboration among the Rio Conventions on forest-related issues, UN DESA and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) launched a joint initiative under the CPF to promote the integrated implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF). Over the past year, the initiative focused on regional analyses in Latin America and Africa, identifying both opportunities and challenges for advancing the GFGs and the KM-GBF in a coherent, synergistic

manner. Two publications—*Towards a Coherent Forest Agenda* and *The Forest Factor*—were launched during Forest Day at CBD COP16, underscoring the central role of forests in achieving global biodiversity and sustainability targets.

## **Catalysing forest-based climate actions through multistakeholder partnerships**

At COP29 in November 2024 in Baku, Azerbaijan, UN DESA organized the Forest Pavilion within the SDG Pavilion, marking an important milestone in elevating the role of forests in global climate discussions. This

multistakeholder Forest Pavilion—the first of its kind at any climate COP—brought together more than 500 participants to showcase forest-based climate action and partnerships at national, regional, and international levels by governments, organizations, science and research communities, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women, and youth. The Forest Pavilion partners launched a communiqué, *From Baku to Belém: Forests for Climate, People, and*

*the Planet*, underscoring forests as the bedrock of the global journey towards a net-zero, climate-resilient, and equitable future for all. It highlights key outcomes and renewed commitments to advancing forest-based climate actions to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030 and introduces the “Roadmap to Belém” that sets the stage for accelerated forest-based climate action leading up to COP30 in November 2025 in Belém, Brazil.



Juliette Biao (left), Director of the UN Forum on Forests secretariat, and Thomas Clark (centre), General Counsel for the Asian Development Bank, participate in an interview at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan. | UN DESA



## Recognizing Indigenous stewardship in the fight against climate change

UN DESA examined the critical intersection between Indigenous Peoples' rights to lands, territories, and resources, and the escalating impacts of the climate crisis in its *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Volume VI* report. The report highlights how Indigenous Peoples—who steward about 22 per cent of the world's land surface and protect 80 per cent of its biodiversity—are not only front-line defenders of the planet, but also are among the most vulnerable to climate-related threats, including displacement, deforestation, and loss of traditional livelihoods, often with limited access to climate finance and policy decision-making. This volume calls for urgent recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples' collective rights, as well as the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into global climate strategies. It emphasizes that safeguarding Indigenous land rights and ensuring free, prior, and informed consent are essential not only to advancing human rights but also to achieving effective and equitable climate action. The report is a compelling reminder that Indigenous-led solutions are indispensable for addressing the climate crisis and building a more resilient, sustainable future for all.



### State of the World's Indigenous Peoples

Climate Crisis

Volume VI







## FRAMING THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT

### ... by turning foresight into forward-thinking solutions

UN DESA harnessed foresight, innovation, and data to help countries navigate uncertainty, reinforcing the Department's role as a strategic convener and knowledge partner. Through forward-looking analysis and the integration of UN 2.0 capabilities, the Department advanced long-term planning, strengthened institutional preparedness, and delivered future-oriented capacity development to Member States.





UN DESA

## UN DESA...

- Analysed global economic uncertainties amid geopolitical tensions, weakened growth, strained supply chains, and financial volatility, and offered solutions to mitigate these risks and boost economic prospects through strategic policymaking and international cooperation.
- Elevated foresight as a core UN function through the UN Economist Network and its “Futures and Foresight” series.
- Equipped Member States with open-source macroeconomic tools and training for forward-looking policymaking.
- Supported national planning processes in small island developing States and other vulnerable contexts, applying systems thinking and strategic scenario models.
- Prepared countries for population ageing and demographic shifts through cutting-edge projections and policy guidance
- Integrated foresight and digital transformation into “UN DESA’s internal capacity development, knowledge platforms, and youth engagement.

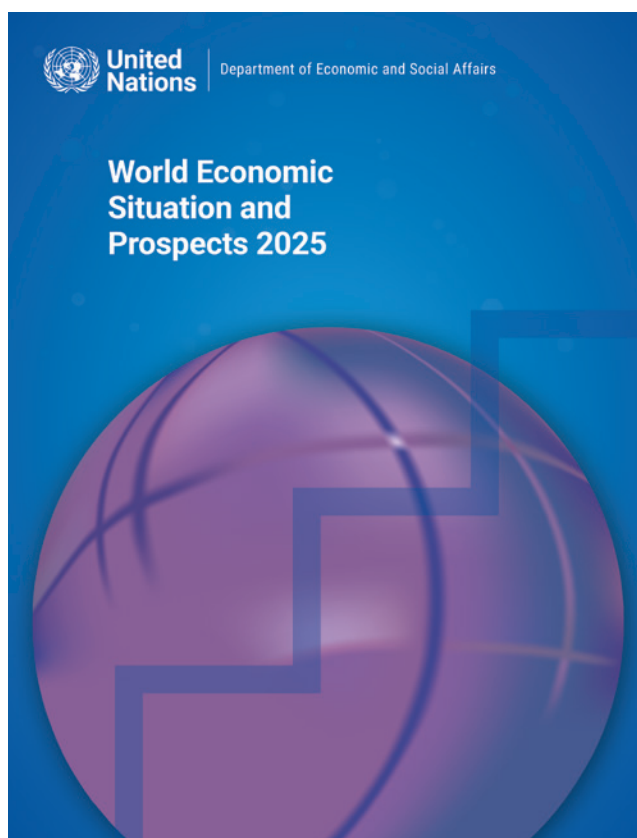
# 07

## FRAMING THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT

*As the international community confronts converging crises—climate stress, technological disruption, economic volatility, and demographic transitions—UN DESA has responded with a renewed commitment to anticipatory action and intergenerational equity. In 2024–2025, the Department expanded its foresight capabilities and future-focused engagement, both internally and in its support to Member States. Embracing the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change, UN DESA mainstreamed strategic foresight into its analytical products, intergovernmental processes, and capacity development programming.*

### Navigating global economic uncertainty to safeguard sustainable development

Produced in partnership with United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the five United Nations Regional Commissions, UN DESA's flagship *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025* report, and the mid-year update of the report, examined the growing uncertainties facing the global economy in the wake of ongoing conflicts and rising geopolitical tensions. While the world economy demonstrated resilience at the beginning of 2025, the report warns that heightened trade tensions, along with policy uncertainty, have significantly weakened the global economic outlook for 2025, straining global supply chains, driving up production costs, and delaying critical investments, while also contributing to financial market volatility. It further warns that this subdued economic outlook poses significant risks to poverty reduction and progress towards the SDGs, particularly in vulnerable developing economies. To address these challenges, the report offers forward-looking recommendations to mitigate these risks and boost economic prospects through strategic policymaking and ramped-up



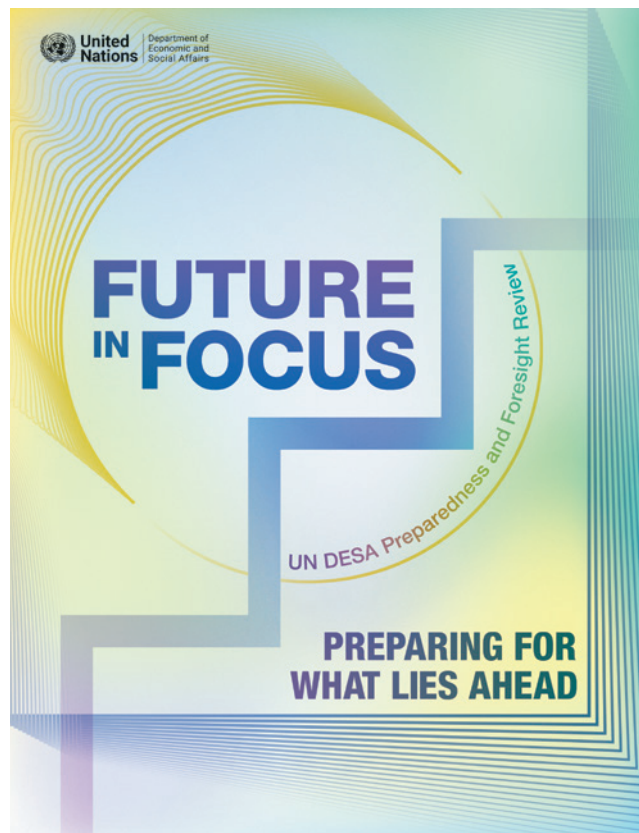


international cooperation, supporting policymakers in fostering sustainable and inclusive global development.

### Showcasing the strategic foresight that builds preparedness

Considering the increasingly complex and interwoven challenges facing our world, the role of the United Nations in preparing for the future is more important than ever. Foresight is central to the vision of UN 2.0, signifying the organization's commitment to long-term thinking, strategic planning, and readiness for a spectrum of possible futures. UN DESA undertook a comprehensive review of its own foresight and preparedness efforts this year, releasing the results in a short, accessible report and interactive website.

The *Future in Focus* review highlights how the Department's economic and demographic forecasts, capacity-development programmes, as well as efforts towards accelerating an inclusive and just transition, help governments and people make strategic choices to shape and prepare for the future they want. A UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue on "Using Foresight Tools to Prepare for What's Ahead", held in January 2025, brought experts together for a public-facing conversation on how the Department's economic and population forecasts help countries better navigate an increasingly uncertain world.



to explore alternative development models and policy pathways for Member States. Each brief concluded with actionable policy options and implications for capacity development.

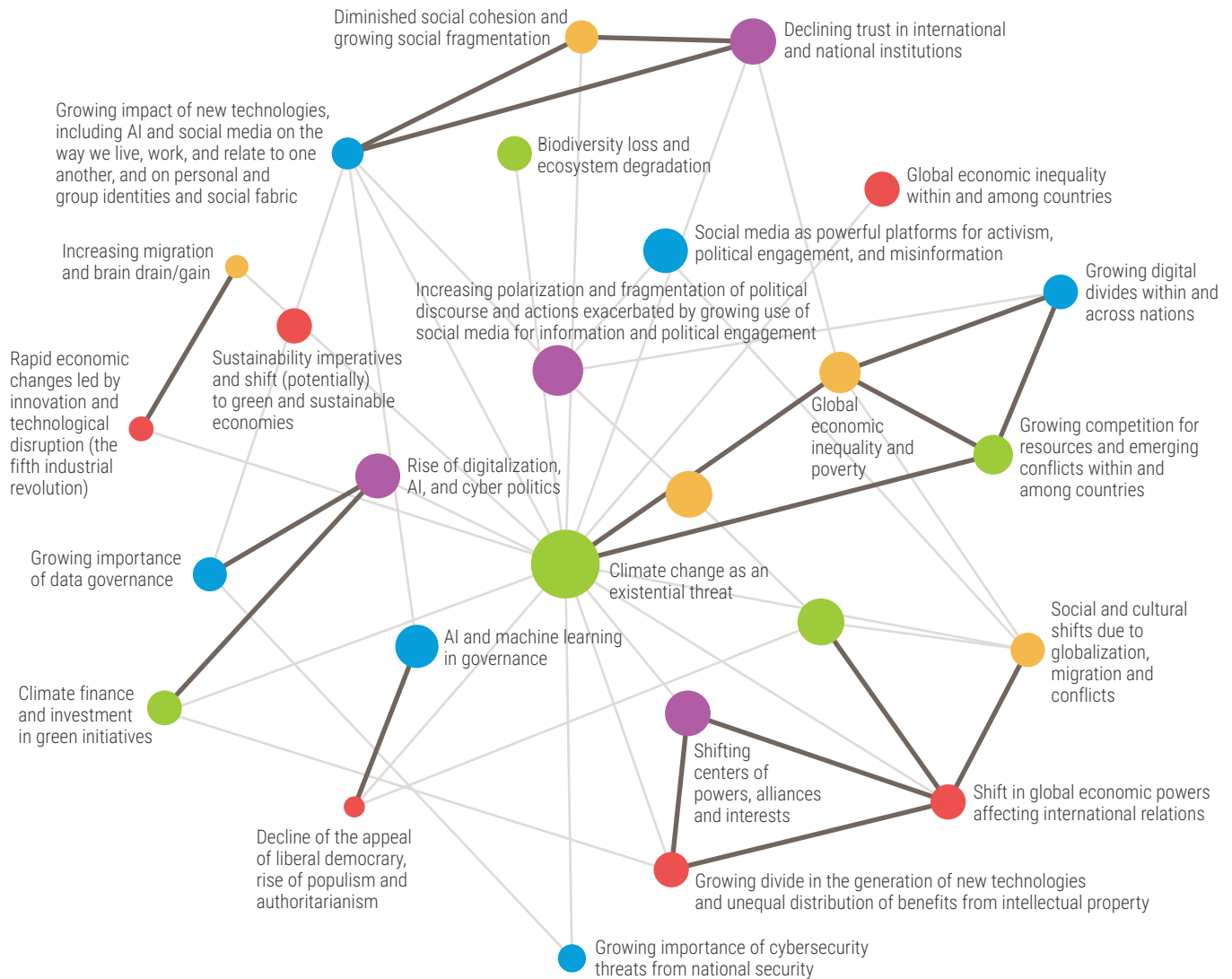
For example, a UNEN Futures and Foresight Policy Brief on Governance Futures was launched in March 2025 to guide UN efforts in integrating foresight into governance reforms, providing insights for transformational change, and helping policymakers design forward-looking, adaptive, and inclusive governance strategies. To support this work, UN DESA, in collaboration with the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub, organized a Foresight Webinar Series on Governance Futures. Participants from 21 UN entities engaged in scenario development, explored interlinked drivers of change, and identified implications for governance reform. The series helped build foresight capacity across the UN system and fostered a shared understanding of how to navigate uncertainty and shape desirable governance futures.



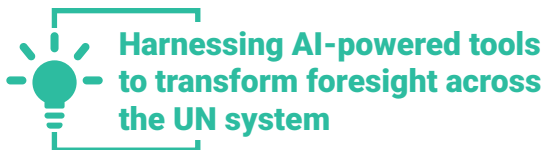
### Advancing collaborative foresight through the UN Economist Network

By fostering cross-system collaboration and leveraging the collective intelligence of the United Nations, the UN Economist Network (UNEN) contributed to a growing culture of anticipatory thinking and long-term policymaking. Convened by UN DESA, the Network deepened foresight capabilities across the UN system through a new series of forward-looking policy briefs. Topics included the future of work, digital transformation, climate, energy, biodiversity, and governance. Co-authored by economists from UN entities and Resident Coordinator Offices, the briefs applied strategic foresight approaches

## Drivers of Change Network Diagram



Interlinkages among the drivers of change for designing flexible, adaptive governance systems capable of managing future uncertainties and interconnected issues | UNEN POLICY BRIEF ON "GOVERNANCE FUTURES: KEY INSIGHTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS"



UN DESA showcased a groundbreaking AI prototype to transform how the UN system harnesses foresight at the 2025 STI Forum, developed in collaboration with the

UN Futures Lab. Drawing on horizon scanning reports from 2022–2024 by UN DESA, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, and WHO, the tool consolidates signals, trends, and drivers of change to support more informed decision-making, planning, and programming. Building on the efforts of the UN system, the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub and UN DESA have explored digital capabilities and analytics to enhance foresight processes by consolidating and

analysing insights from horizon scanning initiatives across the UN system. At the heart of this effort is an AI knowledge repository designed to analyse and visualize foresight outcomes, strengthen institutional learning and coherence, and support users with tools to navigate complexity and harness collaboration in shaping anticipatory, SDG-aligned initiatives.

### Identifying development pathways in a new global context

The evolving global landscape demands new approaches, informed by research and evidence. In response to this demand, the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), supported by UN DESA, examined how systemic crises are reshaping the landscape for sustainable development. At its 27th session in February 2025, the CDP provided analysis on a range of structural transformations—such as the breaching of planetary boundaries, geopolitical shifts, growing inequalities, and advances in artificial intelligence—that are challenging traditional policy models. The Committee emphasized the need for pragmatic, evidence-based approaches to navigate these complex dynamics. UN DESA supported the CDP in reporting its findings to ECOSOC and informing preparations for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) and the 2025 High-level Political Forum (HLPF). These efforts reflected the call for “breaking-the-mould” approaches that are adaptive, values-driven, and aligned with the realities of today’s global context.

infrastructure, strengthen technological capabilities, and boost government revenues to fund essential public services. However, realizing these benefits requires robust governance, strong institutions, and targeted investments. Low-income countries, in particular, must address structural barriers, including inadequate infrastructure and limited human capital. UN DESA plays a key role in supporting data-informed innovation and sustainable industrial transformation in Member States.

In one “Future of the World” [policy brief](#), for instance, UN DESA highlighted how enhanced international co-operation will be essential to bridge investment gaps, accelerate technology transfer, and scale up skills development. In its July 2025 edition of the [Frontier Technology Issues \(FTI\)](#), the Department also showcased how developing countries can tap into the potential of transforming recycling waste and scrap into a strategic source of critical minerals—reducing reliance on primary extraction, fostering green job creation, and advancing progress toward the SDGs.

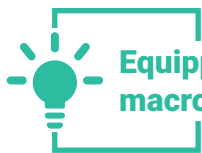


Participants at the overlapping generations macroeconomic model workshop in Indonesia work together to prepare their policy scenario | UN DESA

### Unlocking the development potential of critical energy transition minerals

Critical minerals—such as cobalt, lithium, and copper—are rapidly emerging as catalysts for poverty eradication, energy transition, and technological progress. Harnessing these resources effectively in developing countries holds immense potential to drive inclusive economic growth, generate quality employment, improve





### Equipping countries with open-source macroeconomic tools

UN DESA supported Member States to apply open-source “overlapping generations” (OG) macroeconomic models to simulate long-term policy outcomes in the context of a fiscally constrained environment. These tools enable scenario modelling of taxation, debt, and demographic change aligned with national SDG priorities. In the Philippines, over 30 analysts from government and academia were trained by UN DESA in Manila in August 2024, laying the groundwork for robust fiscal sustainability simulations. South Africa held a second intensive workshop in Cape Town in March 2025, focusing on inequality, social protection, and green transition. In Indonesia, a March 2025 workshop in Bandung helped officials assess investment strategies and development pathways using national data-driven scenarios. Through hands-on training, joint research, and community-building, these efforts have deepened local ownership, enhanced policy coherence, and fostered lasting national expertise in macroeconomic modelling.



### Driving resilient recovery and strategic foresight in small island developing States

In 2024–2025, UN DESA supported five small island developing States (SIDS)—Dominican Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Mauritius, and Seychelles—to strengthen recovery planning through forward-looking, integrated approaches. By building capacities in systems thinking, strategic foresight, CLEWs (Climate, Land, Energy, and Water systems) modelling, and forest financing strategies, UN DESA is enabling these countries in special situations to pursue development strategies that are adaptive, cross-sectoral, and aligned with the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS). These tools were delivered through national workshops, inter-ministerial coordination, and integration into development and financing frameworks.

“

**I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the insightful and well-structured OG-Core training workshop. The sessions were highly engaging, and the materials provided have been incredibly useful in deepening my understanding of the model. [UN DESA's] expertise and clear explanations made complex concepts much more accessible.**

**Murendeni Nengovhela**  
Senior Economist for Economic Policy,  
South Africa National Treasury

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### Responding to demographic transitions with actionable insights on family planning

UN DESA published its *World Fertility 2024* report, providing data-driven insights and policy recommendations to help governments prepare for fertility levels and demographic trends that may differ appreciably from those of the recent past and integrate demographic foresight into development strategies. Based on updated fertility estimates and projections from the *World Population Prospects 2024* dataset, the report supports Member States in planning for inclusive, sustainable futures grounded in robust demographic evidence. The report highlights how fertility trends reflect various stages of the fertility transition—from high fertility rates to historically low fertility. As coordinator of the global SDG indicator framework and custodian for indicators 3.7.1 and 3.7.2 on contraceptive use and adolescent birth rates, UN DESA provides insights into how improved access to sexual and reproductive



A mother and her newborn baby at the Maternal & Child Health Training Institute for medically needy in Dhaka, Bangladesh (2010) | UN ESCAP/KIBAE PARK

healthcare and education, would help to reduce early childbearing and unintended pregnancies, and support women and girls.

### **Scaling innovation and systems learning for transformation**

UN DESA reinforced its commitment to becoming a more agile, innovative partner in delivering effective, future-oriented capacity development support. Through its [Digital Learning Centre \(DLC\)](#), the Department strengthened its institutional capabilities to support SDG implementation, in line with the Secretary-General's vision of a UN 2.0. The DLC delivered over 53 courses to more than 9,400 participants across 185 Member States, issuing more than 3,800 certificates on topics ranging from governance and macroeconomic policy

to disaster risk reduction and digital transformation. Together, these initiatives equip Member States to better anticipate and respond to emerging trends, design adaptive policies, and integrate futures thinking into national planning processes.

### **Strengthening global engagement with the SDGs**

To enhance user experience and engagement with UN DESA's analytical products, the Department developed "SDG Chat"—an AI-powered chatbot that offers seamless, on-demand access to SDG-related content. Leveraging generative AI technology, the tool connects users with authoritative data and content drawn from UN DESA's reports and publications. Launched in March 2025, the SDG Chat consolidates previously dispersed



SDG Chat presented by UN DESA staff at the UN AI Day on 22 April 2025 | UN DESA

knowledge—spanning websites, databases, and social media—into a single, intuitive entry point. This innovation broadens global outreach, fosters deeper stakeholder engagement, and reinforces the Department’s role in advancing the SDGs through cutting-edge digital solutions.

## Partnering with global thinkers to guide the UN forward

Convened by Under-Secretary-General Li Junhua, the UN High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social

Affairs (HLAB) continued to play a vital role in guiding the Department’s strategies to address today’s most pressing global challenges. UN DESA launched the third term of HLAB in spring 2025, bringing together 22 globally renowned experts on sustainable development. The Board convened for its inaugural meeting in May 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand, co-hosted by UN DESA and UN ESCAP, where it offered bold, forward-looking recommendations to help the UN lead transformative changes in support of sustainable development. These proposals included redesigning global economic governance to prioritize equity and sustainability, mobilizing innovative financing for the SDGs, and advancing a



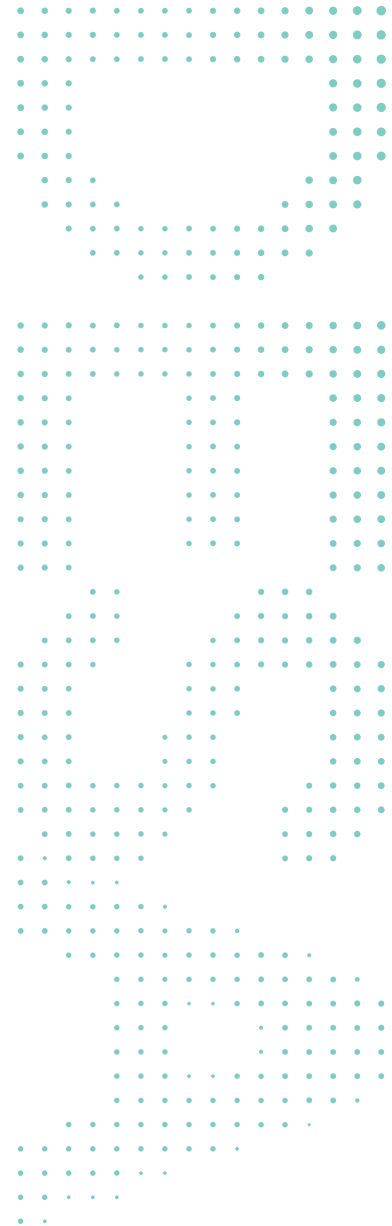


HLAB members discuss ways to leverage socioeconomic opportunities and Asia-Pacific perspectives to prepare for global challenges at the Global Policy Dialogue on "Converging crises, shared solutions: Applying socioeconomic lessons from Asia-Pacific to global challenges", May 2025, Bangkok, Thailand | UN DESA

just green transition tailored to the needs of developing countries. The HLAB also emphasized the importance of people-centred development, calling for new ways to measure progress beyond GDP and promoting inclusive economic models that empower communities. These insights have informed UN leadership, including at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4), the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF), and the Second World Summit for Social Development.

UN DESA has also played a central role in amplifying the HLAB's voice and connecting its ideas with global audiences. Through the UN DESA Global Policy Dialogue Series, HLAB members engaged with civil society, students, policymakers and SDG practitioners in interactive dialogue sessions. Recent dialogues in Bangkok, at FFD4 in Sevilla, Spain and HLPF in New York, USA showcased the Board's practical, solution-oriented thinking—reinforcing its commitment to advancing the SDGs and building a more inclusive, sustainable future.

# ANNEXES



- UN DESA SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
- UN DESA ORGANIZATION CHART
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 79TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- KEY MILESTONES AND MOMENTS OF THE 80TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY



**Mr. Li Junhua**  
Under-Secretary-General

Mr. Li Junhua took office as the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, effective 30 August 2022. He succeeds Mr. Liu Zhenmin, who served as Under-Secretary-General from July 2017 through July 2022.

As Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Li guides UN Secretariat support for the follow-up processes of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. He also oversees the substantive services to many intergovernmental processes, including the annual meetings of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly, the meetings of the Economic and Social Council, including its Development Cooperation Forum, and the work of the subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC. In addition to intergovernmental processes, Mr. Li oversees DESA's policy analysis and capacity development work. He also serves as the Convenor of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, and advises the United Nations Secretary-General on all development-related issues, including climate change, internet governance, and financing for development.

Prior to joining UN DESA, Mr. Li served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Italy and San Marino. Prior to this, he was Director General of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China (2013–2019). He has contributed to numerous meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council, as well as other multilateral meetings including the G20, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), BRICS etc.

Mr. Li began his career at the Foreign Affairs Ministry in 1985. Since then, he has served in various capacities, including as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Myanmar (2010–2012), Deputy Director General of the Department of International Organizations and Conferences (2008–2010), Minister Counselor (Political), Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations (2003–2008), Division Director and Counselor in charge of UN General Assembly and Security Council Affairs (2001–2003), Second and First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations (1997–2001). Third and Second Secretary, the Department of International Organizations and Conferences (1992–1997) and Assistant to the Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok (1986–1992).

Mr. Li holds a Master's in International Public Policy, School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University. Mr. Li is married.





## **Mr. Navid Hanif**

Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development

Mr. Navid Hanif was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development, effective 1 July 2022. As Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Hanif assists the Under-Secretary-General in the overall strategic guidance of the Department, with particular focus on ensuring the quality and value-added of its thought leadership and analytical work, its support to the broader UN development system and its support to countries in special situations.

Mr. Hanif has more than 30 years of experience in national and international civil service, encompassing analytical work, policymaking, programme planning, capacity development, multilateral diplomacy and extensive knowledge of the United Nations system. He first joined UN DESA in 2001 until 2003, serving as Senior Policy Adviser in the Division for Sustainable Development and member of the team for the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

He later joined the office of the Under-Secretary General for UN DESA and focused on departmental initiatives in various policy areas. He worked as the Chief of Policy Coordination Branch in the office for Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) support from 2004 to 2009. In 2005, he was sent on a special one-year assignment to work as a Principal Officer in the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General. He worked there as a member of the team for the 2005 World Summit. In 2010, he was appointed as Head of the newly established UN DESA Strategic Planning Unit. He later served as Director of the former Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, from 2012 to 2018 and as Director of the Financing for Sustainable Development Office from 2018–2022.

Mr. Hanif holds a Master's in International Political Economy, from Columbia University, New York and a Master's in English Literature from Government College, Lahore.



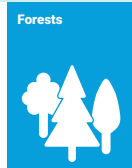
## **Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær**

Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination

Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær was appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination, effective 24 March 2025. Prior to her appointment, Ms. Sandkjær served as Deputy Minister for International Development at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2021. In that role, she has been responsible for the development of Norway's strategic vision and engagement in international development cooperation issues and played a key role in the negotiations on Norway's budgetary allocations for official development assistance (ODA) while also leading her country's engagement in multilateral processes and fora, including the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Ms. Sandkjær began her career at the United Kingdom Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, organizing the civil society input into the 1999 European Ministerial conference on Environment and Development. Since then, she has held positions in the civil society, private sector, government and multilateral organisations, including serving as the deputy leader of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare of the Oslo City Council (2019–2021), and holding positions at the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the Church of Norway. She brings to the position experience and commitment to inclusive and sustainable development, as well as dedication to multilateral cooperation in the service of Member States.

Ms Sandkjær holds a master's degree in Demography from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and an undergraduate degree from the University of Oslo.



## **Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo**

Director, Secretariat of the United Nations  
Forum on Forests

Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo was appointed as Director of the Secretariat of the United Nations Forum on Forests in 2022.

She has a wealth of experience in international development and 32 cumulative years managing complex initiatives across Africa, in Latin America, and Canada with a focus on the environment, community livelihood and gender equality. She has worked with a range of international organizations developing, managing or mobilizing resources.

Prior to her appointment in UN DESA, Ms. Biao, worked in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi where she served for over six years as the Director and Regional Representative for Africa. She worked previously with Canadian Crossroads International as the Director of Programmes, has served the Canadian Centre for international Studies and Cooperation as the Regional Director for Africa, and has worked with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Office for West Africa. She also worked for seven years with a private sector organization.

Ms. Biao has served in her native Benin as Minister of Environment and Nature Protection as well as Acting Minister of Family and the Child. As the first female forester in West Africa, Ms. Biao pioneered ground-breaking initiatives including participatory management of protected areas. She has won the Global Women's Leadership and Green Future Leadership Awards and was named Commander of the National Order of Merit.

Ms. Biao Koudenoukpo holds an M.Sc. in Forestry Economics and a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Walden University





## Mr. Charles Katoanga

Director, Division for Inclusive Social Development

Mr. Charles Katoanga leads the work of the Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD), which serves as the UN system focal point on youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, families, cooperatives, the social dimensions of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and sport for development and peace, and coordinates follow-up to the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. DISD is the substantive secretariat for the Commission for Social Development, Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

He was appointed Director of the Division by the Secretary-General in September 2024, following a 24-year career in the United Nations Secretariat. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Katoanga was the Chief of Staff of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. He has served in the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Department of Management.

Before joining the United Nations Secretariat, Mr. Katoanga worked for the Government of Fiji and the New Zealand Official Development Assistance bilateral programmes in Fiji and Tuvalu and its Pacific Regional programme.

Mr. Katoanga is a graduate of the University of the South Pacific and Santa Clara University as well as executive education programmes of the John F. Kennedy School of Government.



## Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee

Director, Economic Analysis and Policy Division

Acting Director, Statistics Division

Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee was appointed Director of the UN DESA Economic Analysis and Policy Division in December 2022. In this position he oversees the Division's work on macroeconomic monitoring, modelling and forecasting; the economic analysis of emerging and long-run trends that relate to sustainable development; reviewing the development progress of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) including the secretariat support to the Committee on Development Policy (CDP); and the substantive support to the UN Economist Network (UNEN), as well as to economic policy related capacity building in developing countries.

Prior to this appointment he served as Chief of the Integrated Policy Analysis Branch in the Division for Sustainable Development Goals where his team led the work on integrated SDG analysis with a special focus on harnessing science and technology for the SDGs. In this capacity, he oversaw the Global Sustainable Development Report and the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, as well as the substantive back-stopping to the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development.

He began his career in the UN system with the United Nations Development Programme, where he led the research team at the "Human Development Report Office". Prior to that, he led the MDG team in UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy where his work included both global policy analysis as well as support to national and local governments, including extensive collaboration with UN and other multilateral entities.

A micro-economist with interests in poverty, health and sustainability, Mr. Mukherjee began his career in his native India working on development policy and public finance as part of the national government.

Mr. Mukherjee earned a Ph.D. in Economics from Princeton University and holds advanced degrees in Public Policy, and in Physics.



## **Ms. Shari Spiegel**

Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Office

Ms. Shari Spiegel is the Director of the Financing for Sustainable Development Office within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In this capacity, she oversees support for intergovernmental negotiations on financing issues, analytical work on financing for sustainable development, and the UN work on tax issues. She was previously Chief of the Policy Analysis and Development Branch of the Financing for Sustainable Development Office (UN DESA), where she was integral to the negotiations on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, launched the 60-agency Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, and oversaw publication of the task force's annual Financing for Sustainable Development Report.

Ms. Spiegel has extensive private sector experience, including as a Principal at New Holland Capital (an advisor on alternative investments to APG, the Dutch Civil Servants Pension Fund), Director at Lazard LLC and the Senior Portfolio Manager in charge of emerging market debt and foreign exchange at Lazard Asset Management, and posts at Citibank and Drexel Burnham Lambert in fixed income research, cross-currency interest-rate-swap trading, and credit research. In the early 1990s, she co-founded and was Chief Executive Officer of Budapest Alapkezel, which launched the first domestic investment funds in Hungary.

Ms. Spiegel also served as the Executive Director of the Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD), a think-tank at Columbia University founded by Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz, which focuses on macroeconomics and economic development in developing countries. She has worked as a foreign adviser to the Hungarian Central Bank and as a consultant to the World Bank/International Finance Corporation. She is author and co-author of several books and articles on financial and capital markets, debt issues, macroeconomics, and development.

She has an MA in Economics from Princeton University and a BA in Economics and Applied Mathematics from Northwestern University.





## Ms. Lotta Tähtinen

Director, Office of Intergovernmental Support  
and Coordination for Sustainable Development

Ms. Lotta Tähtinen was appointed Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development (OISC) in 2024. She oversees and guides UN DESA's support to the Economic and Social Council, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Prior to this, she served as the Chief of the Outreach and Partnerships Branch of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals in UN DESA. Here she led stakeholder and partnerships programmes and oversaw communication and outreach work, along with overall preparations for the annual ECOSOC Partnership Forum.

She has extensive experience in supporting major UN conferences and summits on sustainable development, including those on Small Island Developing States, the ocean, water and sustainable transport. She also supported the intergovernmental process that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in 2015.

She began her career in UN DESA over 20 years ago in the former Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (current OISC) and has also served in the UN Department for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management.

She holds a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Tampere, Finland.



## Mr. John Wilmoth

Director, Population Division

Mr. Wilmoth joined as Director of the UN DESA Population Division in January 2013. He oversees the Department's support to the Commission on Population and Development and to intergovernmental discussions on international migration in follow-up to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Under his leadership, the Population Division continues to upgrade its production of internationally comparable population data, which are essential inputs to the global monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Prior to his appointment as the Director of the Population Division, Mr. Wilmoth served as Professor in the Department of Demography of the University of California at Berkeley. He worked as a consultant for the World Health Organization and the World Bank from 2009 to 2012, leading the development of new global estimates of maternal mortality. He also served previously in the UN DESA Population Division as Chief of the Mortality Section from 2005 to 2007.

Mr. Wilmoth is a member of the Population Association of America and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population and has served on the editorial boards of leading demographic journals. He is the author or co-author of more than 50 scientific papers examining various aspects of population dynamics and population issues, including the causes of the historical decline of human mortality, prospects for future trends in life expectancy, the impact of population ageing on public pension and healthcare systems, popular perceptions of population growth and its consequences, and methodologies for estimating and projecting demographic trends.

Mr. Wilmoth holds a joint Ph.D. in Statistics and Demography from Princeton University.



## Mr. Juwang Zhu

Director, Division for Public Institutions  
and Digital Government

Acting Director, Division for Sustainable Development Goals

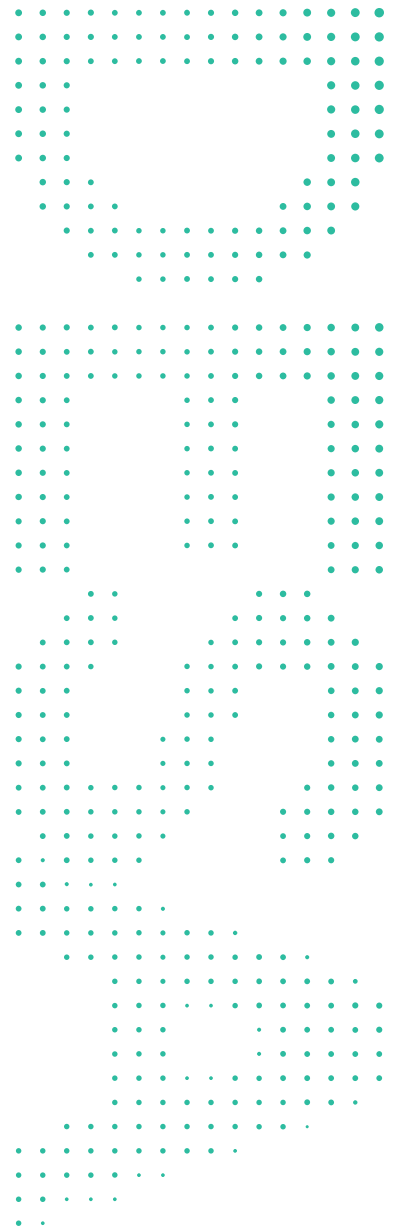
Mr. Juwang Zhu leads the Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government in promoting inclusive, effective, accountable institutions that are well equipped to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 16. He also currently serves as Office-in-Charge of the global secretariat for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a focus on providing substantive support, integrated policy analysis, building multi-stakeholder partnerships and capacity-development in the thematic areas such as natural resources, water, energy, climate, ocean, transport, science and technology, as well as special concerns of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Prior to his current role, Mr. Zhu served as Chief of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General of UN DESA from 2008 to 2013. In that capacity he advised the Under-Secretary-General on policy and management issues and coordinated the Department's substantive advice to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on development issues and on the restructuring of UN DESA's capacity-building programme.

Mr. Zhu was Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and assisted in coordinating support for the Conference. He also contributed to the Departmental support for Rio+20 follow-up. As Director of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals from 2016 to 2019, Mr. Zhu coordinated the Secretariat support for the HLPF, the UN Ocean Conference, and the Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

Mr. Zhu graduated from the Shanghai International Studies University in 1982 and did post-graduate studies in Beijing Foreign Studies University. He has an MSC in Financial Economics from University of London and an MA in International Relations from Webster University.



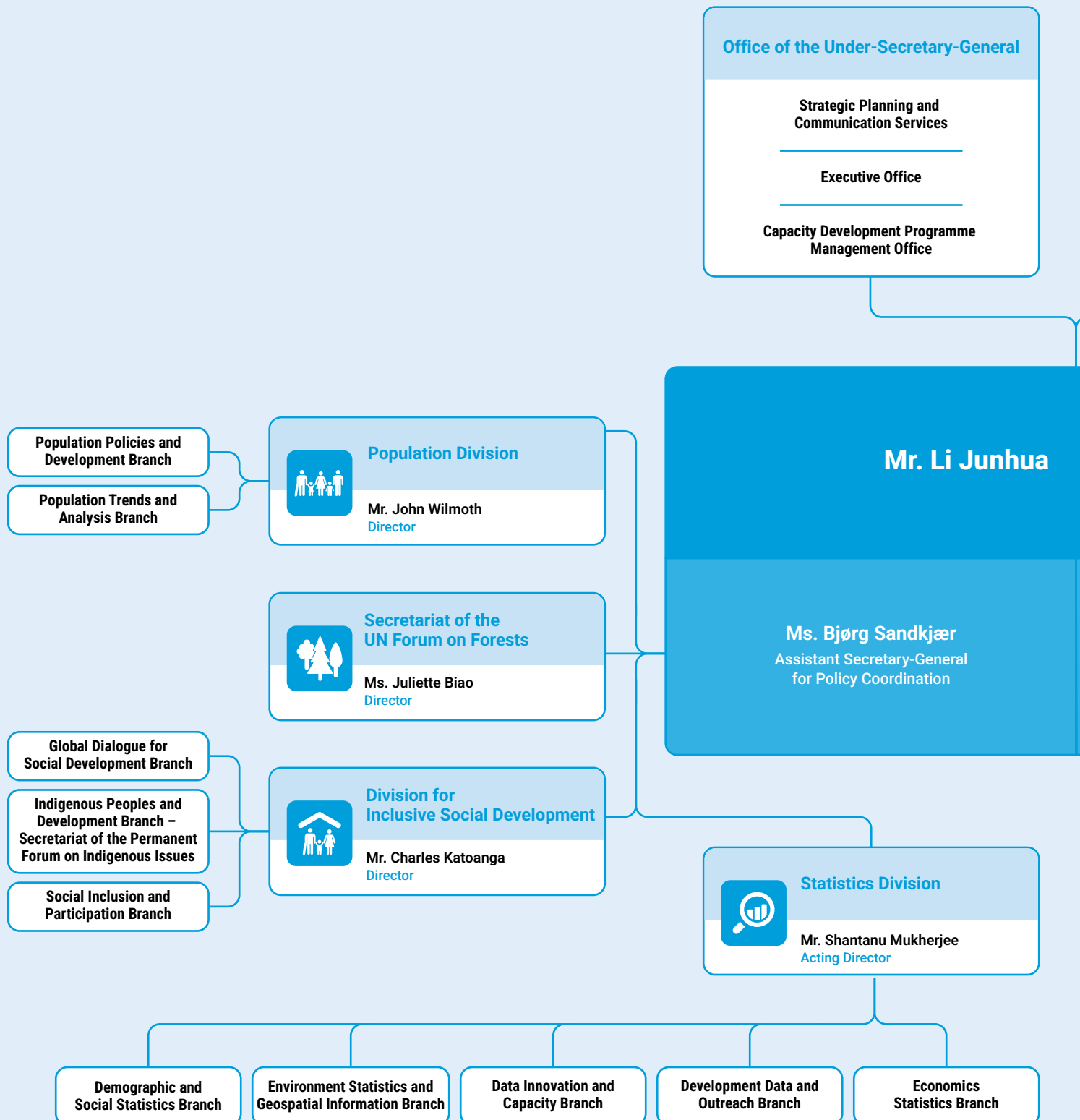


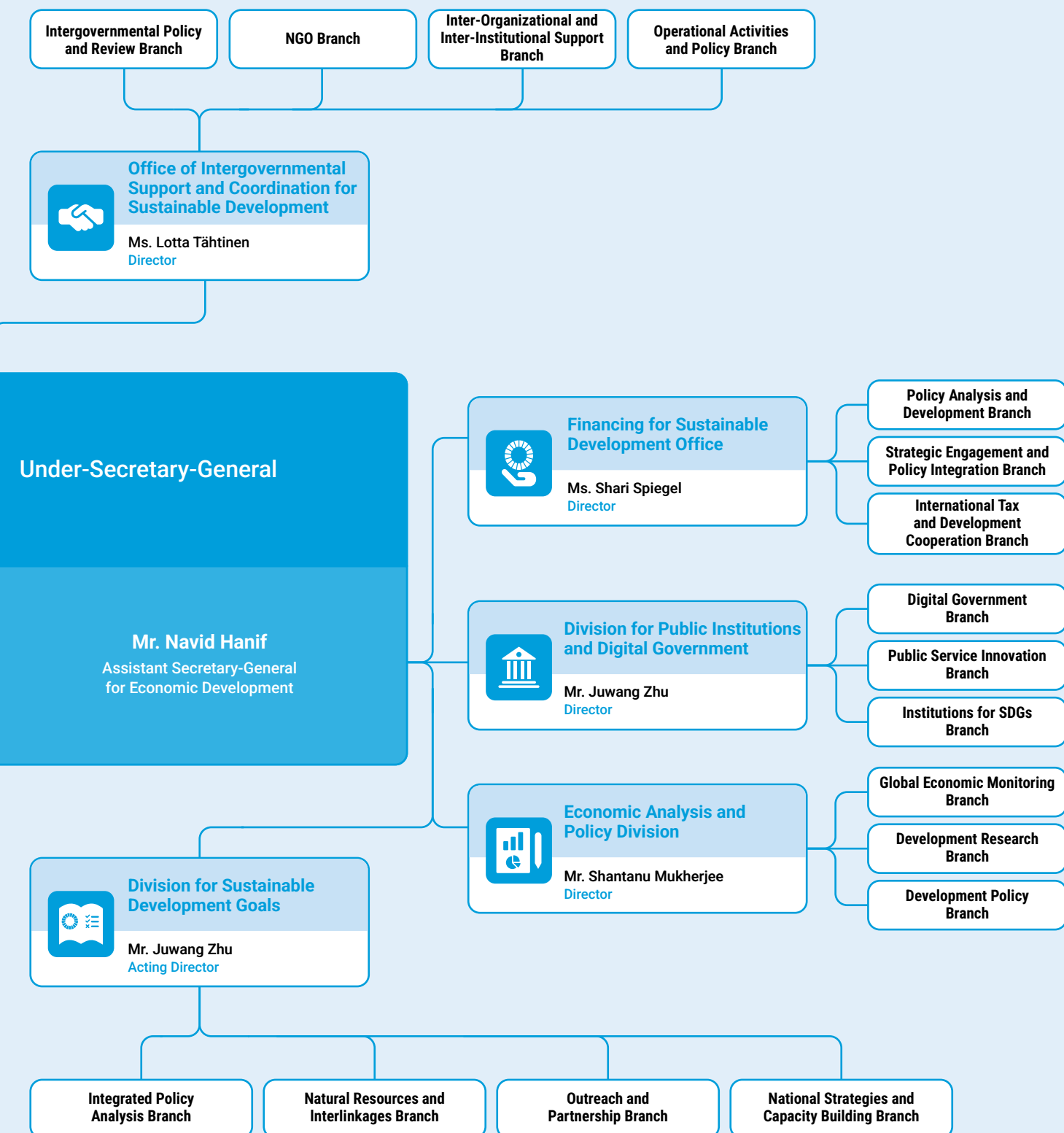


**United Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

# ORGANIGRAMME







# UN DESA

## Key moments and milestones of the 79th General Assembly

DATE	KEY MOMENTS AND MILESTONES
September 2024	
5–6	Fifth Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement
10	Opening of the 79th session of the General Assembly
16	Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024
17	UN E-Government Survey 2024
20–21	Summit of the Future Action Days
22–23	Summit of the Future
24	High-Level Meeting on Sea Level Rise
24–28, 30	General debate of the 79th session of the General Assembly
25–27	SDG7 Action Forum
October 2024	
1	International Day of Older Persons
3	Opening of the 79th session of the Third Committee of the General Assembly
7	Opening of the 79th session of the Second Committee of the General Assembly
8–10	High-level Forum on UN Global Geospatial Information Management
15	Joint Meeting of ECOSOC and the Second Committee
15–18	Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
17	World Social Report 2024
28	Intersessional Multi-stakeholder Hearing for the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
28–29	Annual Meeting of the GISD Alliance
31	World Cities Day
November 2024	
11–22	SDG Pavilion at the 29th Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP 29)
12–15	UN World Data Forum
19	World Toilet Day
26	World Sustainable Transport Day
December 2024	
3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities
3–6	Second Preparatory Committee Session for the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
15–19	Internet Governance Forum
18	International Migrants Day
18	International Migration and Sustainable Development
20	International Human Solidarity Day
21	World Basketball Day
January 2025	
9	World Economic Situation and Prospects 2025
20–24, 30–31	Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
26	International Day of Clean Energy
February 2025	
3, 11	Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (cont'd)
5	ECOSOC Partnership Forum
6–7	ECOSOC Coordination Segment
10–14	Commission for Social Development
10–14	Third Preparatory Committee Session for the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
20	World Day of Social Justice
24–28	Committee for Development Policy
March 2025	
4–7	Statistical Commission
12–13	ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum
21	International Day of Forests
21	World Down Syndrome Day
21	World Glacier Day
22	World Water Day
24–27	Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
28	ECOSOC Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters

<b>ECOSOC Functional Commission (Intergovernmental)</b> <b>[Supported by DESA]</b>	<b>ECOSOC Advisory Bodies (Experts) [Supported by DESA]</b>
	<b>Publication/Dataset Launch</b>
<b>High-level Intergovernmental Meeting</b>	<b>International Days</b>

DATE	KEY MOMENTS AND MILESTONES
<b>April 2025</b>	
4	ECOSOC Management Meeting
6	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
7–11	Committee of Experts on Public Administration
13–17	Commission on Population and Development
15–17	ECOSOC Youth Forum
21 Apr–2 May	Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
24	World Social Report 2025
24	State of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Volume VI
28–29	ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development
28 Apr–2 May	UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names
30 Apr–1 May	Fourth Preparatory Committee Session for the fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
<b>May 2025</b>	
5–9	UN Forum on Forests
7–8	Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum)
12	SDG 16 Conference
15	World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2025
15	International Day of Families
19–23, 28–29	Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, Resumed regular session
20–22	ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment
27–28	Sixth Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
29–31	High Level International Conference on Glacier Preservation
<b>June 2025</b>	
5	Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, Resumed regular session
8	World Oceans Day
9–13	UN Ocean Conference
10–11	ECOSOC Management Segment
10–12	18th session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
11	Joint meeting of ECOSOC and the Peacebuilding Commission
15	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
16	International Day of Family Remittances
16–18	International Forum on Migration Statistics
17	ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development
18–20	ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
23	UN Public Service Day
23–25	UN Public Service Forum
23–27	Internet Governance Forum (IGF)
27	Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day
30 Jun–3 Jul	Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development
<b>July 2025</b>	
5	International Day of Cooperatives
9–10	PGA Preparatory Meeting for the 2026 UN Water Conference and related multistakeholder events
11	World Population Day
14	The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025
14–23	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
15	World Youth Skills Day
21–24	High-level segment of ECOSOC, including the three-day ministerial segment of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
29–30	ECOSOC Management Segment
31	ECOSOC organizational session for 2026 Cycle (July 2025–July 2026)
<b>August 2025</b>	
4–8	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, First Session
6–8	Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
9	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
11–15	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, Second Session
12	International Youth Day

# UN DESA

## Key moments and milestones of the 80th General Assembly

DATE	KEY MOMENTS AND MILESTONES
<b>September 2025</b>	
9	Opening of the 80th session of the General Assembly
15	Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2025
22	UN Private Sector Forum
22	SDG Moment
24	Climate Summit
24	Biennial Summit between the United Nations and the International Financial Institutions
24-25	SDG 7 Action Forum 2025
24-25	Third Global Report on Climate and SDG Synergies
<b>October 2025</b>	
1	International Day of Older Persons
1	Opening of the 80th session of the Second Committee of the General Assembly
1-3	10th Global Forum on Gender Statistics
3	Opening of the 80th session of the Third Committee of the General Assembly
17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
20	World Statistics Day
21-24	Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
31	The World Cities Day
TBC	World Urbanization Prospects 2025
TBC	Annual Meeting of the GISD Alliance
<b>November 2025</b>	
3-5	Internet Governance Forum
4-6	Second World Summit for Social Development
10-19	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, Third Session
10-21	SDG Pavilion at the 30th Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC (COP 30)
19	World Toilet Day
26	World Sustainable Transport Day
TBC	World Public Sector Report 2025
<b>December 2025</b>	
3	International Day for Persons with Disabilities
10	Launch of the Implementation Plan for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026-2035
18	International Migrants Day
20	International Human Solidarity Day
21	International World Basketball Day
<b>January 2026</b>	
8	World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026
23	ECOSOC at 80: Commemoration Event
26	International Day of Clean Energy
27	ECOSOC Partnership Forum
28-29	ECOSOC Coordination Segment
TBC	Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
TBC	High-Level Meeting in Dakar Senegal ahead of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference
<b>February 2026</b>	
2-13	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, Fourt Session
20	World Day of Social Justice
TBC	Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (cont'd)
TBC	Committee for Development Policy
TBC (Feb-Apr)	ECOSOC Special Meeting on Financial Integrity
<b>March 2026</b>	
3-6	Statistical Commission
21	International Day of Forests
21	World Down Syndrome Day
22	World Water Day



<b>ECOSOC Functional Commission (Intergovernmental)</b> <b>[Supported by DESA]</b>	<b>ECOSOC Advisory Bodies (Experts) [Supported by DESA]</b>
	<b>Publication/Dataset Launch</b>
<b>High-level Intergovernmental Meeting</b>	<b>International Days</b>

DATE	KEY MOMENTS AND MILESTONES
March 2026	(continued)
23–26	Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
27	ECOSOC Special Meeting on International Cooperation in Tax Matters
April 2026	
8	ECOSOC Management Meeting
13–17	Committee of Experts on Public Administration
14–16	ECOSOC Youth Forum
20–24	ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development
20–24	SDG Investment Fair
20 Apr–1 May	Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
21	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace
13–17	Commission on Population and Development
TBC	World Social Report 2026
TBC	Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2026
May 2026	
6–7	Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (STI Forum)
11–15	UN Forum on Forests
15	International Day of Families
26–28	Sixth Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement
27–29	ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment
TBC	World Economic Situation and Prospects as of mid-2026
TBC	Global Forest Goals Report 2026
TBC	Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, Resumed regular session
TBC	Dushanbe Water Conference
June 2026	
8	World Oceans Day
8–18	Commission for Social Development
9–11	Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
10–11	ECOSOC Management Segment
11	Joint meeting of the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission
15	World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
16	International Day of Family Remittances
16	ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development
17–19	ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
21–22	ECOSOC Management Segment (cont'd)
23–27 (TBC)	20th Annual Internet Governance Forum
23	UN Public Service Day
27	Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day
TBC	UN Public Service Forum
July 2026	
4	International Day of Cooperatives
6–10	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
11	World Population Day
11	World Population Prospects 2026
13–16	High-level segment of ECOSOC, including the three-day ministerial segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
15	World Youth Skills Day
21–22	ECOSOC Management Segment
23	ECOSOC organizational session for 2027 Cycle
August 2026	
3–14	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation, Fifth Session
5–7	Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
9	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
12	International Youth Day



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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