



INTRODUCTION

UN DESA's work over the 76th session of the General Assembly was heavily shaped by the combined impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the cascading socioeconomic effects of the war in Ukraine. The need for progress within the 10 critical action areas committed to by Member States in the political declaration at the SDG Summit in September 2019 became at once increasingly urgent and incredibly challenged. Guided both by the call of the SDG Summit, and by the forward-looking vision outlined by the Secretary-General in his report on Our Common Agenda, the Department continued its focus on championing synergistic, future-focused approaches to pandemic response and recovery that accelerate integrated and cross-sectoral progress towards sustainable development for all.

10 PRIORITY ACTION AREAS OF MEMBER STATES

- Leaving no one behind
- Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing
- Enhancing national implementation
- Strengthening institutions for more integrated solutions
- Bolstering local action to accelerate implementation
- Reducing disaster risk and building resilience
- Solving challenges through international cooperation and enhancing the global partnership
- Harnessing science, technology, and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development
- Investing in data and statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals
- Strengthening the high-level political forum

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UN DESA: CHAMPIONING SDG IMPLEMENTATION AMIDST COMPOUNDED CRISES



I am honoured to introduce the fourth edition of the annual UN DESA Highlights report and to become a part of the legacy it represents. The UN DESA Highlights was first launched in October 2019 and aims to present the impact of UN DESA's work to a broader audience. The report is an initiative of UN DESA to strengthen its external communications, which was a priority area of the Secretary-General during the Department's reform to enhance its support to Member States in the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level, as mandated in General Assembly resolution 70/299. In this regard, by presenting this latest version of the report, I am pleased to continue the work undertaken by my predecessors, Under-Secretaries-General WU Hongbo and LIU Zhenmin to enhance the work of UN DESA.

The UN DESA Highlights 2021-2022 revisits the major contributions of the Department to the field of

international development and the implementation of the global sustainable development agenda over the course of the 76th session of the General Assembly (September 2021-August 2022). It provides a snapshot of the important work undertaken by the Department to ensure that the long-term goal of shared prosperity on a healthy planet remains central to international development dialogue and multilateral action, even as the impact of the pandemic persists and climate chaos unfolds, along with the cascading effects of interlinked crises spurred by the war in Ukraine.

Featuring six thematic chapters, the highlights in the present volume focus on UN DESA's work to support and amplify Member States efforts to address the constraints imposed by the multiple, intersecting crises facing the world. The report also spotlights cross-cutting approaches used by the Department to attain the expected results, including our mainstreaming of gender considerations; our attention to partnerships; our central attention to strengthening public institutions; our consistent facilitation of people-centred and planet-friendly multilateral actions, commitments and decisions; our support to countries in special situations; and our commitment to ensuring that we tap our broad expertise to deliver cohesive, cross-sectoral action and advice, driving the types of innovations needed to spur transformative and forward-looking results.

Chapter 1, on Addressing poverty and the root causes of inequality, features the Department's efforts to mainstream poverty reduction and the addressing of inequalities across its various areas of work, and its coordination and acceleration of action in these areas within the UN system and in

building Member State capacities. The year saw the Department place particular emphasis on promoting inclusive social and economic development, particularly among youth, older persons, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities. Amidst the accelerated digital transformation spurred by the ongoing pandemic, much attention was given to addressing the digital divide.

Chapter 2, on Guiding global action on our global goals, highlights efforts to champion a centring of SDG implementation in deliberations on COVID-19 response and recovery, support to the High-level Political Forum, Voluntary National Review Workshops, and other efforts to strengthen Member States capacities to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In chapter 3, on Ensuring sustainable financing, we see the depth of work undertaken by the Department to deliver on the major financing for development priorities, responding to Member States existing and emerging needs, with particular attention to the needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and other countries in special situations.

Chapter 4, on Making data count, highlights efforts to provide support for making data and statistics more accessible and available to use both for and beyond the direct objectives of the SDGs. The importance of quality data for effective decision-making cannot be overstated. UN DESA's work over the period helped Member States improve their capacities for collecting official data and for leveraging a range of data sources.

In chapter 5, on Protecting our planet, we give attention to the Department's work on natural and public resource management and environmental action for driving sustainable development, building on the synergies between implementation of the

SDGs and global climate action. The past year saw the Department move forward international dialogue in many areas critical to ensuring a healthy planet, including on sustainable transport, sustainable energy, water and sanitation, responsible use and care of our forests and protecting the ocean.

Finally, chapter 6, on Framing the future of development, highlights UN DESA's work in forecasting and foresight and zooms in on the Department's efforts to focus on long-term intergenerational thinking, supporting Member States to do the same.

As we provide support to the 77th session of the General Assembly, the Department will remain steadfast in championing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the blueprint for current crisis response and recovery. By actioning the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs, the Paris Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, we can realize a stable and inclusive recovery, build resilience, and move the world towards sustainable development for all. UN DESA stands ready to work with the broader international development community to support Member States in these efforts.

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.



Thought leadership

UN DESA generates, analyses, 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 policies and practices.



Capacity-building

UN DESA aids in translating policy frameworks developed at 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

- [Ocean Voluntary Commitment Database](#)
- [Population databases](#)
- [SDG Acceleration Action Database](#)
- [SDG Good Practices Database](#)
- [SIDS Partnerships Database](#)
- [UN Comtrade International Trade Statistics Database](#)
- [UN COVID-19 Data Hub](#)
- [UN Data](#)
- [UN e-Government Knowledge Database](#)
- [UN Global SDG Indicators Database](#)
- [UN LDC Data](#)
- [UN Public Service Awards Database](#)
- [UN SDG Data Hub](#)
- [UN System SDG Implementation Database](#)
- [Voluntary National Reviews Database](#)



MAJOR PUBLICATIONS



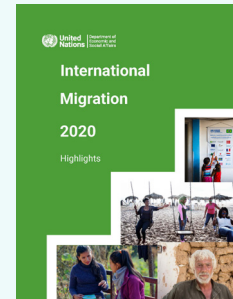
World Social Report



World Economic Situation and Prospects



Financing for Sustainable Development Report



International Migration Report



State of the World's Indigenous Peoples



The Global Forest Goals Report 2021



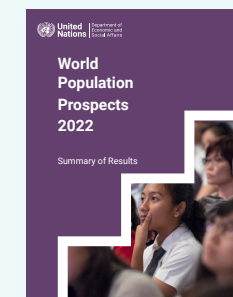
The Sustainable Development Goals Report



The World's Women



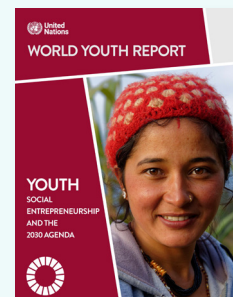
United Nations E-Government Survey



World Population Prospects



World Public Sector Report



World Youth Report