

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND



- Photo Credit: UN DESA Forest Photo Contest/Riccardo-Gangale

In 2019-2020, UN DESA maintained its firm focus on inclusion of the most vulnerable, giving particular attention to youth, indigenous peoples, older persons and persons with disabilities. Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women remained a constant guide. With attention to countries in special situations, including SIDS and LDCs, we identified emerging trends and effective policy options for eradicating poverty; addressing inequalities; fighting discrimination; strengthening social protection; and providing opportunities for all, before, during and beyond the COVID-19 crisis.

UN DESA...

- Highlighted the 25 years of progress of implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development.
- Brought critical attention to the complex problem of homelessness, its impact on development and policy options to address it.
- Continued to strengthen and raise the profile of research and data to accelerate global actions toward a world without poverty.
- Assessed the potential of youth social entrepreneurship to support youth employment and development, in the 2020 World Youth Report.
- Drew attention to the disparate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on older persons, indigenous peoples, youth and countries in special situations.
- Issued its first Policy and Plan of Action for Disability Inclusion and established a network of focal points on disability.
- Established, maintained, and provided targeted trainings to support capacity-building in LDCs.
- Shone a spotlight on the economic and financing obstacles faced by SIDS.

Leaving no one behind

UN DESA is a leading voice for promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities and eradicating poverty. Throughout the year, UN DESA used its convening power and analytical capacity to ensure that the global dialogue included the voices of all peoples, everywhere. The Department also supported the development of national actions to leave no one behind even as interlinked global crises stifled fiscal and policy space.



World Summit for Social Development 1995. - Photo Credit: UN Photo/Milton Grant

Celebrating 25 years of championing social inclusion

The World Summit in 1995 was a critical turning point towards people-centred, inclusive and integrated approaches to policymaking. The vision of the Summit is reflected in the core principle of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and reach the furthest behind first. In commemoration of the 25th anniversary, UN DESA launched complementary online campaigns to draw

attention to the progress made and encourage action for greater and more sustainable inclusion.

UN DESA's [Social Milestones Project](#) showcases 169 social development milestones, with links to relevant United Nations documents and diverse multimedia sources. Since its February launch, the Project has enhanced the accessibility of the repository of knowledge on social development. In addition, UN DESA's yearlong [#EveryoneIncluded](#) campaign, has aimed to inspire and

motivate people around the world to join an ongoing multifaceted dialogue on social development and its role in achieving sustainable development. The campaign reminds the international community about the importance of placing people at the centre of development by ensuring full participation of all.

Reaching the furthest behind first

The work of UN DESA continued to address the issues critical to human resilience. In February 2020, the Report of the Secretary-General on *Affordable housing and social protection systems for all to address homelessness* helped guide deliberations in the 58th session of the Commission for Social Development. The report informed a milestone resolution, the first on homelessness adopted at the UN. The resolution recognizes homelessness as a complex problem, affecting people of different ages and with

diverse backgrounds in both developed and developing countries. It underscores the importance of taking a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to address multiple inter-related structural causes of homelessness through integrated responses, cutting across fiscal, economic, labour, housing, health, social protection, and urban development policies.

Protecting and mobilizing youth for sustainable development

The World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda, launched by UN DESA in July 2020, assesses the potential of youth social entrepreneurship to support youth employment and development while helping accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It examines challenges faced by young social entrepreneurs and explores how innovative



Ellen Chilemba, young social entrepreneur and founder of Tiwale. - Photo Credit: Tiwale



Participants at the International Day of Older Persons 2019. - Photo Credit: UN DESA /Amine Lamrabat

technologies can be used to help youth succeed. The report offers policy guidance for developing enabling, responsive and sustainable national ecosystems for young social entrepreneurs.

UN DESA analysis on the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic also drew attention to the need for targeted action toward youth. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the disruptions the COVID-19 pandemic has caused, and many are now at risk of being left behind in education, economic opportunities, and health and well-being during a crucial stage of their life. At the same time, young innovators are already responding to the pandemic through projects with social impact.

Reminding the world that people aged 60+ count

UN DESA continued to support the efforts of the General Assembly's open-ended working group on ageing, providing analysis on older persons' right to work and access to the labour market. The Department also helped to shape language for the development of a possible international standard on the protection of the rights of older persons to education, training, life-long learning and capacity-building as well as to social protection and social security (including social protection floors).

Promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women

UN DESA's research and analysis continued to mainstream gender equality and the empowerment of women, producing gender-sensitive recommendations addressing the important nuances that too often leave the world's women at a disadvantage. Several of the Department's activities focused specifically on the gender dimension of sustainable development, such as the symposium on "Mainstreaming gender in Water Resources Management, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policies in the Caribbean Region", held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 2019. The Symposium discussed the draft CARICOM Gender Equality Strategy and introduced language to be included in the Strategy. CARICOM is currently finalizing the strategy taking into account the suggested text and language. Seventy per cent of the participants of the Symposium were female.

The Department also continued its coordination of the Global Gender Statistics Programme, working to strengthen coherence among existing initiatives on gender statistics, and improve national statistical and technical capacity for the production, dissemination and



Ms. Silvia Museiya (Yaku / Kenya), panellist at the 2019 commemoration of the International Day of Indigenous Peoples – Photo Credit: UN Photo/ Manuel Elias

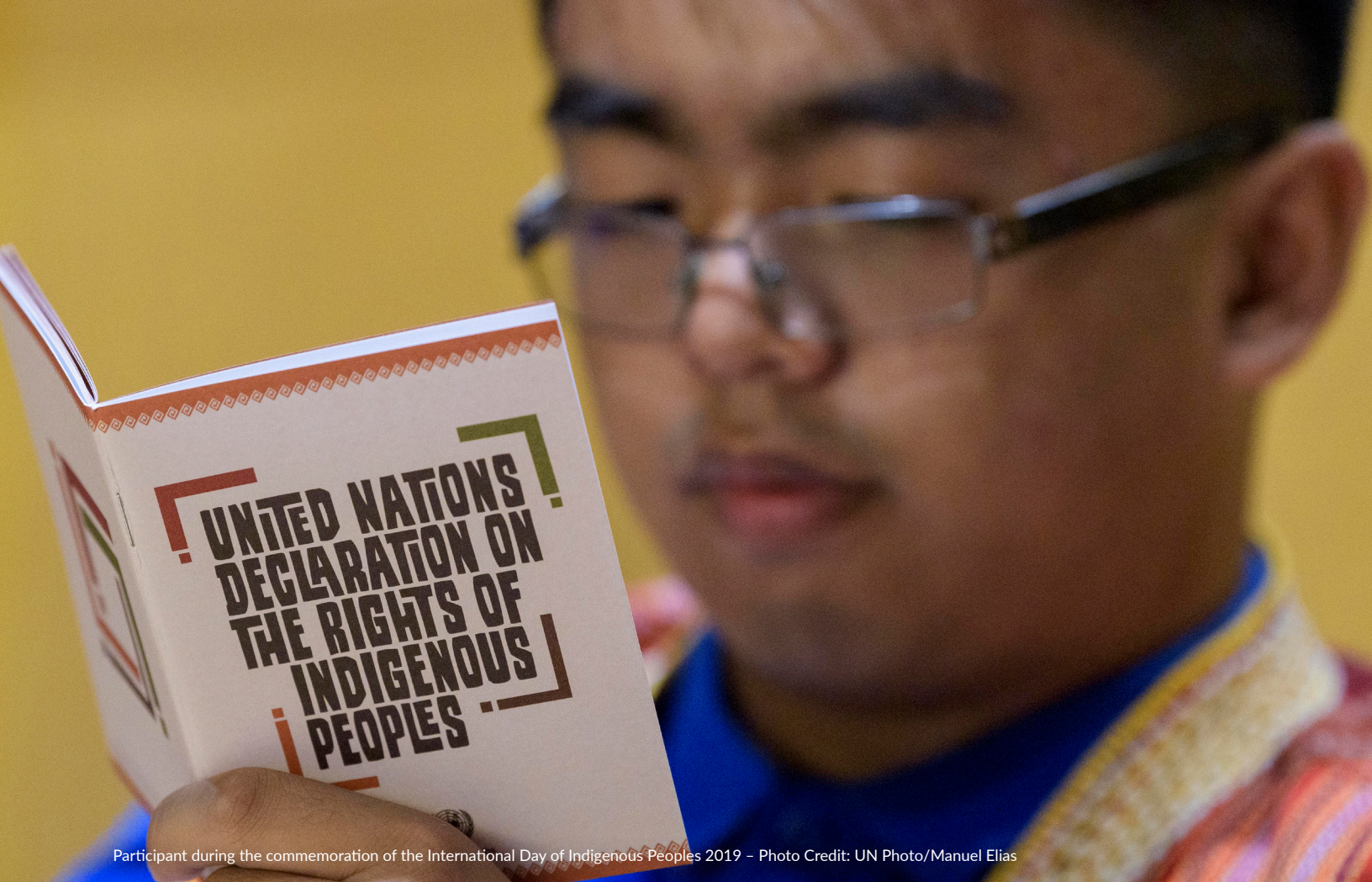
use of gender relevant data. During 2019, UN DESA further increased knowledge and understanding of the gender dimensions of demographic phenomena through datasets, data visualizations and reports. For example, the International Migrant Stock 2019 dataset shows gendered patterns of international migration: Female migrants outnumber male migrants in the North, while male migrants outnumber female migrants in the global South.

The Department expanded its World Economic Forecasting Model (WEFM-e) to incorporate gender dimensions in assessing the development impacts of regional initiatives on female employment. The new WEFM-e generated various scenarios and results, showing possible impacts of key gender-related issues such as female job creation, poverty reduction and access to public service (education, health, etc.). The model-based analyses and related policy recommendations – reflected in various publications of the Department – enable Member States to fine-tune development plans and strategies for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A rights-based approach to indigenous issues

With the postponement of the 2020 annual session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), UN DESA arranged for Forum members to hold virtual meetings with stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, United Nations indigenous mechanisms and indigenous peoples organizations from various regions, to enable the consultations that would normally have taken place during the Forum session. The aim was to identify possible policy options where the UNPFII members might provide support and identify concrete actions to advance implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples at the country level.

Noting the real and potential disparate impact of the pandemic on indigenous communities, UN DESA also established a repository of information for indigenous peoples, related to COVID-19. The repository includes actions being taken by all stakeholders, online news articles, examples of best practices, indigenous-led public service announcements in numerous indigenous languages, statements from key indigenous and UN organizations, as well as guidelines and recommendations for response and



Participant during the commemoration of the International Day of Indigenous Peoples 2019 – Photo Credit: UN Photo/Manuel Elias



Participants pose for a photo at the closing of the high-level event of the General Assembly on the conclusion of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, 17 December 2019 – Photo Credit: UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

recovery sensitive to the needs of indigenous peoples. UN DESA published a policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on indigenous peoples in May 2020, within the COVID-19 policy brief series.

Moving disability-inclusive development forward

In December 2019, the Doha International Conference on Disability and Development, with UN DESA's support, brought together persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, experts, academics, policymakers, governments and UN entities, to promote the mainstreaming of disability inclusion in the development of national strategies, policies and action plans in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. The conference resulted in the adoption of the Doha Declaration, which outlined recommendations for policy development about human rights and sustainable development in the context of disability.

UN DESA, in 2020, issued its first internal policy and plan of action for disability inclusion, in line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and established

a network of focal points on disability to drive implementation.

Building country capacity for forwarding social inclusion

With 2019 as the first year of implementation of the system-wide plan of action for the eradication of poverty, the Department monitored and analysed global social and economic trends and emerging issues that have a bearing on poverty eradication, inequality, jobs and social inclusion, particularly among vulnerable social groups, to help inform government policy. Together with partners, UN DESA supported more than 75 countries in building integrated, evidence-based, inclusive, and well-funded national strategies and plans to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

UN DESA also worked to extend social protection coverage to more individuals in middle- and low-income countries through its technical cooperation work. For example, the Department's ongoing project, Achieving SDGs and ending poverty through Universal Social

"On Display NYC": an installation by Heidi Latsky Dance during the 2019 commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- Photo Credit: UN DESA /Amine Lamrabat





Training Workshop on Cooperative Healthcare, Istanbul, 21-23 May 2019 - UN DESA and Istanbul Aydin University - Photo Credit: AFRIKAM Centre of the Istanbul Aydin University

Protection, aims to assist Cambodia and Pakistan in improving their social protection systems. In 2019, Cambodia proposed a more comprehensive social security system, which is currently with Parliament for approval. UN DESA trained civil servants in the country on governance and management of their social protection system.

Supporting graduating LDCs

Through its support to the Committee for Development Policy (CDP), UN DESA is in a unique position to help countries to analyse and implement policies that ensure countries graduate smoothly from the LDC category. At its Plenary session in February 2020, the CDP updated the technical LDC criteria and discussed country-specific support for ensuring smooth transitions and maintaining momentum towards sustainable development. The CDP further focused on implications of the COVID-19 crisis, highlighting the need to put the SDGs first and build equal, green, and resilient societies and economies.

In 2019-20, the Department provided targeted trainings on various capacity-building tools for LDCs, including the LDC graduation support platform, gradjet.org, the LDC-specific support measures portal, new assistance measures for LDCs, as well as macroeconomic and climate-related policy models. UN DESA continued to deliver the support to LDCs in the COVID-19 crisis, adopting all available measures - modifying implementation methods using virtual meetings, augmenting project objectives to minimize negative impacts of economic shocks caused by COVID -19 or exploring additional funding sources. COVID-19 also led to an increase in activities in the ePing trade notification system, developed



« ... This worked very well and was undertaken on record time, from all ends, with much appreciation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and me. It will no doubt prove useful in the work ahead on the LDC graduation. I used this as an example(...)of excellent collaboration across the UNDS ... the CDP Secretariat at UN DESA rocks!»

~ Resident Coordinator of Lao PDR, Ms. Sara Sekkenes, commenting on support provided in preparation for LDC graduation.



Jason Mamoia speaks at High-level Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway - Photo Credit: UN Photo/Laura Jarriel

by UN DESA together with WTO and ITC. Already in 2019, Uganda, as one of UN DESA's pilot countries in providing ePing support, became the top notifier in the system.

Addressing the unique needs of small island developing States

In September 2019, Member States held a High-level Midterm Review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the dedicated 10-year programme of action adopted in 2014 to promote international assistance to address the unique set of challenges that small island developing States face. The midterm review saw Member States adopt a political declaration reaffirming their solidarity with SIDS, which remain a special case for sustainable development, and calling for more innovative partnerships and financing.

Guided by this outcome, UN DESA built on its work with and for SIDS to address their unique needs. New multi-stakeholder partnerships for SIDS were announced on the margins of the event and registered on two platforms maintained by UN DESA: the SIDS Partnership database and the SDG Acceleration Actions platform. The Department's 2019 edition of **The Cowrie**, a newsletter on SIDS, shone a spotlight on the economic and financing obstacles faced by SIDS, and the need for international cooperation to ensure sustainable financing for small island nations. This work became even more poignant in the wake of the pandemic, as SIDS, particularly those in the middle-income bracket, sought innovative ways to finance the safety and protection of their inhabitants and slow the spread of COVID-19.