



ADDRESSING POVERTY AND THE ROOT CAUSES OF INEQUALITY

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... to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda, for all.

With the COVID-19 pandemic driving one of the greatest social and economic crises in the history of the United Nations, and the war in the Ukraine driving a food, fuel and financing crisis, UN DESA's work in 2021-2022 sought to address multiple dimensions of poverty and inequality and shape solid recommendations that drive transformative action for inclusive social and economic policy, and people-centred development.

UN DESA ...

- Promoted integrated long-term social policy frameworks for addressing poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, and inequalities.
- Supported the protection of small-scale producers and family farmers through access to modern technologies.
- Completed training for sixteen countries in the Least Developed Country (LDC) category and worked with the OECD Development Centre, International Trade Centre, and UNCTAD
- to promote LDC advancement.
- Drew critical attention to the importance of effective disability-inclusion for effective pandemic recovery and long-term development progress.
- Promoted digital inclusion through multistakeholder partnerships that facilitate access for all to information and communication technologies, in line with human rights frameworks.

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With the world facing climate catastrophe and unstable, food, fuel and financing markets amidst a prolonged pandemic, there is urgent need for social, economic and financing policies and governance strategies that promote equity and inclusion. UN DESA has sought to provide governments the support they need to shape an inclusive and transformative response to these interlinked crises and drive a process of recovery that puts the world on track to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda, for all.

Promoting orderly migration and sustainable urbanization to reduce inequality and family poverty

In preparation for the 30th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, UN DESA is supporting research and awareness-raising activities on the impact of current megatrends on families. In 2022, the Department has focused on the impacts of migration and urbanization. As migration-related issues are visible throughout the 2030 Agenda and across all pillars of United Nations work, more attention should be given to migrants and their families and ensuring effective policy support and responses in this area. A side event at the Commission for Social Development, "Families and Migration," highlighted the contribution of family remittances to poverty reduction. In observance of the International Day of Families, in May 2022, the Department launched a research paper on "Migration, Urbanization and the Family Dimension", and

prepared a policy brief on "Migration Trends and Families." A UN Chronicle article on families and urbanization was also published, as part of the commemoration.

Eradicating poverty and hunger for an inclusive and resilient recovery

UN DESA's evidence-based analysis of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular on the poorest and most vulnerable, supported the 59th session of the Commission for Social Development to adopt a policy outcome focused on enabling an inclusive and resilient recovery to eradicate poverty and hunger to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In addition to compiling effective national policies and measures implemented to combat hunger and poverty during the pandemic, UN DESA facilitated mutual learning among Member States and various stakeholders during

the Commission session to promote integrated long-term social policy frameworks that simultaneously address multiple causes of poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, combat inequalities, and enhance the capabilities, resilience, and well-being of all people over their life cycle. The Department further guided numerous multistakeholder discussions aimed at reducing food insecurity through support for and protection of small-scale producers and family farmers, and the elimination of digital barriers.

Advancing disability-inclusive development

With 185 ratifications to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there is increasing appreciation of and action to advance disability-inclusive development. As secretariat to the Conference of State Parties to the Convention, UN DESA facilitated global-level dialogue to address existing gaps in translating the international commitments to persons

with disabilities into development policies, programming and practices at national and international levels, and realize the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind. Bringing together 1,000 delegates from 185 States Parties and Signatories, UN entities, national human rights institutions and over 500 accredited NGOs, the 15th session of the conference, held in June 2022, addressed three thematic issues: innovation and technology advancing disability rights; economic empowerment and entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities; and participation of persons with disabilities in climate action, disaster risk reduction and resilience against natural disasters. The conference also took steps to strengthen its intersectional and intergenerational approach with a youth representative speaking at the opening for the first time, along with the representative of civil society.



Integrating population and development considerations in building back from the pandemic

UN DESA supported the Commission on Population and Development in its negotiation of a consensual resolution on population and sustainable development, in particular, sustained and inclusive economic growth. The resolution highlights the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in poverty eradication, access to education, and gender equality and women's empowerment. Member States agreed on action-oriented paths to integrate population and development considerations in building back from the pandemic and accelerating implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the 2030 Agenda. Focus areas highlighted in the resolution include:

the disproportionate amount of time spent by women in unpaid work, limiting their economic empowerment and independence; the role of inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels and lifelong learning for achieving sustainable development; the impact of population ageing on labour and financial markets, fiscal systems, education, housing, health, long-term care and social protection; the need to address digital divides within and among countries and regions; the need to invest in measures to empower women, girls and youth in order to realize and capitalize on the demographic dividend; the recognition that sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are central to the realization of social justice and achievement of sustainable development; and the contribution of sustainable consumption and production practices to achieving economic development, reducing environmental impacts and advancing human well-being.



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Country-led and partnership-based global support to countries moving up and out of the LDC category

A record number of countries, sixteen in total, are set to move up and out of the least developed country (LDC) category. UN DESA, recognising an urgent and increasing need for capacity support for countries on the path to graduation, scaled up its pilot of the six service offerings of its LDC Graduation Support Facility to an additional seven countries and expanded its partnerships. UN DESA in collaboration with the OECD Development Centre provided policy and technical support to the Government of Bangladesh in conducting a Production Transformation Policy Review for the country—a first of its kind for an LDC. It will inform Bangladesh's National Smooth Transition Strategy. UN DESA together with the World Trade Organization, International Trade Centre and UNCTAD produced a joint report titled [The Textile and Clothing Sector in Asian Graduating Least Developed Countries: Challenges and Ways Forward](#). The report offers insights on the sector in Bangladesh, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal, and sets out important preparatory measures to strengthen the textile and clothing sector. UN DESA actively engaged Member States throughout the intergovernmental

preparatory process for the Fifth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5), culminating in the Facility being a concrete measure of support in the Doha Programme of Action.

Building resilient and sustainable digital societies and economies

Building inclusive, resilient and sustainable digital societies and economies is a foundation for achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and digital tools remain critical as the pandemic continues to keep people apart in many cases. [The 16th Internet Governance Forum](#) held in December 2021 in Katowice, Poland, encouraged countries to put in place adequate policies, legislation and institutions to ensure that digital transformation processes are inclusive, just, safe and sustainable. This starts with enabling universal and meaningful access to the Internet and equipping individuals with digital skills – actions that require cooperation between public institutions and private actors. The IGF continued to strengthen its position as a central platform for multistakeholder dialogue at the global level on the most pressing Internet and digital policy issues. In 2021 the forum attracted 10,371 participants from 175 countries, featuring



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318 sessions addressing six issue areas: economic and social inclusion and human rights; universal access and meaningful connectivity; emerging regulation: market structure, content, data and consumer rights protection; environmental sustainability & climate change; inclusive internet governance ecosystems and digital rights; and trust, security, stability.

Frontier technologies for supporting smallholder farmers and addressing food insecurity

The number of people facing acute food insecurity continues to grow at an alarming rate. The world is facing a food crisis that is driven by major supply shocks, such as conflicts, weather extremes and disrupted agricultural value chains. The November 2021 edition of *Frontier Technology Issues* examines smart, digital, and precision agricultural technologies that could help to address information asymmetries and deficiencies facing farmers, especially smallholders. The use of these technologies could improve agricultural productivity and output and play a significant role in addressing food insecurity. The report identifies frontier technologies that could be impactful at key stages of the agricultural cycle – preparation, production, and processing and sale.

Despite their potential benefits, the uptake of these technologies by smallholder farmers remains limited. To accelerate the adoption of these technologies, the report calls for greater investment in promoting digital literacy in rural areas; a rethinking of the current model of agricultural extension services; a renewed effort to make digital platforms more user-friendly for smallholder farmers; and significant expansion of rural infrastructure to promote agricultural e-commerce.

Highlighting the intersecting discriminations experienced by older women

UN DESA worked with partners, in the past year, to increase the attention given to the compounded and intersectional discrimination faced by older women, particularly in situations

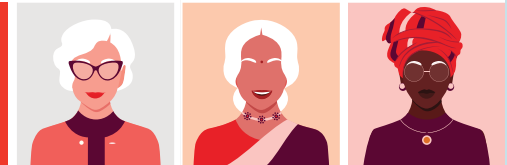
of crisis. An [advocacy brief](#) by UN DESA, UN Women and the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, with support from AARP¹, highlighted how the intersecting discriminations that women experience in their lifetimes have a cumulative impact in old age that makes their situation more vulnerable in a crisis, including in the COVID-19 pandemic. The brief is accompanied by infographics and features new data on older women. The brief was launched at a side event during 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

At the 2022 HLPF, a related side-event, co-hosted by the Stakeholder Group on Ageing, UN DESA, UN Women and the Special Procedures Office of the Independent Expert on the rights of older persons, addressed the theme “Older Women in Crises: Invisible Among the Most Vulnerable.” The event sought to explore the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by older women in emergencies and put forward ideas on how to address such challenges and ensure that their needs are met, adding the often overlooked perspective and consideration of older women’s well-being to the HLPF discussions.

¹AARP is a United States-based nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that empowers people to choose how they live as they age

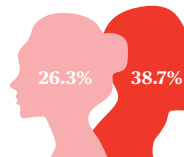
Older Women: Inequality at the Intersection of Age and Gender

Supporting the well-being of all older women across the world demands more and better data.



Many women are confronted with economic insecurity in old age.

26.3% of working-age women worldwide are covered under a pension scheme, compared to 38.7% of men.¹



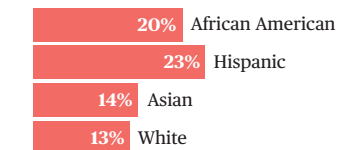
In lower-middle income countries, only 8.1% of working-age women are covered under a pension scheme, compared to 20.8% of men.¹

The intersecting discriminations that women experience in their lifetimes have a cumulative impact in old age that make their situation more vulnerable in a crisis.

41% of women in the US aged 40-65 have lost job-based income since the beginning of 2020.²



14% of women in the US aged 40-65 have lost their jobs.²



The pandemic adversely impacted older women’s income and ability to work.

61% of women aged 60-plus reported having lost income as a result of the pandemic.⁴

54% of older women aged 60-plus reported a reduction in paid working hours, compared to 38% of men.⁴

As women age, their social roles also evolve.

Women do an average of 2.5 times the amount of unpaid care and domestic work as men do globally.³



More than half of older women aged 60 and over reported increased time spent on unpaid care and domestic work during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴



The invisibility of abuse and violence against older women makes their situation more vulnerable.

34% of women 60-plus reported experiencing violence or knowing someone who has since the beginning of the pandemic.⁵

63% of women 60-plus think that domestic violence has increased, while 55% think that sexual harassment has worsened.⁵



¹International Labour Organization (2021) “https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_817572/lang-en/index.htm” World Social Protection Report 2020-2022.

²AARP survey “Women, Work, and the Road to Resilience: Working Women at Mid-Life and Beyond”.

³UN DESA (2021) “https://unstats.un.org/sgds/report/2021/gsal-05/” Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

⁴UN Women (2021) “https://data.unwomen.org/publications/women-and-girls-left-behind-glaring-gaps-pandemic-responses” Women and Girls left behind: Glaring gaps in pandemic responses.

⁵UN Women (2021) “https://data.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/Publications/Measuring-shadow-pandemic.pdf” Measuring the shadow pandemic: violence against women during COVID-19.

