



GUIDING GLOBAL ACTION ON OUR GLOBAL GOALS

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... to craft a roadmap out of crisis

In 2021-2022, UN DESA continued to support Member States in responding to the pandemic in transformative ways that accelerate progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. The Department supported evidence- and science-based policy debates and peer learning at the various intergovernmental meetings and events it supported, building on its work to identify and share best practices of SDG implementation at the national, regional and local levels.

UN DESA ...

- Provided data, analysis, policy recommendations and expert guidance to support a successful 2022 HLPF.
- Supported Member States in preparing for and conducting Voluntary National Reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (VNRs) at the HLPF through global preparatory workshops and webinars.
- Supported the substantive preparations of the HLPF reviews of implementation of SDGs 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals, and on the HLPF theme on recovering from COVID-19 while realizing the SDGs.
- Supported governments in negotiating the 2022 HLPF Ministerial Declaration.
- Promoted innovative thinking at 18 VNR Labs.
- Raised awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through special events, side events and exhibitions in the margins of the HLPF, ensuring the inclusion of a wide range of voices and perspectives.

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Policies to recover from COVID-19 must aim to both reverse the negative impacts of the pandemic and instil the deep structural changes we need to achieve the SDGs and realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda. UN DESA has been supporting Member States to reflect on shaping a transformative recovery, including through the 2022 United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which examined the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the SDGs.

Ensuring effective review of implementation of the SDGs

The HLPF brought more than 140 Heads of State and Government, Deputy Prime Ministers and Ministers, along with other actors back to the UN Headquarters in New York to reflect on ways to recover better from COVID-19. The Forum addressed the theme, “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and also reviewed in-depth SDG 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. UN DESA supported intergovernmental negotiations on the 2022

Ministerial Declaration, as the outcome of the session. While the HLPF declaration provides the sobering diagnosis of the HLPF on the world’s situation regarding the SDGs, it also points to important policy measures that can both drive recovery and rescue and advance the SDGs. It stressed that the 2030 Agenda is our roadmap for recovering from the crises. It asserts that the negative impacts of COVID-19 on the SDGs can still be reversed and provides detailed guidance to make progress towards the goals under review. The Declaration also notes the dramatic impacts of conflict on food, energy and finance, and welcomes the Global Crisis Response Group created by the Secretary-General. It launches preparations for the September 2023 SDG Summit and calls for ambitious preparations by all actors.

UN DESA guided and supported 44 countries in preparing their Voluntary National Reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (VNRs) at the 2022 HLPF. Featuring 11 first-timers, 28 second-timers, 3 third-timers and 2 fourth-timers, the continued interest in VNR presentation points to high commitment to the 2030 Agenda. The Department organized three global workshops, including a hybrid workshop in Botswana in 2022 and an in-person workshop in July in New York, which allowed countries to learn from each other and from UN DESA on

policies, actions and institutions to implement the 2030 Agenda and review SDG progress. At national level, the VNRs allowed countries to review and improve their efforts to reach the SDGs. At global level, they provided the HLPF with a clear understanding of the impacts of COVID-19 on the SDGs and the kind of approaches countries are embracing to recover from the pandemic and turn the tide on the SDGs. UN DESA prepared a synthesis of main messages from the 2022 VNRs, available at the HLPF website at: <https://hlpf.un.org/2022/vnrs>.



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HLPF IN NUMBERS:

2022 HLPF and High-level Segment of ECOSOC

Theme: Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

9

Days

5

SDGs under review

44

Countries presented VNRs

Who was there?

More than 140

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

214

Keynote speakers, panelists, lead discussants, respondents, moderators in townhall meeting, panels, and fireside chats

to talk about



8 Special Events

18 VNR Labs

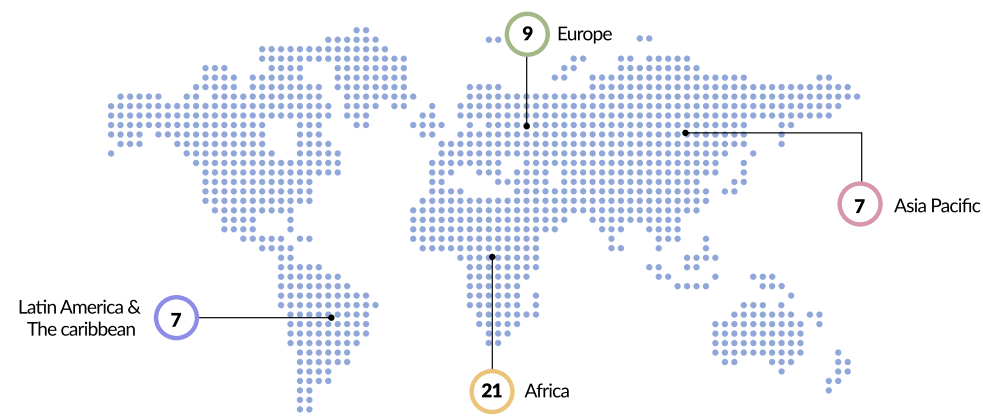
273 Side Events

11 Exhibitions

Including a pop-up concert with an SDG Piano

(43 in person)

Voluntary National Reviews 2022



Promoting public-private partnership to propel the SDGs

The sixth annual SDG Business Forum took place during the High-level Week of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly. Co-convened by UN DESA, the International Chamber of Commerce and UN Global Compact, the event reached more than 7,000 participants from 143 countries around the world. The sixth SDG Business Forum incorporated important themes of several United Nations Conferences, including the High-level Dialogue on Energy, the United Nations Food Systems Summit, the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference, the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) and the UN Climate Change Conference 2021 COP26. As a truly multistakeholder event, the Forum included 17 CEO-level speakers, and several high-ranking government officials, UN Principals and Special Envoys also addressed the Forum. The SDG Business Forum continues to be an important space for dialogue to promote a whole-of-society approach to forward sustainable development.

Encouraging youth participation and intergenerational solidarity to realize the SDGs

Throughout the year, UN DESA has undertaken several initiatives to ensure that youth voices are brought to the global decision-

making space, to drive youth inclusion and equality in the process of SDG implementation.

UN DESA's United Nations Project Office on Governance hosted its 5th Youth Forum on SDG implementation in September 2021. The virtual forum engaged youth and offered a platform for the participants to brainstorm and share their ideas on the topic of Leveraging Public Governance and Enhancing Youth Engagement to Promote Green, Resilient and Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19. Participating youth expressed appreciation for the Forum as a platform for young people to engage on issues critical to advancing the development agenda.

Based on the key findings of the WHO and UN DESA 2021 Global Report on Ageism, UN DESA hosted the event, "Thriving Youth - From Ageism to Intergenerational Solidarity", within the margins of the Commission for Social Development in February 2022, to address the impacts on youth inclusion and participation and identify pathways for forging the international dialogue and solidarity necessary to move development forward. A related event, "Ageism in Politics: Exploring Intergenerational Solutions," held alongside the 2022 ECOSOC Youth Forum, addressed the impact of ageism against youth in politics. A key message stemming from these initiatives is that pandemic recovery needs



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to leverage the strength and knowledge of every generation and be anchored in equity between generations.

In April, the ECOSOC Youth Forum 2022 offered youth leaders from around the world the opportunity to engage with government representatives, youth delegates and other stakeholders to share best practices, lessons learned and innovative solutions to recover from COVID-19 and get on track to achieve the SDGs. The forum welcomed over 50 Ministers, high-level government representatives and over 22,000 youth participants. The forum reiterated that young people around the world are eager to be in the driver's seat when devising recovery efforts and when decisions are taken that would impact their future. Young people are demanding that the gap between promise and action be closed, particularly to address climate action, inequalities, peace and security, human rights, financing, education, women's and girls' empowerment as well as protecting the planet. Key messages from the Forum served as input to the HLPF. The forum was convened by the President of ECOSOC and supported by UN DESA and the Office of the Secretary General's Envoy on Youth, in collaboration with the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, the Major Group for Children and Youth and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations.

Placing a focus on people-centred governance to recover lost ground on the SDGs

UN DESA, the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy co-organized the third SDG 16 Conference in April 2022. The theme of the conference was "People-centred governance in a post-pandemic world". The event brought together leading experts in areas across SDG 16 representing governments, the United Nations, other international organizations, civil society, academia and other stakeholder groups. The conference focused on aspects of peace and security, rule of law and access to justice, resilient institutions in times of crisis, and leaving no one behind. Participants provided

important messages and recommendations to inform the discussions at the 2022 HLPF and guide Member States in their responses to and recovery from the pandemic and other crises. The debates stressed the centrality of SDG 16 to transformations in governance necessary to recover lost ground and accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The conference featured more than 30 speakers with in-person and online participation from approximately 1,000 individuals. Participants came from 137 different countries, covering all regions.

Engaging local governments for the SDGs

The UN DESA project office, the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development, held the 2021-2022 International Mayors Forum in January 2022. Through presentations and discussions, the Forum provided a platform for policy dialogue and knowledge-sharing on key aspects of SDG implementation, and for examining the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on cities and local governments. Mayors, leaders and representatives of local governments from developed and developing countries discussed their experiences, lessons learned and good practices for SDG implementation at the local and regional levels, while experts from around the world shared



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knowledge and tools to further strengthen the contribution of local actors. More than 100 participants from around the globe joined virtually and interacted with speakers and presenters through Q&A sessions to identify potential solutions and sustainable responses for advancing sustainable development.

The fifth High-level Local and Regional Governments Forum (LRGF), an annual HLPF special event co-organized by UN DESA, the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, UN-Habitat, UNDP and the Local 2030 Coalition, was held in a virtual format, in July 2022. The LRGF aims to showcase innovative actions taken by local and regional governments to implement the SDGs under review at the HLPF. The LRGF panel discussions included a focus on Voluntary Local Reviews and Voluntary Subnational Reviews and multilevel governance and multistakeholder collaboration. 660 participants registered to attend the event, which was also livestreamed on YouTube.

Accelerating action on the SDGs, with and for countries in Africa

UN DESA, in collaboration with the Office of the Special Advisor on Africa and the Economic Commission for Africa, organized

the Special High-level Dialogue on the Sustainable Development of Africa, convened by the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The dialogue provided an opportunity for African Member States and their partners to share country experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 while considering the challenges of pandemic recovery and the impact of current geopolitical challenges on food and energy security across the continent. The event served to renew the commitment to the sustainable development of Africa as one of the established priorities of the United Nations and mobilize greater support and partnerships for accelerated implementation of sustainable development priorities.

Under the provisions of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development UN DESA and the African Union African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) jointly convened two continental workshops, in 2021 and 2022, aimed at forwarding inclusive sustainable development in Africa through effective and coherent implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda. The workshops provided a regional platform for peer-learning on

good practices for integration and implementation of both Agendas and supported countries to prepare and report on progress implementing the Agendas, including through the Voluntary National Review and Voluntary Local Review processes. Emphasis was placed on the importance of ensuring robust, agile, adaptive, resilient, inclusive and adequately resourced public institutions and on ensuring application of the principles of effective governance for sustainable development, which were developed by the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) and endorsed by ECOSOC. Each workshop brought together high-level participants from over 30 African countries.



Strengthening ECOSOC coordination for realizing development goals

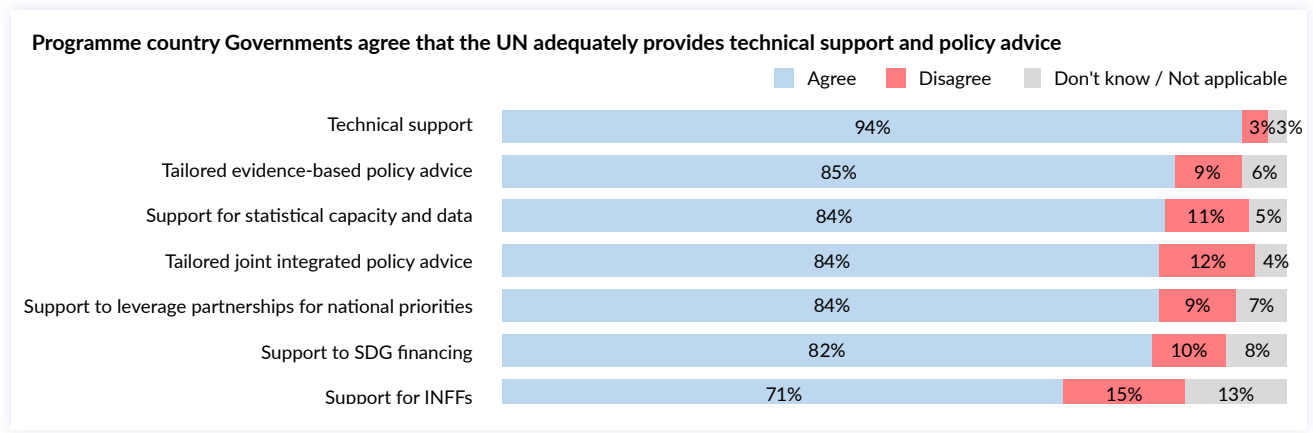
One of the major outcomes of the ECOSOC Review by the General Assembly was the renewed focus on the Economic and Social Council's charter mandate on coordination of the UN system and of its functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies. At the inaugural Coordination Segment, supported by UN DESA, Member States actively participated in taking stock of the impacts of the pandemic on the SDGs and proposed policies

and actions for an inclusive and resilient recovery aimed at the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Segment identified key areas where ECOSOC, its subsidiary bodies and the UN system could deepen the policy reflection, identify innovative solutions or work more closely together. A [draft decision](#) endorsing a summary of recommendations, based on Member State consultations, was submitted to, and adopted by, ECOSOC at the 2022 Management Segment in June. The summary contains important recommendations to place poverty eradication, gender equality and climate change at the centre of the work of subsidiary bodies, enhance their focus on the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda and SDGs that are the furthest behind, as well as reinforce ECOSOC coordination and oversight of its subsidiary bodies.

Keeping track of progress in UN country-level support to the 2030 Agenda

To help ECOSOC discharge its oversight role vis-à-vis the UN development system, UN DESA carried out a review of UN development system support to countries in realizing the SDGs and responding to COVID-19. The Department conducted a survey, receiving feedback from 141 countries, the results of which informed deliberations at the ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment in May 2022.

UN DESA also brought the UN development system together to elaborate a framework of indicators to allow Member States to monitor the implementation of the 2020 General Assembly Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of United Nations system



operational activities (QCPR). The new framework allows Member States to gauge the results and performance of UN development system support to country-level implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Fifty-nine delegates attended the consultation convened by UN DESA to support the elaboration of the framework.

Curriculum on Governance for the Sustainable Development Goals

The Curriculum on Governance for the SDGs is a comprehensive set of seven Training of Trainers Capacity Development Toolkits, which contain ready-to-use and customizable training material on key governance dimensions needed to advance the implementation of the SDGs. Launched by UN DESA at the end of 2022, the curriculum provides methodologies and approaches to advance knowledge and assist governments in developing capacities at the individual, organizational, and institutional/societal level, to drive the transformational change needed to implement the 2030 Agenda.

Among the modules are materials targeted to COVID-19 pandemic response. The Toolkit on Transparency, Accountability and Ethics in Public Institutions contains examples and case studies on corruption risks in public procurement during the pandemic; the Toolkit on Government Innovation for Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups includes a module on ensuring inclusion of vulnerable groups during public health emergencies, focusing mostly on the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Toolkit on Risk-Informed Governance

and Innovative Technologies for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience has a module on risk-informed governance and innovative technology for public health emergencies.

Emphasizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls

To strengthen the efforts of ECOSOC and the HLPF to support gender equality as a cross-cutting issue for the achievement of the SDGs, UN DESA commissioned an analytical paper in late 2021 to examine how well gender considerations are integrated into the work of the Council and the HLPF, and to identify opportunities for expanding those efforts. This work resulted in a useful analysis of the gender dimensions of the SDGs under review in 2022. It also provided many practical recommendations to help UN DESA expand and deepen gender analysis and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in its work in order to better support ECOSOC and the HLPF in advancing gender equality as a cross-cutting issue.

To turn the recommendations into concrete actions, UN DESA developed a practical and easy-to-use Gender Checklist to help mainstream gender considerations and perspectives in the work of ECOSOC and the HLPF. The checklist provides guidance to staff on applying gender analysis and highlighting gender dimensions in the substantive documentation, programme and deliberations of ECOSOC and the HLPF.

