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## Feature Articles

### “We all expect a very strong commitment”

*“This first month has been very exciting,” said Mr. Lenni Montiel, who was recently appointed as Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development in UN DESA overseeing a wide portfolio of areas crucial for economic and social development. In his first DESA News interview, he discussed some of the most current issues, which are also vital for this year of global action, including preparing a data monitoring framework and financing for sustainable development.*



Watch video interview: <http://bit.ly/18vjMw8>

With almost thirty years of experience, Mr. Montiel has held strategic positions within the Government of Venezuela and in several international organizations. Throughout his career, he has been systematically involved in policy making and analytical work on issues related to economic development.

“It was like a very natural situation, but it was a great surprise, so I really enjoyed that moment,” Mr. Montiel said smiling, as he shared his reaction when he received the offer to join the department. At the time, and before taking office in UN DESA on 16 January, he worked as Director for Economic, Social and Development Affairs in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, leading the analytical work in the area of economic and development affairs.

#### New assignment kicks off in high gear

In his new capacity, Mr. Montiel oversees the work of many divisions including the Financing for Development Office, the Statistics Division, the Development Policy and Analysis Division, the Social Policy and Development Division and the Division for Public Administration and Development Management. With this portfolio, Mr. Montiel’s new assignment has kicked off in high gear, as one of the major tasks ahead involves a milestone event later on in July – the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

“This is a very important event,” said Mr. Montiel, also stressing that this is so much more than just another event. “This is a very important process, in terms of the future of development,” he

added. Taking place in Addis Ababa on 13-16 July, under the leadership of UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo, who has been designated the Conference Secretary-General, this conference is expected to prepare the framework for financing the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

Mr. Montiel praised the preparations carried out so far and the solid set of recommendations that have been delivered by the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. He also highlighted Mr. Wu's recent mission to Ethiopia and the very active exchange that he has initiated with the host government to ensure a successful conference.

#### Expecting ambitious new financing framework

"We all expect a very strong commitment to a policy framework that will guide the development work on financing for development in the years to come," Mr. Montiel said. "Many are speaking about it as the Monterrey plus, meaning it is good that we have a consensus already in place," he added, also explaining that some additional elements have to be put in place. "Unquestionably one of the key elements [...] is a reassurance, a recommitment of many countries to the question of official development assistance."

At the same time, Mr. Montiel acknowledged that there are other sources than ODA and that Member States will need to agree on other questions like the facilitation for private sector to engage in development activities on the ground. "This includes improving the conditions of governance and tax collection in many countries, [...] fighting illicit flows of finance from many countries; so the line of options is large," he explained.

While the world is still struggling on the road to economic recovery, Mr. Montiel shared his hopes for high-level engagement from countries and international organizations, going beyond the outcome document. "I have no doubts at this point that the conference will be successful," he said, highlighting the commitment of a wide range of organizations including the IMF, the World Bank, WTO, UNDP and UNCTAD.

"All of them together with Mr. Wu are, I would say, carrying out the flags of success of Addis Ababa together with 193 Member States and unquestionably the private sector and NGOs," he added encouragingly.

#### Work on data central

Mr. Montiel also shared his views on another key element this year, namely the work outlining the post-2015 monitoring framework which will help the international community evaluate the new sustainable development goals once adopted by UN Member States. Here, UN DESA and its Statistics Division play a leading role.

"Secure and reliable data to monitor development requires effective, strong, sound national statistical systems," Mr. Montiel underscored, also describing the work on statistics as central and highlighting the ongoing efforts to make sure we have a dependable system in place to collect reliable data in order to monitor global development. These efforts will also be in focus on 3-6 March when the UN Statistical Commission convenes for its 46<sup>th</sup> session.

"DESA carries on the legacy [...] on statistics and monitoring of development since 1947," Mr. Montiel noted. "So if we are celebrating this year the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, we can very proudly say that DESA has made a fundamental contribution to the question of quantifying the world," he praised.

#### Discovering wealth of efforts by UN DESA

With a great amount of enthusiasm, Mr. Montiel highlighted other major tasks at hand. "First of all, DESA has a regular responsibility to provide to Member States annual analysis of the economic situation around the globe," he said, pointing to the solid work of a strong team of economists in the department. "It is a great honor to be working with a team like that."

He also described the important work within the area of social development and the efforts to strive for social inclusion of older persons, youth, family, persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples. "Particularly relevant will be the question of building up [...] a system wide action plan to address the needs and requirements of indigenous peoples around the globe," Mr. Montiel noted. "This was a mandate given to DESA by the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples that took place last year in September 2014."

Mr. Montiel also discussed the department's work on public administration and development management, providing support to strengthening good governance, civil service and fighting corruption. "We are also dealing with very challenging topics such as internet governance and cyber security," he explained. "This shows to you the wide range of issues that DESA is involved in by mandates and requests coming in from Member States."

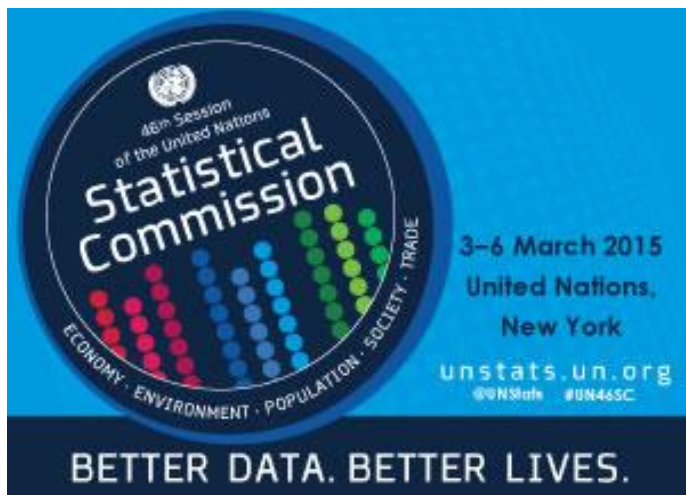
Throughout the interview, Mr. Montiel displayed much excitement about having joined the department. "I have to say that I thought I knew what DESA was about," he said. "I have to acknowledge that I have learned a lot during this month and I have no doubt that I will have a lot of fun learning more in the many months to come."

For more information:

[Bio of Mr. Lenni Montiel on UN DESA's website](#)

## Securing better data for better lives

*Data helps the international community measure the progress of development. How many children attend school, who has access to healthcare and how many people are employed? On 3-6 March, over 300 senior statisticians from about 140 UN Member States will gather for the 46th session of the Statistical Commission to ensure that we have reliable data for development. The ultimate goal – to enable people to live better lives.*



Watch promotional video [Better Data. Better Lives.](#)

Spanning close to 70 years, the Statistical Commission has a rich history as the leading entity of the global statistical system. During this crucial year, the statistical community has a big task before them with the post-2015 development agenda, among other important topics, which are also reflected in the busy agenda of the Commission.

In keeping with tradition from past years, a Friday seminar on 27 February informally kicked off this major event. The focus for this one-day seminar was “The development of an indicator framework for the post-2015 development agenda: Towards a nationally owned monitoring system for the SDGs”.

Data in support of the post-2015 development agenda is at the forefront of discussions this year, as the international community prepares to transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the new post-2015 agenda with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core.

The 46th session will therefore also need to focus on broader measures of progress, examining the post-2015 indicator framework including what the expected data requirements will be, as well as what the current data gaps are in different countries across the globe.

### Getting ready to monitor the post-2015 development agenda

Statistics will be vital for the new era of development and the statistical community stands ready to take on the challenge.

“The Statistical Commission, as the mandated intergovernmental body for the review of development indicators, will, indeed, be able to assist in ensuring that the future information base for the SDGs is based on rigorous science, is sustainable and will be acceptable to Member States,” Ms. Gabriella Vukovich, Acting Chair of the Commission, said ahead of the session.

“The Statistical Community and the community of official statisticians stand ready and are strongly committed to taking on the task of measuring the SDGs over the coming years and thereby contributing to their realization,” Ms. Vukovich added.

### Big Data and the data revolution

A number of other important topics will be discussed and decided upon during the session, such as the data revolution and Big Data. With the widespread use of mobile devices and other forms of telecommunication driven by innovations in technology, a high volume of digital information is continuously generated.

This type of information is often referred to as Big Data and its potential resides in the timely and frequent availability of large amounts of data, which are usually generated at minimal cost. However, many statistical offices around the world still need to harness this potential and explore concretely how to implement Big Data in their production work in a reliable and efficient way.

The Commission will also discuss the data revolution and the recommendations presented in the newly released report, “A World that Counts – Mobilising the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development”, issued by the Secretary-General’s Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. This report includes a number of suggestions on measures to close data gaps and strengthen national statistical capacities.

“The data revolution is giving the world powerful tools that can help usher in a more sustainable future,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon when the report was launched in November 2014. “The recommendations of the Group will be important inputs to the post-2015 debate and our efforts to shape an ambitious yet achievable vision.”

### Sustainable statistics for a sustainable future

Statistics to measure crime rates; the number of refugees in the world; international trade and globalization; environmental-economic accounting as well as data to assess governance, peace and security are just a few of many other vital items on the busy Commission schedule.

In addition, and as in previous years, some 70 side events will also take place making the Statistical Commission one of the largest and busiest events held at UN Headquarters. Some of these side events take aim at food security, disability statistics, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), data for gender equality and strengthening environment statistics for monitoring the SDGs.

When the Commission opens its session, there will only be 303 days left until the Millennium Development Goals expire. In order for the statistical community to be ready to monitor the new set of goals, Stefan Schweinfest, the Director of UN DESA's Statistics Division, has underlined the need for capacity building efforts at the national level.

“Only National Statistical Systems can ensure a sustained flow of high quality and nationally acceptable data for policy decision making. National statistical systems, therefore, need to be empowered to produce these information sets over the next 15 years. We need sustainable statistics in support of sustainable development,” Mr. Schweinfest stressed.

Once the Commission completes its session on 6 March, the global community will have taken yet another important step to prepare for the new post-2015 sustainable development agenda. A step that also aims to ensure that “better data for better lives,” becomes a living reality for every person on the planet.

For more information:

[46th Session of the UN Statistical Commission](#)

[Follow the 46th Session of the UN Statistical Commission live via UN Web TV](#)

[Get updates on the event via the Twitter account of UN DESA's Statistics Division @UNStats](#)

## Wanted: 600 million jobs

*Most people joining the global workforce today will only have a few years of school with limited skills to make a living. Most will toil from dawn to dusk in harsh conditions, usually in agriculture or demanding physical labour, earning less than \$1.25 per day. Some of the lucky ones with university degrees will take a job that undervalues them. This is a reality that ECOSOC and the ILO wish to change.*



Nearly 839 million workers in developing countries, 27 percent of global employment, are unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their families above the poverty threshold. There are 75 million unemployed young people today and those who are employed earn less than the living wage. Unemployment and underemployment are a major issue in many countries, regardless of their level of development. On top of all this, many of the world's workplaces leave big carbon footprints.

In order to generate 45 million new jobs each year for new entrants to the labour market, and provide jobs for those who have lost theirs due to the impact of the financial and economic crises, the world must create 600 million jobs over the next decade. Will these be decent jobs with fair remuneration, good working conditions and respect for their rights at work?

Will these jobs take into account the impact on the environment of their activities? Or will they create greater income inequalities leaving many behind? Or will they continue to pollute the environment that will increase water- and airborne illnesses, destroying arable land and increasing the acidification of the oceans which support life on earth?

### Creating decent work opportunities

With much at stake, the theme for the 2015 Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Integration segment will focus on, “Achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all.”

The three day session, starting on 30 March, will provide an opportunity for Member States, civil society, trade unions, the private sector, academia and other key actors to discuss and elaborate upon how employment creation and decent work for all could help promote the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Participants will include Heads of State and Government, Ministers, ILO's tripartite constituency, local governments, the United Nations system, foundations, NGOs, academia and the private sector.

In order to optimize the opportunities for an integrated and constructive discussion, the conference will stage roundtable sessions, where representatives from diverse sectors are asked to focus on ways to promote policy convergence based on country experiences, good practices and lessons learned.

As ECOSOC President Martin Sajdik has underscored, ECOSOC is the central hub for engaging global actors and for mobilizing action on the most pressing challenges of our time.

#### Jobs for climate smart future

We are now at a tipping point in how we use the earth's resources and build a more sustainable future, an important focus throughout the event. Participants will discuss the types of jobs that are needed to provide solutions to climate change and which policies are required for effective implementation. They will examine which investments could generate the greatest job potential while maintaining environmental sustainability.

Informal economy will be discussed on the session's first day. This term refers to the very large proportion of people in developing countries who work without a formal contract. Poor employment conditions are often characterized by compulsory overtime or extra shifts without pay, "at-will" employment contracts, unsafe working conditions and the absence of social benefits such as pensions, paid sick leave, maternity leave and health insurance.

Unemployment and informal employment remains a particular concern in Africa, particularly among young people. The continent will therefore, be in the spotlight on the second day of the meeting, where participants aim to find an answer to the question: How can sustained economic growth be translated into decent work in African countries?

#### Taking the high road to growth

Seeing that economic growth is essential in many parts of the world, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has been advocating that Member States support decent work which includes respect for international labour standards, a voice at work, well-functioning labour management relations and sharing fairly in the profits that they have helped generate.

Participants will, on the second day of the integration segment, discuss how the normative framework set out by the ILO Conventions, especially the eight fundamental Conventions, to help reduce human exploitation and encourage innovation and higher level of productivity.

Creating 600 million jobs in a decade is a real challenge, making them green and decent is probably an even greater challenge.

When Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon hosted the Climate Summit in September 2014, he expressed confidence in the task at hand. "Solutions exist and we are already seeing significant changes in government policies and investments in sustainable ways of living and doing business," Mr. Ban said. "The race is on, and now is the time for leaders to step up and steer the world towards a safer future."

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder expressed faith in the creation of a well-functioning labor market, and has urged a "process of social dialogue which embodies the basic democratic principle that people affected by decisions should have a voice in constantly renewing the social contract that is so vital to sustainable development."

The ECOSOC Integration segment will result in a set of policy recommendations for integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development through the creation of new jobs and promotion of decent work. The recommendations will then be available for consideration at the upcoming ECOSOC High-Level Segment and High-Level Political Forum that is scheduled to take place in July.

For more information:

[ECOSOC Integration Segment](#)

## Global Dialogue on Development

### Including persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction efforts



*During the past decade, the world has witnessed an increase in the number of major disasters, such as the Asian tsunami in 2004, the Haitian earthquake in 2010, the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, and hurricane Sandy in the United States 2012.*

*Persons with disabilities are disproportionately affected by conflict, disasters and other emergency situations. The Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (3WCDRR) taking place in Japan on 14-18 March, will address this issue.*

Different populations, when exposed to similar risks of disasters and emergency situations, are affected in different ways. Factors such as poverty, social status, geographical location and access to mitigation and relief resources, influence the impact of disasters on each individual.

With early warning systems for disasters often not adapted to their specific needs, people with disabilities are especially at risk, resulting in a mortality rate two to four times higher than that of the non-disabled population, in many disaster situations.

Often overlooked, people with disabilities are a unique resource of knowledge and experience, essential to help reduce the risk of disasters and build resilient societies and communities. A barrier-free environment helps to ensure full and equal participation in society by all, regardless of age, gender or ability.

To ensure the integration of persons with disabilities in the development of a global framework for disaster risk reduction, UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development Division (DSPD) is working along with all stakeholders, including governments, UN system organizations, academics, the private sector, civil society organizations, and persons with disabilities and their organizations.

Based on the first global framework on disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) which concludes in 2015, the international community is moving forward with a post-2015 international framework on disaster risk reduction (HFA2) that will be adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (3WCDRR) in Sendai, Japan, on 14-18 March. This framework will guide and support global efforts at all levels to build nations and communities that are resilient to disasters.

“Globally, over 1 billion people or 15 percent of the world's population live with some form of disability,” Akiko Ito, Chief of the Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities said in a statement on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in December last year. “Available data indicates that persons with disabilities experience disproportionately high rates of poverty and face exclusion and lack of equitable access to resources such as education, employment, health care and legal and social support systems.”

At 3WCDRR, the world will consolidate their expertise and efforts to adopt an agreement on a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. But while international efforts are being made to create more resilient communities, a gap between the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the rest of society persists.

Also at 3WCDRR, DSPD will organize a public forum event entitled “[Taking action toward a disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction framework and its implementation](#)”. At the Forum, stakeholders will conduct a review and assessment of existing policies and programmes, as well as the progress made and lessons learned for the advancement of disability inclusive disaster risk reduction at local, national, regional and international levels, drawing out concrete recommendations for the implementation of HFA2.

“A huge tsunami is coming in a minute, how do I know it is coming?” Akiko Fukuda, Secretary-General of the World Federation of the Deafblind asked delegates at a press conference in New York last December, illustrating the shortcomings of early warning signals that are broadcasts via mainstream and often inaccessible media such as television, radio or the internet. “I want to hear someone say ‘You are not alone’”, she added.

Institutional mechanisms and innovative technology have given policymakers more possibilities than ever before to include those with a disability in disaster risk reduction efforts. It is vital to ensure that these possibilities are fully developed and that persons with disabilities are included in both the design and implementation of future policy frameworks.

DSPD continues to work with all stakeholders to ensure that inclusive disaster risk reduction is prominently placed on the agenda in Sendai, and to remind governments, policymakers, civil society and the private sector that the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of disaster risk reduction efforts can save lives.

For more information: [Realizing a disability-inclusive post-2015 disaster risk reduction strategy](#)

## Strengthening accountability for sustainable development



*The 17th plenary session of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) will be held on 23-27 March at UN Headquarters in New York.*

During the five days, the CDP members will examine the following

themes; (i) strengthening accountability for sustainable development in the post-2015 era; (ii) CDP's contribution to the mid-term review of the Istanbul Plan of Action; (iii) the 2015 triennial review of the least developed country category; (iv) monitoring of countries graduated and graduating from the LDC category; and (v) fine-tuning of the human asset index. The Committee plans to organize a lunch-time briefing on the first theme, strengthening accountability for sustainable development in the post-2015 era, on 24 March 2015.

The Committee for Development Policy (CDP) is a subsidiary body of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. CDP provides inputs and independent advice to the Council on emerging cross-sectoral development issues and on international cooperation for development, focusing on medium- and long-term aspects. The Committee is also responsible for reviewing the status of least developed countries (LDCs) and for monitoring their progress after graduation from the category.

The 24 members of the Committee are nominated by the United Nations Secretary-General in their personal capacity, and are appointed by the Council for a period of three years. Membership is geared to reflect a wide range of development experience as well as geographical and gender balance.

For more information: [The Committee for Development Policy](#)

## New US \$1 million UN Grant for leadership and innovation in sustainable energy



*A new programme that will offer \$US 1 million to institutions or individuals that have demonstrated leadership and innovation in energy for sustainable development was launched today by the United Nations*

*Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with funding support from the China Energy Fund Committee (CEFC), a Hong Kong-based NGO.*

The new grant programme “Powering the Future We Want – Recognizing Leadership and Innovative Practices in Energy for Sustainable Development,” will provide \$US 1 million to grant recipients every year. Potential recipients will be expected to apply the funds to capacity building that will replicate and scale up their successful experiences.

“We expect the recipient to identify lessons learned and best practices, and share these lessons with decision-makers and practitioners from other countries, through capacity building activities,” said Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs.

Grant applicants will have to outline their proposed capacity-building activities, illustrate their existing sustainable energy projects and demonstrate how their project has contributed to leadership, vision and commitment in promoting sustainable energy and improving living standards. Applicants will also need to demonstrate that their project has promoted international cooperation in energy and capacity building and furthered the integration of energy for sustainable development strategies.

Today some 1.3 billion people lack access to electricity and some 2.7 billion people rely on biomass for cooking and heating. At the same time, energy-related greenhouse gas emissions contribute to climate change, as much as 80 per cent of emissions in many economies. The ‘Powering the Future We Want’ initiative seeks to help promote universal access to modern energy services while reducing energy-related emissions.

‘Powering the Future We Want’ is a follow-up initiative to the 2012 Rio+20 Conference, at which Member States had called for increased dissemination of success stories and capacity building to replicate and scale up best practices in sustainable

development, in collaboration with Governments, business, civil society and other stakeholders.

The grant seeks to encourage scientific and technological innovations in energy. It aims to foster leadership initiatives and innovative actions that improve access to modern energy services, increase efficient use of energy, and enhance availability of new, renewable and advanced energy technologies, while addressing economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The grant recipient will be identified through a competitive review and selection process involving an Advisory Council and a High Level Steering Committee, with participation from relevant UN system organizations.

“The well-being of our people and economy, and the health of our environment, all depend on safe, clean, secure, sustainable and affordable energy,” said Mr Wu at the first meeting of the Advisory Council of the grant. This cross-cutting nature of the global energy challenge reflects the broader theme for the year 2015, a year of global action in which the world seeks to adopt a new sustainable development agenda and to reach a global agreement on climate change, recognizing these issues as two sides of the same coin.

Applications must be submitted in English by 31 March 2015. Questions can be sent to [poweringthefuture@un.org](mailto:poweringthefuture@un.org)

For more information: [Powering the Future We Want](#)

## Adapting to challenges posed by post-2015 agenda



*The 2015 Operational Activities for Development Segment of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) took place on 23-25 February in the ECOSOC Chamber. The segment serves as a key meeting place for stakeholders interested in operational activities for development of the UN system.*

It is mandated to provide guidance to the UN development system on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities of the UN system. Operational activities of the UN system currently account for nearly two-thirds of all activities of the Organization.

This year, discussions in the Operational Activities for Development Segment also contributed to the recently started ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system, mandated in Council resolution 2014/14. The new ECOSOC Dialogue will take place over the next year and half with a view to informing the outcome of the next General Assembly resolution on the QCPR to be adopted in December 2016.

Ministers and high-level UN officials, including heads of agencies, funds and programmes, participated in the segment. The Deputy Secretary-General opened the segment with a keynote address, stating that the new development agenda required a UN system that is more agile and reduces transaction costs. He stressed that for the UN to be fit for purpose, the UN system will need to differentiate its response for different country contexts, improve its capacity to leverage partnerships, and strengthen coordination and collaboration within the system and with outside actors.

UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Mr. Wu Hongbo introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the QCPR. It was widely acknowledged that the UN system had made progress in implementing the resolution on QCPR but that there were gaps in implementation. There was a widely shared view that better implementation of the QCPR would improve efficiency and delivery; that the UN system must focus on its comparative advantage; that underscored that business as usual is not an option and that we are at a critical juncture and time is ripe for change.

It was emphasized that a clear mandate originating from the Post-2015 Summit Outcome document would add momentum to the ECOSOC dialogue, which will culminate in a comprehensive resolution in December 2016.

For more information:

[ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment 2015](#)



## Member States and stakeholders discuss vision for post-2015



*The post 2015 negotiating session held from 17-20 February 2015 at UN Headquarters in New York focused on the Declaration component of the new development agenda. The Declaration “will be an important part of the future framework and indeed of*

*the outcome document” of the post 2015 agenda, said Co-Facilitator David Donoghue, Permanent Representative of Ireland. Co-Facilitator Macharia Kama, Permanent Representative of Kenya, stressed that the Declaration should be visionary and “speak to the future”.*

In the run up to the session, the Co-Facilitators had circulated an Elements Paper to animate discussions among Member States, which was turned into a Discussion Paper reflecting comments made by the delegations in the course of the session. During the last two days of the meeting, delegations expressed their views on the Discussion Paper.

There was wide agreement that the Declaration should be concise, visionary, ambitious, actionable, communicable and simple. Many delegations stressed that it should lay out a collective vision and clearly argue why we need the new development agenda. Many also said that it should show how the agenda responds to the challenges facing the world today and convey the assurance that ‘no one will be left behind’, be it vulnerable groups or countries in special situations. Furthermore, a number of delegations underlined that poverty eradication should be highlighted as overarching objective and sustainable development as the way forward.

An interactive Dialogue with Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) was held on Thursday morning, during which they commented in detail on the Elements Paper. The Co-Facilitators lauded the organization and contributions of MGoS during the session and reiterated their commitment to continuing such dialogues moving forward.

Next to the Declaration, the four part post-2015 development agenda will consist of sustainable development goals, targets and indicators; means of implementation and global partnership for sustainable development; and a follow-up and review framework.

Statements from the four day session, the Co-facilitator’s Discussion Paper and further information can be found on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.

The third session of the Post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations will be held from 23 – 27 March 2015 and focus on the sustainable development goals and targets.

For more information: [Post-2015 intergovernmental negotiations \(Declaration session\)](#)

## Trends and Analysis

### Focusing on importance of audit institutions for post-2015 agenda



*The 23rd UN/INTOSAI Symposium will be held in Vienna, Austria from 2 to 4 March. The participants of the Symposium will deliberate on the topic “UN Post-2015 Development Agenda: the Role of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) and Means of*

*Implementation for Sustainable Development”.*

This topic reflects a growing recognition of the necessity of involving SAIs in the national implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. Given their independence, professionalism and reliability, SAIs are uniquely positioned to serve the public by promoting effective public governance, increasing the efficiency of public administration, improving development outcomes and promoting trust in government. In terms of national implementation, SAIs have a very important oversight role to play.

The overarching goal of the Symposium is to strengthen the oversight capacities of the SAIs — particularly focusing on audits in the context of sustainable development and engaging with key stakeholders while maintaining independence.

UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Wu Hongbo, will make an opening statement on the current status of intergovernmental deliberations on UN post-2015 development agenda. Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, Ms. Carman Lapointe, is due to make a statement on what lessons learned and advice SAIs can share from reviewing the implementation of the MDGs for the SDGs. The President of ECOSOC and the Permanent Representative of Austria, Mr. Martin Sajdik, will also address the opening.

In addition, the Chair of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, Ms. Margaret Saner, will focus her presentation on the expectations of SAIs by the international public administration community. An audit and citizen engagement expert, Mr. Amitabh Mukhopadhyay, will also address the expectations of citizens in SAIs. The Chair of the United Nations Internal Audit Advisory Committee, Mr. Christopher Mihm, from

the US Government Accountability Office will also be in attendance.

From INTOSAI, the Secretary-General, Mr. Josef Moser, who is also the President of the Austrian Court of Audit will make opening remarks. He will be joined by the Deputy Auditor General of China and the representative of the INTOSAI Chair, Mr. Zhang Tong.

The Symposium will be a good occasion to highlight the recent GA resolution A/RES/69/228, which acknowledges the important role of supreme audit institutions in promoting the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration. The resolution “encourages Member States to give due consideration to the independence and capacity building of SAIs, as well as to the improvement of public accounting systems in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.” It follows the previous GA resolution 66/209 on the same theme.

For more information:

[International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions \(INTOSAI\)](#)

### Advancing e-government for sustainable development



*Experts will meet at UN Headquarters on 16 to 17 March to discuss critical issues related to e-government for sustainable development in support of the UN E-Government Survey 2016.*

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) entitled “United Nations E-Government Survey 2016: E-Government for Sustainable Development”, is organized by UN DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM).

The purpose of the meeting is to provide a platform for experts to (a) discuss and exchange views on emerging issues and trends related to e-government for sustainable development, (b) discuss the outline and issues for possible inclusion in the United Nations E-Government Survey 2016, with a view to aligning it to the overall United Nations post-2015 development agenda (c) review and examine the Survey’s methodology, as well as (d) review and update the Survey’s questionnaire.

The experts will provide advice and recommendations on how to integrate these issues into the next edition of the United Nations E-Government Survey and will take into account the feedback and suggestions received from Member States during consultative meetings organized by the Division prior to the EGM. It is the first time that these meetings are being organized by DPADM, in collaboration with a number of regional hosts, in order to allow for a more inclusive, open and participatory approach in the design of the Survey.

Consultative meetings already took place in Colombia (5 December 2014), Bahrain (29 January 2015), Kazakhstan (12 and 13 February 2015), the Republic of Korea (9-10 February), Belgium (17-18 February 2015) and Estonia (19-20 February 2015), while preparations are under way for meetings to be held in Morocco (4 March 2015). Through a participatory approach that includes discussions at round tables and in plenary sessions, participants are invited to respond to a set of questions, so as to provide concrete suggestions and feed-back on the theme and methodology of the UN E-Government Survey 2016.

For more information: [United Nations Public Administration Network \(UNPAN\)](#)

## Celebrating forests' role in combatting climate change



and man-made disasters.

*21 March is the International Day of Forests, and the theme of this year's observance of the Day is climate change. Forests and climate are inextricably linked, forests generate oxygen, store carbon, conserve soils, and build resilience to natural*

An estimated 17 percent of global human-generated carbon dioxide emissions stem from loss of forests due to deforestation and land-use changes. At the same time, healthy forests can regulate climate and rainfall patterns, while also absorbing and storing carbon in their biomass, soils and products.

In its resolution 67/200 of 21 December 2012, the General Assembly proclaimed 21 March as the International Day of Forests to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests and of trees outside forests and requested DESA's UN Forum on Forests Secretariat in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to facilitate the implementation of the International Day of Forests, in collaboration with Governments, the Collaborative Partnership on

Forests and international, regional and subregional organizations and processes as well as relevant major groups.

At UN Headquarters, UN DESA's UNFF Secretariat is holding a special event in celebration of the International Day of Forests on Friday, 20 March 2015 (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) in the Economic and Social Council Chamber. The event entitled "International Day of Forests: Create a Climate Smart Future" will focus on showcasing forest-based solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable development more broadly.

The UNFF Secretariat will also engage in a 21 day social media campaign starting 1 March, which will showcase inspiring films and forest heroes, beautiful award winning forest photographs, as well as interesting forest factoids. In addition a range of multi-media products are being made available online to support International Day celebrations around the world – which include forest films, art and photo materials as well as design products such as banners, posters and postcards.

Discover and amplify the complete and highly visual campaign by following [@UNDESA](#) on Twitter – and the hashtag [#IntlForestDay](#) – or connect with us on [Facebook.com/joinUNDESA](#).

For more information: [UN Forum on Forests Secretariat](#)

## Capacity development

### E-discussion examines what it will take to transition from MDGs to SDGs



The 2015 ECOSOC e-discussion takes place from 17 February to 17 March 2015 with the purpose of engaging policymakers, experts, practitioners and stakeholder groups in a global dialogue on specific aspects of the 2015 ECOSOC theme of

“Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What it will take”.

The e-discussion consists of four concurrently running thematic windows, each led by an expert moderator. The thematic windows address:

1. policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda;
2. adaptation by institutions and structures;
3. partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda; and
4. monitoring and review.

Participants may join the e-discussion at <http://www.unteamworks.org/amr2015>

The e-discussion is co-ordinated and organized by UN DESA and UNDP in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). UN DESA’s Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination is leading the e-discussion for DESA, with substantive support provided by the UN DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management.

For more information:

[2015 ECOSOC e-discussion](#)

## Promoting accountable delivery of public services in Africa



*UN DESA’s Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) joins the 36th ‘African Association for Public Administration and Management’ (AAPAM) roundtable conference to conduct capacity*

*building workshops in Rabat, Morocco, on 2-6 March.*

During the conference, DPADM will conduct two capacity building workshops and one e-Government Survey consultation. The first workshop will be attended mainly by the Members of the Africa Public Sector Human Resource Managers’ Network (APS-HRMnet) and will focus on ‘Strengthening Professionalism, Ethics, Integrity and Accountability in the Public Service for Sustainable Development in Africa’. It is aimed at promoting professional, ethical, and accountable delivery of public services in Africa.

The second one, focusing on ‘Effective Partnership between Ministers and Bureaucratic Leaders: From Policy to Implementation’, will be attended by Heads of Public Service and Cabinet Secretaries. Its major objective is to contribute to strengthening the capacity of political leadership and senior public service leaders in Africa, to carry out integrated and coordinated public policy formulation, decision, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The expected outcome of the workshops includes increased knowledge and awareness by political and administrative leaders in public sector institutions in Africa of the importance of integrated and coordinated policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, as well as evaluation by focusing on enhanced collaboration and partnerships between political leaders and senior public servants.

In addition, consultation sessions on the e-Government Survey will be conducted during the Roundtable Conference to update Africa’s Public Service Leadership on the developments in the use of information and communication technologies to conduct public governance and public administration and to solicit inputs for improvements in the next United Nations e-government survey.

For more information:

[36th AAPAM Roundtable Conference](#)

## Data collection to measure quarterly gross domestic product



*DESA's Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Economic Cooperation Organization and the Statistical Centre of Iran, is organizing a training workshop on the Compilation of Quarterly National Accounts for Economic Cooperation*

*Organization Member Countries in Tehran, Iran, from 8 to 11 March.*

The workshop aims to train national accounts statisticians on the methods and data sources that are available to compile current price and volume measures of quarterly gross domestic product, benchmark the quarterly estimates with the annual estimates and produce seasonally adjusted estimates. In addition, it will provide a forum for participants to share experiences in terms of improved data sources and methods as well as establish contacts.

For more information:

[Training Workshop on the Compilation of Quarterly National Accounts for Economic Cooperation Organization Member Countries](#)

## Strengthening environment statistics



*Second Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics will take place in New York on 25-27 March.*

The Statistical Commission at its forty-fourth session in 2013 adopted the revised Framework for the

Development of Environment Statistics (FDES 2013) as the framework for strengthening environment statistics programmes in countries and requested UN DESA's Statistics Division to convene an Expert Group on Environment Statistics to collaborate with the division in the development of the necessary methodological tools to support the implementation of the FDES 2013.

The meeting will discuss and finalize (i) the draft methodology sheets of Volume I of the Manual for the Basic Set of Environment Statistics; (ii) Part I of the Environment Statistics Self-Assessment Tool (ESSAT) on institutional aspects; and (iii) Part II and III of the ESSAT on national priorities and data availability. Experts from developing and developed countries, as well as from international and inter-governmental organizations will attend the meeting.

For more information:

[Calendar of events of UN DESA's Statistics Division](#)

## Evidence and data for gender equality



*The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) project staff together with the staff of the African Development Bank (AfDB) visited the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of South Africa and Swaziland in the first week of*

*February to discuss South Africa's and Swaziland's contributions to the EDGE pilot data collection.*

The EDGE pilot surveys in South Africa and Swaziland are supported by the AfDB. The team held detailed discussions with subject matter experts and extensively reviewed data collected by NSOs South Africa and Swaziland under different surveys, in order to assess which data items are already being collected on a regular basis that may be used to compile potential EDGE indicators on individual level asset ownership and entrepreneurship and which data items need to be newly collected under the EDGE pilots.

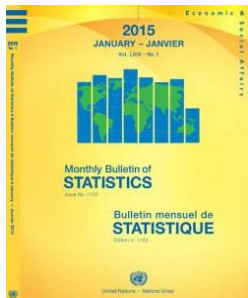
The EDGE-AfDB team assisted the NSOs in contextualizing the EDGE survey instruments and designing the samples for the pilots. Findings of the pilots are expected to inform the international methodological guidelines to be developed by the EDGE project on measuring asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective.

For more information: [The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality \(EDGE\)](#)

## Publications and Websites

### Statistical compilations

#### Monthly Bulletin of Statistics and MBS Online



The Monthly Bulletin of Statistics presents current economic and social statistics for more than 200 countries and territories of the world. It contains over 50 tables of monthly and/or bimonthly, quarterly and annual data on a variety of subjects illustrating important economic trends and developments, including population, prices, employment and earnings, energy, manufacturing,

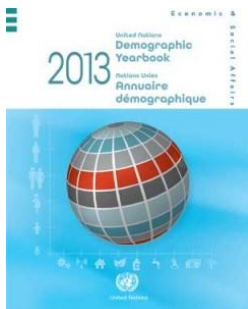
transport, construction, international merchandise trade and finance.

#### Vol. LXIX – No. 1, January 2015

In addition to the regular recurrent monthly tables, this issue includes quarterly tables: Civil aviation traffic: passenger-km and cargo net ton-km; Total exports and imports by countries or areas: volume, unit value, terms of trade and purchasing power of exports, in US dollars.

- [For more information](#)

#### Demographic Yearbook 2013 (DYB 2013)



The Demographic Yearbook 2013 has been published online by UN DESA's Statistics Division. It is the sixty-fourth issue in a series published by the United Nations since 1948. It contains tables on a wide range of demographic statistics, including a world summary of selected demographic statistics, statistics on the size, distribution and trends in national populations, fertility, foetal mortality, infant and maternal mortality, general mortality, nuptiality and divorce. Data are shown by urban/rural residence, as available. In addition, the volume provides Technical Notes, a synoptic table, a historical index and a listing of the issues of the Demographic

Yearbook published to date. This issue of Demographic Yearbook contains data as available including the reference year 2013.

- [To download](#)

#### Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook 2012



The 2012 edition of the Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook has been published. This is the forty-sixth in a series of annual compilations of statistics on world industry designed to meet both the general demand for information of this kind and the special requirements of the United Nations and related international bodies.

This edition of the Yearbook presents data on production of about 600 industrial commodities by country or area. The data includes physical quantities and monetary

value of the production that was carried out at some point in time and has been sold (invoiced) during the reference period. The Yearbook is organized in two volumes, namely Volume I: Physical Quantity Data and Volume II: Monetary Value Data. The statistics refer to the ten year period 2003-2012 for about 200 countries or areas.

The data covers only products produced by mining, manufacturing and electricity and gas units that are classified in sections B, C, and D of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) Revision 4. The selection of industrial commodities is based on the United Nations List of Industrial Products, established in 2005 (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/industry/commoditylist2.asp>). The List is comprised of a selected set of products intended for data collection on industrial production. The List is not intended to represent an exhaustive list of industrial or manufacturing products. Products have been selected on the basis of their overall importance and their importance as outputs of individual ISIC industries in the world economy. Moreover, a consolidated list on contract processing services for industrial products has been included.

- [For more information](#)

## The Demographic Yearbook Online Dissemination of Population and Housing Censuses' datasets to UNdata

UN DESA's Statistics Division has updated the Population and Housing Censuses datasets for the 2000 and 2010 rounds (1995 to the present), published via the UNdata portal. This update includes the censuses' datasets reported during the year 2014, by the National Statistical Offices to the Demographic Yearbook system.

These datasets cover population by several characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, population of cities, recent fertility and mortality, and lifetime fertility from household responses, household, ethnocultural and economic characteristics, migrant stock, and housing characteristics.

- [To access the data](#)

## Outreach material

### Sustainable Development in Action, Volume 3, Issue 2

The February issue of Sustainable Development in Action, published by UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development, highlights among others, the High-level Thematic Debate on Means of Implementation for a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda and the February session of post-2015 negotiations. The newsletter aims to feature the work carried out by Member States, United Nations system, Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing sustainable development and leading the way to the Future We Want.

- [Read full issue](#)

### Youth Flash Newsletter

"Youth inclusivity and the post-2015 development agenda" is the topic of one of the articles presented in the February issue of United Nations Youth Flash. The newsletter is a service of the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) Focal Point on Youth to help keep the public informed about the work of the UN on youth issues. It is prepared with input from UN offices, agencies, funds and programmes, and from youth organizations all over the world.

- [Read full issue](#)

## DESA NGO News

The latest issue of DESA NGO provides the most up-to-date information on news and upcoming events of interest to civil society at UN headquarters in New York, Geneva and elsewhere. The newsletter is published by UN DESA's NGO Branch.

- [Read full issue](#)

## Discussion papers

### Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects No. 75

Prepared by UN DESA's Development Policy and Analysis Division, the February issue is available online with the following summary:

- Major central bank policy swings in Switzerland and the euro area
- Euro area deflation sets in
- Oil exporters face increased fiscal challenges, while lower commodity prices ease inflationary pressures

- [To download](#)

## Working papers

### The Global Consumption and Income Project (GCIP): An Introduction and Preliminary Findings

Two separate datasets (The Global Consumption Dataset (GCD) and The Global Income Dataset (GID)) are introduced, containing an unprecedented portrait of consumption and income of persons over time, within and across countries, around the world. The benchmark version of the dataset presents estimates in PPP units of monthly real consumption and income for every decile of the population (a 'consumption/income profile') for 133 countries and more than half a century (1960-2012). The construction of the datasets is described and some possible uses are demonstrated by presenting preliminary results concerning the consumption distribution, poverty and inequality for the world and specific country aggregates.

- [To download](#)

## Websites

### Launch of new website of the Capacity Development Office (CDO/DESA)



The new redesigned website, which was launched on 18 February, comes with an improved navigation structure and better incorporates latest developments on the Internet. UN DESA's Capacity Development Office (CDO/DESA) provides broad substantive guidance and management to the implementation of the Department's capacity development work, promoting effective translation of intergovernmental outcomes into the Department's operational programmes and capacity development work.

- [To browse](#)



## Comings and Goings

### Goings

*The following staff member retired in February:*

Marie Oveissi, Chief, Capacity Development Office

### Comings

*The following staff members were promoted in February:*

Lisa Ainbinder, social affairs officer, Division for Social Policy and Development

Marcus Newbury, Statistician, Statistics Division

# Calendar

## March

### **23rd UN/INTOSAI Symposium**

2-4 March, Austria

### **46th session of the Statistical Commission**

3-6 March, New York

### **Training workshop on the Compilation of Quarterly National Accounts for Economic Cooperation Organization Member Countries**

8-11 March, Tehran, Iran

### **Public Forum: Taking action toward a disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction framework and its implementation**

15 March, Japan

### **Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “United Nations E-Government Survey 2016: E-Government for Sustainable Development”**

16-17 March, New York

### **International Day of Forests**

21 March

### **Committee for Development Policy (CDP)**

23-27 March, New York

### **Second Meeting of the Expert Group on Environment Statistics**

25-27 March, New York

### **Capacity Building Workshops during the 36th AAPAM Roundtable Conference**

2-6 March, Rabat, Morocco

### **ECOSOC Integration Segment**

30 March – 1 April, New York

**DESA News is an insider's look at the United Nations in the area of economic and social development policy. The newsletter is produced by the Communication Section/SPCS of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with DESA Divisions. DESA News is issued every month. Please click [here](#) to send inquiries.**