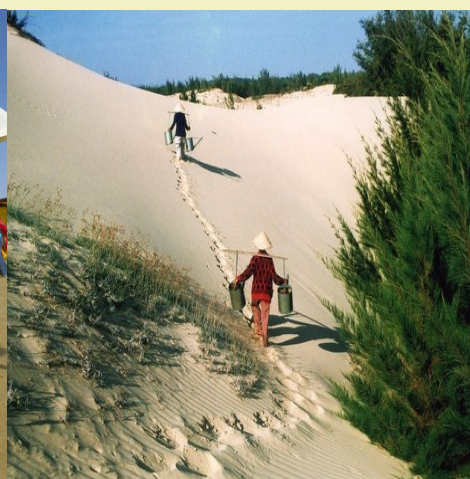




DESA Capacity Development Strategy



Partnering with countries to integrate
global development knowledge into
national development strategies



United Nations

FOREWORD

UNDESA
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

When I was appointed Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, I saw the unique potentials of what UNDESA can contribute through refocusing its operational activities for development which is the third functional pillar alongside its normative and analytical work. I decided to revitalize this function with a focus on capacity development.

The decision was opportune as Member States embarked on the implementation of the General Assembly's 2007 comprehensive review of operational activities for development, and likewise, the pursuit of the system-wide coherence agenda. There was also the increased prominence and importance of aid effectiveness in the inter-governmental discussions. Above all, was the imperative of achieving significant progress in the MDGs and in sustainable development. All of these posed a major challenge and opportunity for UNDESA to take stock of its capacity development work and develop a fresh vision. I then created a dedicated Capacity Development Office (CDO) to help me carry forward this endeavour, and to assist me as well, as Programme Manager of the United Nations Development Account.

Given our relatively modest operational resources, the Department developed a strategy to consolidate its strengths—its global knowledge base, including the highly-recognized analytical products, worldwide networks of experts, in-house policy expertise, and rich experience in translating international norms into operational strategies and programmes. The aim is to create more operational impact with a better focus and working in greater synergy with our partners.

In sharing UNDESA's capacity development strategy with the Member States, our partners within and beyond the United Nations system, and the development community at large, we mark a very important milestone within the Department. The strategy constitutes an important step in our contribution towards a more effective United Nations.

I, with my team, look forward to working with our partners with new vigour as we implement the strategy.

New York
27 July 2011

沙祖康
Sha Zukang

Under-Secretary-General

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs



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Executive summary

DESA's operational work is aimed at developing capacities of developing countries to translate internationally agreed policy frameworks into strategies and programmes at country-level. Capacity development is the third functional pillar of DESA's overall mandate, alongside its normative and analytical work. It contributes both global knowledge and a global perspective on development drawn from its support to intergovernmental policymaking at its country-level.

The present document articulates DESA's capacity development strategy. It informs Member States, partners, and stakeholders within the United Nations system and beyond, of its guiding framework and principles, areas of priority and expertise, resources, and services.

The internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, provide the main framework for DESA's international development cooperation. The outcome of the General Assembly's 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs, the recently concluded conference on the Least Development Countries (LDC-IV), and the General Assembly resolutions on development cooperation provide further guidance in sharpening the focus on DESA's operational priorities. Member States particularly call for greater attention to the needs of Least Developed Countries, those farthest from reaching the MDGs and with large inequalities, and those in post-conflict transition. Meanwhile, the General Assembly's comprehensive review of operational activities for development provides guidance for system-wide coherence of operational activities at country-level.

DESA bases its capacity development work on five priority areas that capitalise on the Department's key areas of strength and expertise. These priority areas are:

- *Strengthening of statistical capacities, including monitoring of MDGs.* DESA through its Statistics Division serves as the coordinating centre of the global statistical system under the guidance of the UN Statistical Commission. It brings together global expertise, state-of-the-art knowledge, and best practice in development statistics. While supporting the development of international guidelines, it assists national statistics offices in the use of the guidelines and develop their capacities to produce quality data for policy making.
- *Macro-economic advisory services and international tax cooperation.* DESA assists countries to integrate macroeconomic, fiscal, environmental,

and social policies in national development strategies, to make macro-economic stabilization compatible with the long-term goals of poverty eradication and sustainable development, and to strengthen national tax systems. On the request of governments, DESA provides alternative macro-economic policy advice.

- *Social integration and inclusion of vulnerable groups.* DESA assists countries develop policies to address societal conditions that create vulnerability and social exclusion, and strengthen mechanisms of inclusion, paying particular attention to the situation of older persons, youth, families, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, persons in situations of conflict and other groups, including women, marginalized from society and development.
- *Sustainable development including climate change mitigation and adaptation and forests.* DESA supports countries to develop, implement, monitor, and review national strategies for sustainable development including responses to climate change, particularly in the areas of water, energy, forests, and sustainable consumption and production, and climate change technologies. DESA assists countries to transition from unsustainable to sustainable practices, through integrated water resources management, development of clean energy alternatives and sustainable transportation modes, and demand-supply management including through regulatory and institutional frameworks linked to macro-economic and spatial planning.
- *Public administration and ICT for development, including e-government.* DESA assists countries to transform governance and public institutions to be effective, efficient, transparent, accountable, innovative, and citizen-oriented in the development and delivery of public services. This involves strengthening of public sector human resource capacities and institutional mechanisms for civil society engagement. DESA particularly supports the development of capacities on use of information and communications technology (ICT) for governance.

DESA pursues an integrated approach that brings together inter-related strands of work in each of the above priorities areas to ensure synergy, and tailored as needed to specific country-level or inter-country cooperation requirements, also taking into account the support provided by other United Nations system partners.

DESA works with groups of countries based on common needs, providing them with shared platforms of learning and exchange of experiences, including

on development policies that work. It supports piloting of innovative approaches, models, and instruments, and promotes replication and scaling up where successful.

DESA offers analytic and methodological tools, including those that it develops drawing from its in-depth analytic work. Its assistance is delivered through specialized advisory services of national and international experts; training; diffusion of knowledge through expert groups and practitioners meetings; and on-line knowledge platforms that provide access to analytical reports/studies, best practices, and other learning materials. DESA also draws on the support of and collaborates with numerous partners, including the UN Funds and Programmes, Regional Commissions and other Secretariat entities in the development field, multi-lateral development banks, bilateral aid agencies, and civil society.

DESA makes its services available to countries that express interest in its capacity development work, either directly or through the UN Resident Coordinator in the country. DESA also responds to requests made by Member States in the inter-governmental process.

DESA's substantive divisions deliver its capacity development services, while overall coordination of DESA's capacity development work is supported by the Capacity Development Office under the direction of the Department's Under-Secretary-General. The Capacity Development Office also serves as the Office of the Programme Manager of the United Nations Development Account.

For more information, see:

<http://www.un.org/esa/cdo/about.html#tech>

Introduction

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) is part of the United Nations Secretariat and serves as a vital interface between the global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. It is responsible for the Economic and Social Affairs Programme of the UN Secretariat which, within the framework of the United Nations Development Agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals, has the overall objective to promote and support international cooperation in the pursuit of sustained economic growth, the eradication of poverty and hunger, and sustainable development for all.

DESA advises Governments, upon their request, on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into strategies and programmes at the country level

Through its capacity development work, DESA advises Governments, upon their request, on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into strategies and programmes at the country level and in this regard, helps build national capacities to develop and implement national policies and programmes.

DESA recognizes that the challenge of addressing emerging and cross-cutting policy issues requires better strategic integration to promote a coherent and coordinated implementation to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (IADGs/MDGs). This involves strengthening the Department's analytical and monitoring capacity and the links between policy and operational work; enhancing the horizontal linkages across DESA's thematic areas of work; and improving cooperation with other parts of the United Nations development system, especially within the framework of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (EC-ESA) and the United Nations Development Group. A dedicated Capacity Development Office, created in February 2009, provides programme coordination and operational support to this effort.

The present document serves to inform Member States as well as other partners and stakeholders within the United Nations system and beyond, of the Department's capacity development strategy, including its framework and principles, areas of priority and expertise, resources, and services.

The strategy will be reviewed biannually to ensure that it continues to be responsive to emerging issues, challenges and priorities.

I. Framework and principles

DESA is guided by inter-governmental agreements on the implementation of the international development agenda, international norms and standards, and development cooperation of the United Nations system's operational activities for development.

The outcome of the General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs in September 2010, provides a framework for further sharpening the focus of DESA's priorities for operational activities in 2011 and the next biennium, 2012-2013. There is clear recognition that to achieve the MDGs by 2015, certain cross-cutting issues need to be given due attention. These include: addressing inequalities, achieving inclusive and equitable growth, promoting respect for human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women, supporting development of participatory, nationally owned international cooperation strategies and ensuring mutual accountability. These issues are duly taken into account in the design and implementation of DESA's interventions for capacity development.

The General Assembly's resolutions on the comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system¹ and on system-wide coherence² also provide important guidance on which DESA draws. These resolutions stress that capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system and that capacity development and national ownership of national development strategies are essential for the achievement of the IADGs/MDGs. United Nations entities are called upon to provide further support to the efforts of developing countries to establish and/or maintain effective national institutions. A coherent and coordinated approach of the United Nations development system in support of capacity development efforts in programme countries is emphasized, and the potential of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and its results matrix as the collective, coherent and integrated programming and monitoring framework for the United Nations development system at country level is acknowledged.

DESA recognizes the UN Development Group's Position Statement (2006) which provides the framework for the United Nations development system's

- ¹ A/RES/62/208 on the triennial comprehensive policy review for development of the United Nations System, of 17 December 2007 is the latest GA resolution. GA resolution 62/232 changed the comprehensive review from a triennial to a quadriennial cycle starting 2012.
- ² A/RES/62/277 adopted on 15 September 2008; A/RES/63/311 adopted on 14 September 2009; and A/RES/64/289 adopted on 30 June 2010.

The outcome of the General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs in September 2010, provides a framework for further sharpening the focus of DESA's priorities for operational activities

Capacity development is a core function of the United Nations development system. Capacity development and national ownership of national development strategies are essential for the achievement of the IADGs/MDGs

contribution to national capacity development.³ The Statement provides an agreed definition of capacity development⁴. It sets as the overall goal for the United Nations system operational activities for development to support national counterparts in developing their capacities to lead, manage, achieve and account for their national development priorities, especially those related to the IADGs/MDGs, including human rights obligations in ratified UN conventions and treaties.

II. Areas of priority and expertise

DESA works to enhance the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—in policymaking at international, regional and national levels.

DESA's overall objective is to promote and support international cooperation in the pursuit of eradication of poverty and hunger, sustained economic growth, and sustainable development. In line with this objective, DESA works to enhance the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—in policymaking at international, regional and national levels. While it focuses on the development pillar, DESA also contributes to a mutually reinforcing relationship of the United Nations' work on peace and security and human rights.

DESA's priorities for capacity development support the implementation of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs which calls for assigning greater priority to countries and the targets that are most off-track; identifying successes and supporting possibilities for replication and scaling up of successful policies, as well as situating capacity development efforts in the context of the multiple crises since 2006 and their challenges. In the context of the Rio+20 review and the LDC-IV conference, DESA also places high priority on supporting countries in their preparations and pursuit of post-conference follow-up commitments.

The priority areas of support to national capacity development are elaborated below. While each area is described distinctly, DESA pursues an integrated approach that brings together inter-related strands of work in each area to ensure synergy and appropriate interface, based on specific needs at the country-level or

³ UNDG Position Statement on capacity development, October 2006, page 3.

⁴ Capacity development is commonly understood as the process whereby people, organizations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. Capacity is the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.

DESA works to enhance the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—in policymaking at international, regional and national levels

inter-country cooperation, and taking into account the support provided by other United Nations system partners.

As a global entity, DESA does not have country-based operations. However, the Department brings to its engagement at country-level a global perspective on development evolved from its support to the inter-governmental process and headquarters level development debate. It is the ability to make these links between normative and operational work that allows DESA to offer expertise and approaches to development that are both country-driven and based on global consensus. From this context, DESA offers to country-level partners the many analytic and methodological tools that it develops. Strong links to civil society organizations also enable DESA to ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to its policy advice, in which the views of diverse stakeholders are represented.

The Department brings to its engagement at country-level a global perspective on development evolved from its support to the inter-governmental process. DESA offers to country-level partners the many analytic and methodological tools that it develops

In the context of its capacity development work, DESA brings countries together based on common needs and provides shared platforms of learning and exchange of experiences among countries facing similar development challenges, and disseminates relevant knowledge at the national and regional levels on development policies that work, promoting their replication and scaling up. In selected countries, DESA collaborates with national authorities and partners to pilot models, innovative approaches, and instruments that might help catalyse longer-term and larger scale interventions by other development partners.

DESA brings countries together based on common needs and provides shared platforms of learning and exchange of experiences among countries facing similar development challenges

DESA also supports national governments in the preparation of National Voluntary Presentations (NVPs) to the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review. The NVPs assess national progress towards the achievement of the IADGs/MDGs through the implementation of National Development Strategies drawing lessons and good practice on what has worked well.

With its relatively modest resource base, DESA works with priority countries, based on expressed demand for assistance in the planning, implementation, and review of their national development strategies. DESA pays special attention to the needs of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), those farthest from reaching the MDGs and with large inequalities, and those in post-conflict transition.

Priority areas

DESA's operational capacity development activities give priority to five areas:

- strengthening of statistical capacities, including monitoring of MDGs;

- macro-economic advisory services and international tax cooperation;
- social integration and inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- sustainable development including climate change mitigation and adaptation and forests;
- public administration and ICT for development, including e-government.

It is in these five priority areas that DESA has established comparative advantage based on: (i) accumulated in-depth knowledge and expertise derived from its global normative and analytical work and experience in operational activities with outstanding results and good practices; (ii) global networks of experts, policy-makers and institutional partnerships; and (iii) distinctive value added to the work of the United Nations development system partners. DESA's contribution to capacity development will vary from country to country based on assessed needs and existing capacities, comparative advantage vis-à-vis other actors and the principle that no "one size fits all".

Strengthening statistical capacities, including monitoring of the MDGs

DESA plays a leading role in the advancement of the global statistical system in order to produce high quality, easily accessible, comparable national statistics for policymakers and other users at the national and international levels

DESA combines normative, coordination and capacity development roles in the field of statistics. It plays a leading role in the advancement of the global statistical system in order to produce high quality, easily accessible, comparable national statistics for policymakers and other users at the national and international levels. It supports the development of standards and norms for statistical activities to assure the quality of official statistics, compiles and disseminates global statistical information, and supports country efforts to strengthen national statistical systems. DESA's Statistics Division serves as the coordinating centre of the global statistical system, which includes national statistical offices, international organizations and civil society engaging in official statistics, under the guidance of the United Nations Statistical Commission. While supporting the development of international guidelines, it also directly transfers that knowledge to national statistical offices.

In the wake of the economic and financial crisis, and the need to remedy data gaps in addressing global policy challenges, DESA has been engaged in the development of methodology for generating high quality rapid estimates of economic performance and their international comparability, as well as analysis of technical implications on System of National Accounts compilation, arising from

recent government interventions around the world. DESA is also responding to the need to develop additional indicators on performance of the economy and financial markets for effective monitoring.

DESA's capacity development work in this area aims to strengthen the capacity of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to routinely collect, compile, store, analyse and disseminate official statistics and indicators in the economic, social, demographic and environmental fields to produce quality data for policy making and for the public in general. This involves providing methodological information and helping countries, through the development of guidelines, training and advice, to build and manage sustainable national statistical systems with appropriate governance structures and to use state-of-the art data capture, processing and dissemination technologies to enhance quality and access to policy-relevant statistical information.

The focus of capacity development activities for the biennium 2010-2011 are: a) the 2010 round of Population and Housing Censuses, including census data analysis and dissemination; b) management aspects of national statistical systems, specifically on data management and dissemination, notably of the MDG indicators; c) gender statistics, including on violence against women; d) economic statistics, such as macro-economic statistics, international merchandise trade, international trade in services, tourism, manufacturing and energy statistics, in relation to the rapid indicators of economic performance and to the system of national accounts; e) environment statistics and environmental-economic accounting; and f) geospatial information management.

For more information see:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm>

DESA aims to strengthen the capacity of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, to routinely collect, compile, store, analyse and disseminate official statistics and indicators in the economic, social, demographic and environmental fields to produce quality data for policy making and for the public in general

Macro-economic advisory services and international tax cooperation

DESA is a leading entity on macroeconomic issues and issues on financing for development, including in the area of international tax cooperation. Its analytical work supports the Second Committee of the General Assembly, and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as well as the work of the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) and the Committee on Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters which advise and provide recommendations to the ECOSOC, including on capacity development.

DESA provides lead support to the inter-governmental follow-up to the Financing for Development (Monterrey Consensus) agenda

DESA provides lead support to the inter-governmental follow-up to the Financing for Development (Monterrey Consensus) agenda to ensure adequate and inclusive resource mobilization in support of the IADGs/MDGs. In recent years, DESA has been providing major support to inter-governmental dialogue and follow-up actions to address the financial and economic crisis, including those emanating from the UN Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (June 2009). DESA provides estimates of economic performance and develops indicators to assess performance of economies and financial markets. In response to the financial and economic crisis, DESA is doubling efforts to provide supplementary macro-economic advisory capacity especially to least developed countries.

Considerable research and analytical work is undertaken by DESA for its major flagship reports in this area, notably the United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) and the World Economic and Social Survey (WESS). WESP provides an overview of recent global economic performance and short-term prospects for the world economy and some key global economic policy and development issues. For example, DESA, through WESP, had flagged the build up towards the global financial and economic crisis in 2008.

DESA aims to strengthen developing countries' capacity to integrate macroeconomic, fiscal, environmental and social policies in national development strategies and to make macro-economic stabilization compatible with the long-term goals of poverty eradication and sustainable development

DESA's capacity development work in this area aims to strengthen developing countries' capacity to integrate macroeconomic, fiscal, environmental and social policies in national development strategies and to make macro-economic stabilization compatible with the long-term goals of poverty eradication and sustainable development. DESA works directly with national partners to determine policy needs and gaps, and tailors tools for policy analysis to individual country needs. It focuses on the following major strategic sub-areas: a) development policy coherence; b) vulnerability assessment; c) fiscal policy and international tax cooperation.

In the area of development policy coherence, DESA has two objectives: first, to enhance the capacity of national institutions in programme countries (viz.: ministries of finance and planning, relevant line ministries, Central Banks, etc.) in the identification, design and implementation of macroeconomic policies that are socially-inclusive and enable the achievement of sustainable development objectives, including the MDGs and climate change mitigation and adaptation; and second, to strengthen the national and international dialogue on policy coherence, focusing on the implications of reforms in global economic governance for macroeconomic, social, and environmental policy management at the national level. Particular attention is paid by DESA to the implications of reforms in: (a) the aid architecture and

financing of national sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies; and (b) the international financial architecture and global reserve system and international and national tax policies, management of capital flows at the national level and counter-cyclical macroeconomic policies. DESA also enhances the capacities of policymakers in the use of specialized modelling and analytical techniques.

In the area of vulnerability assessment, DESA's capacity development work has three objectives. First, to assist policymakers in the use of the instruments developed for the Integrated Monitoring and Analysis System (IMAS) and the Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System (GIVAS) for assessing current/future economic and social vulnerabilities (particularly those associated with the global financial and economic crisis) and in formulating appropriate policies for prevention, mitigation and adaptation. Second, to enhance the capacity of policymakers to link macroeconomic policy models to the UN's Global Forecasting Framework and, at a later stage, to the UN's Global Policy Model, in order to assess the likelihood and potential impact of global shocks on the domestic economy and to formulate appropriate policies to counteract the impact of such shocks.⁵ Third, to help least developed countries (LDCs) smooth their graduation process from the list of LDCs by enabling them to assess, using quantitative tools, the impact of losing the benefits of preferential treatment.

In the area of fiscal policy and international tax cooperation, DESA supports developing countries to maximise fiscal policy space, and to strengthen the capacity of the ministries of finance and the national tax authorities in developing countries to develop more effective and efficient tax systems which support the desired level of private investment and combat tax evasion. Capacity development covers both policy and administrative components. The policy component supports the development of alternative policy options to address issues of tax incentives, tax evasion, and double tax treaties (sharing of taxation rights between host states of investment and the residence state of investors). The administrative component is aimed at strengthening the capacity of national tax authorities for more effective and efficient tax systems.

Capacity development work in this area involves training and technical advisory services aimed at national tax administrations, including in particular: a) the implementation of the UN Model Double Tax Conventions and other related products developed by the Committee of Experts on International Tax Cooperation Matters; b) the use of the Model of Tax Transactions Costs (TTC) to assist in identifying

⁵ The Global Forecasting Framework (GFF) is used for globally consistent short-term projections at country level; the Global Policy Model (GPM) is used for policy analysis and mid- to long-term economic scenarios at regional level.

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and reducing tax collection costs for governments and compliance costs for taxpayers; and c) the use of the UN Practical Manual on Transfer Pricing (concerning international taxation).

For more information, see:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/>

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>

Social integration and inclusion of vulnerable groups

DESA works with policymakers, government agencies, parliaments, as well as with civil society, to help develop and implement national policies and programmes in line with internationally-agreed plans, programmes of action, and norms and standards in social development.⁶ DESA particularly promotes social integration and the inclusion of vulnerable groups since the concepts of social integration and “society for all” was established at the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995). DESA especially supports the Copenhagen Programme of Action which called for a number of actions towards strengthening mechanisms of inclusion.

DESA assists countries to address societal conditions that create vulnerability and social exclusion. It pays particular attention to social inclusion of older persons, youth, families, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, persons in situations of conflict and other groups or persons marginalized from society and development, such as women. It has specific responsibilities for United Nations programmes for these groups emanating from inter-governmental mandates.⁷

DESA has a two-pronged approach to capacity development in this area which involves support to policy development and strengthening of mechanisms

⁶ These include the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, The World Programme of Action for Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, The World Programme of Action for Youth, as well as resolutions on the family. The International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are coming into force.

⁷ Following the creation of UNWOMEN, DESA retains a strong commitment to ensuring that gender is mainstreamed and integrated in all its activities. A key aspect of DESA’s work is to incorporate gender analysis and gender-sensitive approaches that recognize the need to address the differing impact on women and men of any policy intervention and to ensure these differences are taken into account.

DESA assists countries to address societal conditions that create vulnerability and social exclusion. It pays particular attention to social inclusion of older persons, youth, families, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, persons in situations of conflict and other groups or persons marginalized from society and development

of inclusion. This two-pronged approach recognizes that specific policies for social groups are required to meet immediate needs, but that achieving better social integration in the longer term requires mitigating the dynamic relations in society that create inequality. Support to policy development aims to assist governments and civil society organizations improve the situation of specific social groups through assessment of their situation, development of more responsive policies and programmes, and strengthening of capacities to implement them. DESA also assists countries to more effectively integrate social and economic policies. Strengthening inclusion involves supporting institutions to develop ways and means to give effect to the concept of social integration, such as through developing mechanisms for greater participation, collecting and using disaggregated quantitative and qualitative information, and promoting use of participatory research methodologies. DESA promotes rights-based and equitable approaches and provides training on inclusive policy making and planning, and the use of participatory research methodologies.

For more information see:

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/>

Sustainable development, including climate change mitigation and adaptation and forests

DESA supports the implementation of Agenda 21 and other decisions following up on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including the Rio Declaration, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and the work programmes and decisions adopted by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. It also plays a key role in United Nations coordination mechanisms such as UN-Water, UN-Energy, and UN-Oceans which bring together several UN entities to advance the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. In particular, DESA supports programme countries to enhance their capacities to develop, implement, monitor, and review national sustainable development strategies and action plans, particularly in the areas of water, energy, and forest management, and sustainable consumption and production, including responses to climate change.

The Department serves as the substantive secretariat to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the inter-governmental body responsible for sustainable development issues.

DESA supports the implementation of Agenda 21 and other decisions following up on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

DESA supports programme countries to enhance their capacities to develop, implement, monitor, and review national sustainable development strategies and action plans

The Department also provides substantive secretariat support to the United Nations Forum on Forests which deals with all issues related to forests including the implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument (NLBI) on All Types of Forests and the global Objectives on Forests⁸. The Department serves as a member and as the secretariat of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) which works to enhance inter-agency collaboration and coordination on issues related to forests within the UN system.

The above mandates enable DESA provide a direct link between inter-governmental policy decision-making and field level implementation in assisting countries to translate agreed global policies into national policies and actions and to bridge their capacity gaps.

DESA promotes the adoption of an integrated and participatory approach to sustainable development with the view to achieving progress in the goals and targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.⁹ In the development of national strategies, DESA encourages programme countries' transition to sustainable development from unsustainable practices such as in the use of natural resources, particularly water and energy resources. DESA assists in developing national capacities for integrated water resources management, including regulatory and institutional frameworks linked to macro-economic and spatial planning. DESA's approach views water resources management in a holistic way, whereby socio-economic and hydro-environmental systems are mutually dependent. In the area of energy, DESA's work focuses on efficient, renewable and cleaner energy; clean cities; and clean and efficient public transport. It assists countries to develop capacities in management of energy demand and supply access, sustainable modes of transport, and strengthening institutions, including through regulatory reform, investment promotion in energy and transport, and expansion of the roles of the private sector and local communities.

In regard to forests, DESA helps thematically linked and geographically related groups of developing countries, as well as regional country groupings, in their capacity development programmes to promote implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument and the achievement of the Global Objectives on

DESA helps thematically linked and geographically related groups of developing countries, as well as regional country groupings, in their capacity development programmes to promote implementation of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument and the achievement of the Global Objectives on Forests (GOF)

⁸ Following from Chapter 11 of the Rio Declaration, the UNFF was created under ECOSOC resolution 2000/35; the Non-Legally Binding Instrument was adopted by the GA in its resolution 62/98 on 17 December 2007. The instrument is expected to have a major impact on international cooperation and national action to reduce deforestation, prevent forest degradation, promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce poverty for all forest-dependent peoples.

⁹ This is the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Earth Summit 2002) in pursuit of the full implementation of Agenda 21 from the UNCED in 1997.

Forests (GOF). Based on UNFF mandate on forest financing, DESA's current support is focused on facilitating the mobilization of financial resources and provision of technical advisory services, helping countries analyze their financing needs and challenges, and advising on innovative approaches to secure financing.¹⁰

DESA is presently giving priority to assisting Member States to prepare for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 (Rio + 20). The Department is supporting the intergovernmental process, building indigenous capacity to move beyond the current state of development, and establishing knowledge networks and partnerships. More specifically, DESA is supporting Member States and regional organizations in their preparations, including the collection and consolidation of national and regional reports, development of scenarios for infrastructure innovations, strengthening of institutional mechanisms, and conducting multi-stakeholder dialogues and expert meetings. DESA will be providing and/or facilitating relevant training of national stakeholders.

For more information, see:

<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/>

<http://www.un.org/esa/forests/>

Public administration and ICT for development, including e-government

DESA's work in this area is broadly aimed at strengthening governance and public administration capacities in developing countries to achieve national development objectives and the IADGs. It draws guidance from inter-governmental agreements, notably the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the outcome of the World Summit on Information Society. DESA's research and analytical work, supported by the United Nations Committee on Experts on Public Administration, enables the Department to generate timely up-to-date knowledge on trends, issues, innovations, and best practices in the area of governance systems and public sector institutions world-wide and to link these with inter-governmental policymaking.

DESA's capacity development support to developing countries in this area has four main objectives: (i) to transform governance and public administration institutions to be effective, efficient, transparent, accountable, innovative, and citizen-oriented in pursuit of development and delivery of public services; (ii) to

¹⁰ The work of UNFF on forest financing is closely linked and complementary to the ongoing climate change debate on REDD+financing (REDD- Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries).

develop public sector human resources capacities, including leadership, for effective, efficient, and responsive delivery of services, professional competence, ethical conduct and commitment to public service; (iii) to devise strategies for strengthening institutional capacities for engaging citizens in governance, public administration and development management for responsive, transparent, and accountable delivery of services; and (iv) to harness the potential of information and communications technology (ICT) for effective performance of governments.

DESA assists in strengthening public administration capacity both at central and local (sub-national) levels and in all branches of government

DESA assists in strengthening public administration capacity both at central and local (sub-national) levels and in all branches of government, including the Executive (especially the public service), the Legislative (especially the parliamentary public service), and the Judiciary (especially the documentation and information systems).

DESA supports capacity development through sharing of information, knowledge, innovations and best practices in public administration among countries, predominantly through the United Nations Public Service Awards (PSA), and knowledge networks, particularly the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN), and the Public Administration Knowledge Space (PAKS). The PSA has been recognized and widely acknowledged as a competitive way of discovering best practices and innovations in public administration from around the world. DESA's periodic surveys on e-government are also instrumental in providing a basis for assessment of countries' capacities in the use of ICT for governance and for raising awareness of the important role of ICT in improving the performance of public sector institutions.

The Department provides advisory services on the design and application of ICT in governance and on public sector reforms

The Department also provides advisory services on the design and application of ICT in governance and on public sector reforms (such as improved budgetary practices, regulation of revenue earning sectors, and change management for effective public service) with particular emphasis on least developed countries, countries with economies in transition, especially in Eastern Europe and Western Asia, and Africa, and post-conflict countries. It supports the design of on-line training courses and materials and organizes training, such as on professionalizing the management of human resources in the public sectors; strengthening leadership capacities for local governance and poverty reduction; strengthening institutes responsible for public administration education and training; citizen engagement in public administration and development management; and improving performance of public sector institutions through the use of ICT.

For more information see:

<http://www.unpan.org/dpepa.asp>

III. Strategic partnerships

DESA's strategic partnerships play an important role in maximizing its contributions to capacity development, being a non-resident agency (NRA) with limited country presence.

Within the UN development system, DESA is committed to system-wide coherence and the principles of delivering as one at global, regional and country levels. It supports and coordinates with UN entities in the work undertaken under the auspices of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) and its pillars, particularly the High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), as well as the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs (ECESA), which DESA convenes through its Under-Secretary-General and provides full support. DESA's participation in UNDG mechanisms helps establish better links with development partners at country-level.

As a member of the UNDG, DESA seeks to cooperate as a non-resident agency and contribute to the work of UN country teams and UNDG regional teams. For this purpose, the Department looks to opportunities within the framework of the new strategic priorities of the UNDG (2010-2011). DESA recognizes the respective roles of the UN country teams, led by Resident Coordinators, as the "front line" of the UN development system at country level, and those of the UNDG regional teams and UNDG headquarters as providing leadership and support for overall coherence and quality of response to country needs and priorities. DESA is also exploring opportunities to engage with the Regional Coordination Mechanisms led by the regional commissions in supporting country-level implementation of global agreements.

In each of the five priority areas of capacity development, DESA fosters partnerships with other UN entities. DESA especially works in close collaboration with the regional commissions, the roles and competencies of which mirror those of DESA, but with specific mandates and comparative advantages defined by their regional settings. DESA also works, as far as possible, with the UN country teams to ensure cooperation and collaboration in its projects and continuation and sustainability of its initiatives. Some partnership examples are highlighted below:

In the area of statistics, DESA cooperated with UNFPA and UNICEF on the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, and with UNICEF, on the development of the CensusInfo software tool, now used by many countries to disseminate their census data. On the monitoring of MDGs, DESA works together with UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF, and ILO, and in economic statistics, DESA partners with

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In each of the five priority areas of capacity development, DESA fosters partnerships with other UN entities and as far as possible, with the UN country teams

WTO, UNCTAD, FAO, UNIDO, World Bank, and IMF. In macro-economic development policy, DESA coordinates and collaborates with UNDP's regional bureaus and with country offices to ensure consistency with country programmes and engagement with national partners. The UN regional commissions and the World Bank are key partners, while WTO and UNCTAD are envisaged to be engaged more actively.

In the area of social integration, each of the social group programmes has long-standing mechanisms for inter-agency consultation at the normative level which can be tapped and expanded to include cooperation for capacity development, such as in the case of the joint efforts on Indigenous Peoples. DESA collaborates most closely with the UN regional commissions which have, in addition to the UN global mandates, precise mandates provided by their specific intergovernmental bodies for social group issues. Many regions have established regional instruments and mechanisms that promote social group interests, such as the African Youth Charter, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action on disability (Asia/Pacific) or the Berlin Regional Implementation Strategy on Ageing. DESA also cooperates on several issue-based social development initiatives, such as the Social Protection Floor initiative spearheaded by ILO and WHO, the UNHABITAT Safer Cities programme on youth and violence; and on indicators on ageing with UNFPA.

DESA works with existing coordination mechanisms such as UN-Energy, UN-Water and UN-Oceans, Collaborative Partnership for Forests (CPF), the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, and the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change

In the area of sustainable development, DESA coordinates with UNDP, UNEP, the World Bank and other organizations working in sustainable development in order to ensure that respective activities build synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. To ensure coherence, synergy, and expand its links, DESA works with existing coordination mechanisms such as UN-Energy, UN-Water and UN-Oceans, Collaborative Partnership for Forests (CPF), the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, and the Secretary-General's Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change.

DESA's work in public administration is based on collaboration and partnership with UNDP, the regional commissions, UNODC, UNCDF, UNHABITAT, other UN entities and partners at the global, regional and national levels.

DESA partners with a wide array of government and non-government institutions and organizations at global, regional and national levels, and other multi-lateral and bilateral development institutions

Beyond the UN development system, DESA partners with a wide array of government and non-government institutions and organizations at global, regional and national levels, and other multi-lateral and bilateral development institutions with which DESA complements resources (e.g., expertise, information, and knowledge networks) to support capacity development activities in the five priority areas. Organizations and their networks include academic and training institutes, civil society organizations, government and private professional associations, experts' networks, and private sector associations.

IV. Resources and services

In supporting Member States to translate global development commitments into country level actions, DESA draws on the technical skills and competencies of its staff, and funding from the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, the Development Account¹¹, and extra-budgetary technical cooperation trust funds.

Staff

DESA has over 300 professional staff who implement a broad variety of normative, analytical and operational mandates. This pool of expertise and experience provides services to Member States not only in inter-governmental processes, but also through advisory services and training in individual programme countries, regional or sub-regional country groupings or thematically linked groups of countries.

Inter-Regional Advisors

DESA's Inter-Regional Advisors (IRAs) provide high-level technical expertise, facilitating the transfer of knowledge from global entities to governments on policy-related issues and development strategies, and assisting in the formulation, assessment and/or evaluation of national policies, strategies, programmes and projects. IRAs specialize in any one or a combination of expertise in the five priority areas, with extensive and diverse experiences in developing countries. IRAs can respond flexibly on fairly short notice to individual countries and also groups of countries.

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Training and knowledge networking

Most training activities undertaken by DESA cover thematically linked and/or regional or sub-regional country groupings, thereby promoting South-South cooperation. They involve capacity development of policymakers and/or senior staff from Governments and sometimes also civil society in developing countries.

¹¹ The Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) is allocated by the General Assembly to support technical cooperation activities of UN Secretariat entities. The Development Account was established by the General Assembly beginning in the biennium 1998/1999 in its resolution 52/12 B, pursuant to the Secretary-General's report A/51/950 "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform".

To ensure that acquired knowledge and skills are useful in the country contexts of participants and also to provide a framework for further exchange of experiences and sustainability of results, DESA promotes the creation of knowledge networks among participants of training and consultative workshops and meetings; aims at an adequate number of experts in government agencies and national think tanks that acquire the knowledge and skills; and promotes the creation of an institutional context for continued use and improvement of methodologies. For highly technical fields, trainees are carefully selected to determine whether they can become experts in the methodologies.

At headquarters, DESA also provides in-house experts to conduct trainings organized for delegations of Member States to familiarize them with issues and orientations on the United Nations operational activities for development, including on system-wide coherence.¹²

On-line resources

DESA also provides on-line knowledge and learning resources for capacity development including on best practices and lessons learned (e.g., on “Development Strategies that Work” from national voluntary presentations made at the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review of the progress in the IADGs/MDGs; the UN Public Service Awards); training resources (e.g., on statistics; UN Public Administration Network on-line training center); and web-accessible analytical reports and papers.

In a companion document DESA will provide a resource guide to its capacity development tools in the five areas of focus.

Funding

Regular Programme on Technical Cooperation

The Department, along with ten other entities of the UN Secretariat,¹³ receives regular budget funding for assisting developing countries through the

¹² GA resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, requested UNITAR to conduct training courses for representative of Member States on the functioning of the United Nations operational activities for development (para. 5). DESA has provided substantive inputs and resource persons.

¹³ DESA, UNCTAD, all five regional commissions, UNOHCHR, OCHA, UNODC and UN-Habitat.

DESA promotes the creation of knowledge networks among participants of training and consultative workshops and meetings and the creation of an institutional context for continued use and improvement of methodologies

DESA provides on-line knowledge and learning resources for capacity development including on best practices and lessons learned

The Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC), complements assistance from other sources of funds from the UN development system by allowing a fast and flexible response to requests of developing countries to meet small-scale but urgent requirements

Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC), funded from the UN Regular Budget. The RPTC complements assistance from other sources of funds from the UN development system by allowing a fast and flexible response to requests of developing countries to meet small-scale but urgent requirements, as defined by them. An example is the conduct of needs assessment, tapping the expertise that exists within the Secretariat entities, which typically possess a strong analytical capacity and specialized knowledge of specific economic, social and environmental issues. In addition to supporting the engagement of Inter-Regional Advisors, the RPTC funds short-term expertise through national and international consultants as well as through research and training institutions. The capacity development work undertaken through RPTC feeds into the normative and analytical activities of the Departments, which then support the intergovernmental dialogue. Thus, the RPTC provides a vital link between the normative and analytical work of DESA and its operational activities for development.

Development Account

DESA is also one of ten entities of the UN Secretariat¹⁴ that implements the Development Account, also funded by the UN Regular Budget. The Development Account funds capacity development projects in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda that benefit developing countries.^{15,16} Projects under this Account typically support multi-year activities with an average budget of about US\$500,000. Many projects involve piloting of innovations or new approaches and policies and are designed as joint initiatives of two or more Secretariat entities, often including collaboration with other organizations of the United Nations system and/or other international or national partners. The Development Account places special emphasis on innovative, cross-sectoral, regional, or inter-regional activities which draw mainly on the technical, human and other resources available in developing countries. The Under-Secretary-General of DESA serves as Programme Manager of the Development Account.

The Development Account funds capacity development projects in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda that benefit developing countries. Many projects involve piloting of innovations or new approaches and policies

Extra-budgetary resources

In addition to funding under the RPTC and the Development Account, DESA mobilizes extra-budgetary resources from both Funds and Programmes,

¹⁴ DESA, UNCTAD, all five regional commissions, UNEP, UNODC and UN-Habitat.

¹⁵ A/64/6 (section 35).

¹⁶ A/C.5/64/L.23.

Development Banks and donor countries for the implementation of multi-year capacity development projects. Such projects allow DESA to further develop initiatives which have started under the seed funding provided by RPTC. Italy, Japan, Korea, the United Kingdom, Spain and the European Commission are currently key donors for the Department's capacity development work.

DESA is also entrusted with the management of specialized technical co-operation programmes, including the United Nations Associate Expert Programme which assigns young qualified experts in development projects or regional projects within the UN's wide fields of competence. The Department also supports the UN Fellowship Programme, which responds to the needs of Member States for enhanced national skills development and training and which promotes strategic human resource development.

DESA recognizes donors' increasing interest in new funding modalities to channel extra-budgetary resources to the UN system, such as pooled funding mechanisms supporting (global) thematic trust funds or country trust funds in support of UNDAFs, in line with UN efforts at system-wide coherence and harmonization. As a non-resident agency, DESA is looking into ways to use its resources in more complementary ways at the inter-country, regional, and country-levels.

V. How to avail of DESA's services

DESA makes its services available to countries that express interest in its capacity development work. Government ministries and other national entities either approach DESA directly or through the respective UN country team through the UN Resident Coordinator. DESA may also invite expressions of interest from countries to be part of a regional or sub-regional initiative. Following expressions of interest, existing capacity and resources in relevant national institutions are assessed, including prospects for sustainability. The support and cooperation of the UN Resident Coordinator plays an important role in this regard.

Within DESA, each priority area of expertise is led or co-led by specific divisions which coordinate the inter-divisional effort in that area. Lead divisions have designated focal points for coordination. Overall coordination of DESA's work is ensured by the Capacity Development Office. The contact persons within DESA are listed in Annex 1.

DESA makes its services available to countries that express interest in its capacity development work. The support and cooperation of the UN Resident Coordinator plays an important role in this regard

Annex 1

DESA Contact Persons for Capacity Development

General inquiries

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Statistical capacities including monitoring of MDGs

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Social integration and inclusion of vulnerable groups

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Sustainable development including climate change adaptation and mitigation, and forests

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Public administration, and ICT for development, including e-government

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Department of Economic and Social Affairs Capacity Development Strategy

This document articulates DESA's capacity development strategy. DESA's operational work is aimed at developing capacities of developing countries to translate internationally agreed policy frameworks into strategies and programmes at country-level. The internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals provide the main framework for cooperation, while focusing on five priority areas, viz.: (i) strengthening of statistical capacities, including monitoring of MDGs; (ii) macro-economic advisory services and international tax cooperation; (iii) social integration and inclusion of vulnerable groups; (iv) sustainable development including climate change mitigation and adaptation and forests; and (v) public administration and ICT for development, including e-government.

DESA makes its services available to countries that express interest in its capacity development work, either directly or through the UN Resident Coordinator in the country, or in response to requests made by Member States in the inter-governmental process.

DESA's substantive divisions deliver its capacity development services, while the Capacity Development Office (CDO) supports the overall coordination of DESA's capacity development work under the direction of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. CDO also serves as the Office of the Programme Manager of the United Nations Development Account.

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