

# THE OLIVE TREE

Edition 4. November- December 2017

How travel and tourism can contribute to  
the UN Sustainable Development Goals

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# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





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THE OLIVE TREE

Design & Layout: **Nusreen Ekachon**



## MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**IMTIAZ MUQBIL**

Welcome to Edition 4 of The Olive Tree, the first and only publication designed to help travel & tourism become a more enthusiastic part of the solution in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

This November-December 2017 edition features a number of items related to poverty and global health. While millions of people live in poverty, millions of others are suffering from the ills of prosperity. Hence:

UN Secretary General António Guterres says, "Despite progress to eliminate poverty, more than 800 million people around the world continue live in extreme poverty and many more are threatened by alarming rates of unemployment, insecurity, inequality, conflict as well as the effect of climate change."

At the same time, a report backed by the UN World Health Organisation says, "Obesity rates in the world's children and adolescents increased from less than 1% (equivalent to five million girls and six million boys) in 1975 to nearly 6% in girls (50 million) and nearly 8% in boys (74 million) in 2016. Combined, the number of obese five to 19 year olds rose more than tenfold globally, from 11 million in 1975 to 124 million in 2016."

Both are stark reminders of the global imbalances and chasms between the haves and the have-nots.

Another report highlights a study on over-priced drugs. A team of researchers from the Global Health Justice Partnership/Yale Law School has studied, and rebutted, claims by the global drug companies that high prices are linked to the costs of research, development and manufacturing. Instead, the study says, "inflated drug prices are a result of drug manufacturers' power to charge whatever price the market will bear."

Two more reports provide further food for thought about the imbalance between the economic and ecological priorities of travel & tourism. Making visitors spend more, eat more, stay longer is the industry's survival mantra. But this generates more garbage and waste, increases consumption of energy and water, and worsens environmental problems.

The result? One report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) entitled, "Towards a Pollution-free Planet," warns starkly: "If consumption and production patterns continue as they are, the linear economic model of 'take-make-dispose' will seriously burden an already-polluted planet, affecting current and future generations."

Another report by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) warns that some 15 billion trees and 24 billion tonnes of fertile soil are lost each year. As a result, a third of the planet's land is now severely degraded thanks to a doubling in the consumption of natural resources over the past 30 years.

Another sustainability challenge is also looming: By 2030, the timeframe to realize the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there could be more than 92 million additional people living in cities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

A study, Measuring Sustainability Disclosure: Ranking the World's Stock Exchanges 2017, finds that of 6,441 large companies analysed, over the past five years, corporate disclosure rates for greenhouse gas emissions, energy and waste and injuries have flat-lined while water and employee disclosure both improved at an annualized clip of 10%.

All sobering statistics that should force the travel & tourism sector to review the relentless pursuit of growth, growth and more growth from an alternative perspective.

As always, I thank my sponsors for backing this landmark publication: Jetwing Hotels of Sri Lanka, the Macao Government Tourist Office, Asian Overland Services (and its subsidiary unit Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa).

Feedback and comments are welcome. Email: [Imtiaz@travel-impact-newswire.com](mailto:Imtiaz@travel-impact-newswire.com)



## MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN, JETWING HOTELS

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**HIRAN COORAY**

UN World Tourism Organisation Secretary General Taleb Rifai has called for travel & tourism to never forget its primary calling: to make the world a better place.

This pioneering publication is a perfect partnership between the public and private sectors and the media to help make the world a better place.

Sri Lanka has overcome the challenges of a long and bloody war, and is now pursuing a path to nation-building. Travel & tourism is a critical contributor to this task, and the private sector has a major role to play.

As one of the country's largest private sector players in the travel & tourism sector, Jetwing is proud to be contributing to the job creation, cultural preservation, poverty alleviation in an environmentally friendly way.

We hope this publication will rally the entire PATA fraternity to forge stronger links with the UN system and other multilateral agencies in pursuit of a common objective: Fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals, well before the target of 2030.





## MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR OF MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

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**MARIA HELENA DE SENNA FERNANDES**

Sustainable development requires strong support from all concerning stakeholders and their active participation in parallel with initiatives taken by governments.

As Macao is gearing up to become a World Centre of Tourism and Leisure, large scale development of mega resorts with hotel properties and infrastructures have created employment and a broad spectrum of business opportunities, boosting the economy and local advancement, which in turn contributes to the betterment of services and recreational facilities that stimulates innovation to achieve the concept of smart cities through the use of technologies. Not only would this help create a quality experience for visitors but also improve the quality of life of locals.

To align with the policies of economic diversification and cultivation of local talent, various focuses of learning aimed at cultivating culinary talents, enhancing the professional standard and the sustainable development of culinary art is being launched to promote greater awareness of our gastronomic culture in the context of cultural heritage.

The timely relevance of this publication will not only serve its purpose as a platform for conveying and reinforcing those key messages behind the UN Sustainable Development Goals but also as a guideline for the tourism industry to integrate such goals with their corporate ones and put them into practice.

We hope this publication will facilitate existing dialogues on sustainable development to carry forward the agenda and the opening of new dialogues as we strive to attain these goals.



## MESSAGE FROM GROUP MD, ASIAN OVERLAND SERVICES AND FRANGIPANI LANGKAWI RESORT & SPA

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### ANTHONY WONG

The travel & tourism industry, one of the world's biggest and fastest growing industries, has been battered by hurricane-force winds of change for the last two decades. Much has changed as a result, but one thing that has yet to change is our own industry mindset.

Because we sell dreams for a living, we in travel & tourism often see the world through rose-tinted glasses. Minus those glasses, a more realistic picture of the world emerges.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are designed as solutions to the problems of the "real world". A mindset reset will help travel & tourism deal objectively and realistically with those same problems, all of which, sooner or later, affect us too.

The Olive Tree, the first publication of its kind in travel & tourism, is designed to help our booming industry elevate the awareness levels of these problems, and help us become a part of the solution.

Asian Overland Services ([www.asianoverland.com.my](http://www.asianoverland.com.my)) and its subsidiary Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa ([www.frangipanilangkawi.com](http://www.frangipanilangkawi.com)) have been striving to be part of the solution since 1976. We were the first hotel in Malaysia to set up constructed wetlands for treatment of waste and sewage water. Over the years, we have invested heavily in many other such pioneering projects such as the "200 ways to save energy, water, food, and reduce waste." Training programmes and advisory services have been carried out in Malaysia and across the Asia-Pacific.

We are passionate about creating a better world for future generations. I compliment Travel Impact Newswire for this unique initiative, and am proud to support it.

# LEAD STORY:

## US\$4,000 prize money for first global essay competition linking Travel & Tourism to UN SDGs

Bangkok – On Sept 21 2017, Travel Impact Newswire marked the United Nations International Day of Peace by launching an essay competition on how Travel & Tourism can contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Olive Tree Awards essay competition is claimed to be the first of its kind in the global Travel & Tourism industry.

Young people under 30 all over the world are invited to submit essays of up to 1,200 words on how Travel & Tourism can advance the cause of the UN SDGs and meet the targets by 2030.

The competition will be held every six months, or two rounds a year. Each round will see the winners being awarded one first prize of US\$1,000 and two runners up of US\$500.

The total annual prize money of US\$4,000 is being generously donated by two individuals: Mr. Sonu Shivdasani, CEO and Commercial and Creative Lead, Soneva Resorts, winner of multiple Awards for Sustainability and Lifestyle Travel, and one other prominent benefactor from the Islamic world.

The winners of each round will be announced on 20 March marking the International Day of Happiness, and on 21 Sept, marking the International Day of Peace.

### *Submission criteria*

Writers must be aged under 30 at the date of submission (ID proof of age will be required). It is not necessary for writers to be employees or students of the Travel & Tourism industry. Anyone can submit an essay, but there must be a Travel & Tourism angle.

Essays must be written in English, upto a maximum length of 1,200 words.

### *Tips and Guidance for Writers*

1. Study the SDGs carefully ([click here](#));
2. Think deeply about any aspect of Travel & Tourism which is relevant to the SDGs;
3. Download back issues of the The Olive Tree publications to access thought-prompting ideas ([click here](#));
4. Pen an essay presenting a good idea, venting a powerful frustration, or sharing a passion, experience or event.

Don't feel held back. Let your creativity, and your conscience, be your guide.

## Suggested themes

What can young people do to advance the SDG cause?

How can private companies and government agencies mainstream the SDGs into their projects, plans, events and activities.

Controversial themes which challenge conventional wisdoms and go against the grain are particularly welcome ([click here for ideas](#)).

Look beyond environmental issues. Essays on good governance, anti-corruption, transparency, accountability, human rights, universal values, etc., are all welcome.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Although all essays must be in English, they will be judged on the quality of the ideas, NOT the quality of the English.

## Deadline

The deadline for the first round of submissions is December 31, 2017. Winners will be notified by March 15, 2018. The winning essays will also be published on the [Travel Impact Newswire website](#).

Send all essays along with proof of age and a short personal biodata to Imtiaz Muqbil, Executive Editor, Travel Impact Newswire at this email address: [imtiazamuqbil@gmail.com](mailto:imtiazamuqbil@gmail.com)

## Judges

The seven judges have been carefully balanced to include three Millennials and four women:

- Ms Wong Peng Jun, aged 30, Sales and Marketing Manager, [Frangipani Resort Langkawi](#), Malaysia.
- Mr. Dmitri Cooray, aged 25, Manager Operations, [Jetwing Hotels](#), Sri Lanka.
- Mrs Sana Muqbil Shamsi, aged 31, Franchise Owner, [Escape Hunt, Hyderabad](#), India.
- Mr. Sonu Shivdasani, CEO and Commercial and Creative Lead, [Soneva Resorts](#).
- Mr. Mario Hardy, CEO, [Pacific Asia Travel Association](#).
- Ms Marjorie Pamintuan, General Secretary, [Asia Pacific Research Network](#), Quezon City, the Philippines.
- Ms Punam Mohandas, journalist and lecturer at [Assumption University](#), Bangkok, Thailand.

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*For inquiries and further info, pls email: [imtiaz@travel-impact-newswire.com](mailto:imtiaz@travel-impact-newswire.com)*





# SDG 1: 800 million people still living in poverty worldwide, UN chief warns



*Children in line for a daily meal in Ecuador. Photo: Jamie Martin/World Bank*



## SDG 1: 800 million people still living in poverty worldwide, UN chief warns

(United Nations, (UN News Centre) 17 October 2017 – Highlighting the importance of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development to ensure a life of dignity for all, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres called for redoubling of efforts to eradicate poverty in its entirety.

“This globally agreed agenda, pledges to secure a healthy planet and build peaceful and inclusive societies to ensure lives of dignity for all,” said the Secretary-General in a [video message](#) marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

“Its pledge to leave no one behind will require innovative approaches, partnerships and solutions.”

In particular, he called for addressing the root causes of poverty to eradicate it in its entirety, and in doing so to listen to the views and guidance of people living in poverty and acting together with them.

Despite progress to eliminate poverty, more than 800 million people around the world continue live in extreme poverty and many more are threatened by alarming rates of unemployment, insecurity, inequality, conflict as well as the effect of climate change.

Eliminating poverty, and alleviating the suffering and building resilience of those living in poverty is the target for Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. The Goal also aims to ensure social protection for the poor and vulnerable, increase access to basic services and support people harmed by climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the [decision](#) by the General Assembly, designating 17 October as the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#).

The theme for this year's commemoration is *Answering the Call of October 17 to end poverty: A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies*.

It recognizes the knowledge and courage of families living in poverty throughout the world, as well as the importance of reaching out to the poorest and building an alliance with citizens from all backgrounds to end poverty.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

The most important word of advice from the UN Secretary General is for the world “to listen to the views and guidance of people living in poverty and acting together with them.” When was the last time a travel & tourism industry conference gave a voice to anyone living in poverty? We are too much of a top-down industry, and our conferences are far too heavily stacked with people preaching to the converted. Perhaps it is time to heed the UN chief's advice and disrupt that status quo. It might prove to be both a game-changer and eye-opener.



# SDG 1: Global progress against poverty, disease in jeopardy





“Poverty” by [Jukka Kervinen](#) is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)



## SDG 1: Global progress against poverty, disease in jeopardy

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Press Release 09/13/2017 -- Shifting political priorities, instability, and budget cuts could undermine the world's commitment to the [United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#) and jeopardize the future progress needed to eliminate extreme poverty and diseases by 2030, a report from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) warns.

Produced in partnership with the [Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation](#) (IHME) at the [University of Washington](#), *Goalkeepers: The Stories Behind the Data* ([HTML](#) or 44 pages, [PDF](#)) highlights progress to date on eighteen SDG data points focused on health and well-being — including child and maternal deaths, stunting, access to contraceptives, HIV, malaria, extreme poverty, financial inclusion, and sanitation — with case studies and innovative leaders' first-person accounts about improvements on select targets. Released during the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, the report also presents three projected scenarios through 2030 — with current approaches and spending levels; with

strong leadership, innovation, and investment; and with less focus and funding.

“Leaders everywhere need to take action now to put us on the path we set for ourselves” when UN member states adopted the goals in 2015, [Bill and Melinda Gates](#) warn in the report, or the world envisioned in those goals “will remain out of reach.” The Goalkeepers report will be published annually through 2030.

Without breakthrough vaccines or other innovations, many targets may not be met by 2030 even in the best-case scenarios, the report suggests. For example, the rate of maternal mortality fell from 275 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 179 in 2016, and is projected to fall to 138 if current approaches and spending levels are maintained and to 104 with additional funding and progress, yet these levels are well above the target of seventy.

“This report comes at a time when there is more doubt than usual about the world’s commitment to development,” the Gateses state in the report. “Take it from the point of view of justice, or take it from the point of view of creating a secure and stable world: development deserves our attention.”

“With these findings, health officials in countries can better distinguish longstanding challenges from emerging ones,” said IHME director Christopher Murray, “as well as revise and reorient programs needed to meet their nations’ goals.”

Separately, IHME, which received a [\\$279 million](#) commitment from the Gates Foundation this year, published a [paper](#) in the medical journal [The Lancet](#) that found fewer than 5 percent of nations are expected to reach many health-related targets, including road injury mortality, tuberculosis, childhood obesity and overweight, intimate partner violence, and suicide mortality. IHME’s updated [SDG visualization](#) tool enables users to compare progress between countries and indicators. In 2016, Singapore had the highest SDG index score — which takes into consideration performance across all thirty-seven health-related SDG indicators — followed by Iceland and Sweden, while the United States ranked twentieth.

## Importance to travel & tourism

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This report highlights the linkage between poverty and health. By extension, it flags a need for measuring the health of travel & tourism industry employees globally. Delivering the high levels of service standards and ensuring that people enjoy their holidays is known to be a very stressful undertaking for industry staff, especially at the point of contact. It is something well worth measuring and monitoring.



# **SDG 3: Youth obesity increases 10-fold in four decades, UN-backed study reveals**





Health workers measure and record the height and weight of Erlan Bernouperinev, 3, at his home, in Kindik Uzyak Village in the Konlikul District, Republic of Karakalpakstan in Uzbekistan. Photo: UNICEF/Giacomo Pirozzi

3 GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



## SDG 3: Youth obesity increases 10-fold in four decades, UN-backed study reveals

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 October 2017 – The number of obese children and adolescents (aged five to 19 years) worldwide has risen tenfold in the past four decades. If current trends continue, more children and adolescents will be obese than moderately or severely underweight by 2022, according to a new study led by Imperial College London and WHO.

The study was published in *The Lancet* ahead of World Obesity Day (11 October). It analysed weight and height measurements from nearly 130 million people aged over five years (31.5 million people aged five to 19, and 97.4 million aged 20 and older), making it the largest ever number of participants involved in an epidemiological study. More than 1,000 contributors participated in the study, which looked at body mass index (BMI) and how obesity has changed worldwide from 1975 to 2016.

Obesity rates in the world's children and adolescents increased from less than 1% (equivalent to five million girls and six million boys) in 1975 to nearly 6% in girls (50 million) and nearly 8% in boys (74 million) in 2016. Combined, the number of obese five to 19 year olds rose more than tenfold globally, from 11 million in 1975 to 124 million in 2016. An additional 213 million were overweight in 2016 but fell below the threshold for obesity.

Lead author Professor Majid Ezzati, of Imperial's School of Public Health, says: "Over the past four decades, obesity rates in children and adolescents have soared globally, and continue to do so in low- and middle-income countries. More recently, they have plateaued in higher income countries, although obesity levels remain unacceptably high."



Professor Ezzati adds: “These worrying trends reflect the impact of food marketing and policies across the globe, with healthy nutritious foods too expensive for poor families and communities. The trend predicts a generation of children and adolescents growing up obese and at greater risk of diseases, like diabetes. We need ways to make healthy, nutritious food more available at home and school, especially in poor families and communities, and regulations and taxes to protect children from unhealthy foods.”

The authors say that if post-2000 trends continue, global levels of child and adolescent obesity will surpass those for moderately and severely underweight youth from the same age group by 2022. In 2016, the global number of moderately or severely underweight girls and boys was 75 million and 117 million respectively. Nevertheless, the large number of moderately or severely underweight children and adolescents in 2016 (75 million girls and 117 million boys) still represents a major public health challenge, especially in the poorest parts of the world. This reflects the threat posed by malnutrition in all its forms, with there being underweight and overweight young people living in the same communities.

Children and adolescents have rapidly transitioned from mostly underweight to mostly overweight in many middle-income countries, including in East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The authors say this could reflect an increase in the consumption of energy-dense foods, especially highly processed carbohydrates, which lead to weight gain and poor lifelong health outcomes.

Dr Fiona Bull, programme coordinator for surveillance and population-based prevention of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) at WHO, says: “These data highlight, remind and reinforce that overweight and obesity is a global health crisis today, and threatens to worsen in coming years unless we start taking drastic action.”

In conjunction with the release on the new obesity estimates, WHO is publishing a summary of the Ending Childhood Obesity (ECHO) Implementation Plan. The plan gives countries clear guidance on effective actions to curb childhood and adolescent obesity. WHO has also released guidelines calling on frontline healthcare workers to actively identify and manage children who are overweight or obese.

Dr Bull adds: “WHO encourages countries to implement efforts to address the environments that today are increasing our children’s chance of obesity. Countries should aim particularly to reduce consumption of cheap, ultra-processed, calorie dense, nutrient poor foods. They should also reduce the time children spend on screen-based and sedentary leisure activities by promoting greater participation in physical activity through active recreation and sports.”

### **Explanatory Note:**

The paper presents the first ever comprehensive data on underweight through to obesity for children and adolescents aged five to 19 years and provides startling findings on the increasing numbers and rates of young people being affected by obesity.

The study calculated and compared body mass index (BMI) among children, adolescents and adults from 1975 to 2016, and made projections based on current trends in obesity rates.

BMI is a measure of a person’s weight and body fat mass for their height, and indicates whether their weight is healthy.

Calculating BMI is the simplest way to assess a person’s weight status, and the most common tool used to determine under-, healthy- and overweight and obesity. For children and adolescents, their BMI is adjusted for age and sex using WHO’s growth reference curves.

Action to curb obesity is a key element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.4 commits the world to reducing premature deaths from NCDs by one-third by 2030, including through prevention of obesity. SDG target 2.2 commits the world to ending all forms of malnutrition by 2030, including overweight and obesity. Also, the goal of the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025) is to promote collaboration across all sectors and stakeholders to end malnutrition in all its forms.

The findings also showed that:

### **Global data for obesity and underweight**

In 2016, there were 50 million girls and 74 million boys with obesity in the world, while the global number of moderately or severely underweight girls and boys was 75 million and 117 million respectively.

The number of obese adults increased from 100 million in 1975 (69 million women, 31 million men) to 671 million in 2016 (390 million women, 281 million men). Another 1.3 billion adults were overweight, but fell below the threshold for obesity.

### ***Regional/Country data for obesity, BMI and underweight***

#### **Obesity:**

The rise in childhood and adolescent obesity rates in low and middle income countries, especially in Asia, has recently accelerated. On the other hand, the rise in childhood and adolescent obesity in high income countries has slowed and plateaued.

In 2016, the obesity rate was highest in Polynesia and Micronesia in boys and girls, at 25.4% in girls and 22.4% in boys, followed by the high-income English-speaking region, which includes the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

The areas of the world with the largest increase in the number of obese children and adolescents were East Asia, the high-income English-speaking region, and the Middle East and North Africa.

Nauru was the country with the highest prevalence of obesity for girls (33.4%), and Cook Islands had the highest for boys (33.3%).

In Europe, girls in Malta and boys in Greece had the highest obesity rates, comprising 11.3% and 16.7% of the population respectively. Girls and boys in Moldova had the lowest obesity rates, comprising 3.2% and 5% of the population respectively.

Girls in the UK had the 73rd highest obesity rate in the world (6th in Europe); boys had the 84th highest obesity in the world (18th in Europe).

Girls in the USA had the 15th highest obesity rate in the world; boys had the 12th highest obesity in the world.

Among high-income countries, the United States of America had the highest obesity rates for girls and boys.

**BMI:**

The largest rise in BMI of children and adolescents during the four decades was in Polynesia and Micronesia for both boys and girls, and in central Latin America for girls. The smallest rise in the BMI of children and adolescents during the four decades covered by the study was seen in Eastern Europe.

The country with the biggest rise in BMI for girls was Samoa, which rose by 5.6 kg/m<sup>2</sup>, and for boys was the Cook Islands, which rose by 4.4 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

**Underweight:**

India had the highest prevalence of moderate and severe underweight throughout these four decades (24.4% of girls and 39.3% of boys were moderately or severely underweight in 1975, and 22.7% and 30.7% in 2016). 97 million of the world's moderately or severely underweight children and adolescents lived in India in 2016.

Please click here for full details of the study: [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32129-3/fulltext?elsca1=tlpr](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)32129-3/fulltext?elsca1=tlpr)

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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This certainly guarantees a great future revenue stream for the health & wellness sector and opens a new opportunity for its marketing personnel. But, as the next story points out, it is also a sad reflection of global lifestyles and its impact on children.



# SDG 3: Counselling and dieting among new UN health agency guidelines on child obesity



*Children playing at the multi-ethnic Krupskaya School in the town of Nookat, Osh oblast, Kyrgyzstan.  
Photo: OCHA/Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia, T. Jeanneret*

**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



## SDG 3: Counselling and dieting among new UN health agency guidelines on child obesity

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 4 October 2017 – Faced with evidence indicating that the global child obesity problem affects rich and poor countries alike, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) has released details on how trained professionals can better identify youngsters in need of help.

The just-published [obesity guidelines](#) include counselling and dieting, an assessment of eating habits along with the more usual weight and height measurements.

WHO says the prevalence of [obesity](#) in children reflects changing patterns towards unhealthy diets and physical inactivity. Urbanization, increased incomes, availability of fast foods, educational demands, television viewing and gaming have led to a rise in the consumption of foods high in fats, sugar and salt and lower levels of physical activity.

While there have been major public health interventions to promote improved diet and patterns of physical activity in adults, the contribution of antenatal and young-child interventions to

reducing the risk of obesity in later life have not been significantly reviewed.

Failing to heed these recommendations may leave vulnerable children at an increased risk of dying young from a range of life-threatening diseases, WHO warns.

In 2016, Asia accounted for half of all overweight or obese children, and one quarter lived in Africa, according to the UN agency's Dr. Francesco Branca, Director of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development.

He explained that this is related to the fact that children in poorer countries often get too little breastmilk, nor the right complementary food.

Paradoxically, this leaves under-nourished children at greater risk of putting on excess weight as they grow, when they're offered so-called "cheap calories," in the form of fatty, sugary foods.

“Malnutrition is responsible for a lack of resilience to changes in the food environment. So a malnourished child would be more susceptible to gaining more weight when exposed to a food environment which is high in fat, sugar, for instance.”

The problem of excess weight is rising in all world regions, but most rapidly in poorer and middle-income countries.

Dr. Branca insisted that it was up to governments to do more to address the problem, faced with what

he called an “unsuitable food system” that fails to provide sufficient nutritious foods “with the right levels of vitamins and minerals.”

Educating people about the risks of eating unhealthily is a welcome first step, he said, but what’s really needed is more regulation to ensure that healthier foods are cheaper and more readily available.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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A clear opportunity for food & beverage managers to revamp the Kids Menu in all hotel outlets. A wider choice of healthy options would be welcomed by many parents for sure. Launching health and wellness packages targeted at children during their school holidays would also help.





## **SDG 3: Positive aspects of working overseas often overshadowed by health and financial concerns**



## SDG 3: Positive aspects of working overseas often overshadowed by health and financial concerns



HONG KONG, October 2, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Cigna Corporation (NYSE: CI) released today the results of its [2017 Cigna 360° Well-being Survey - Globally Mobile Individuals](#). The findings reveal that people working overseas generally perceive themselves as worse-off compared to individuals who reside in their home country and have not taken overseas assignments, when it comes to their physical, social, family and even financial well-being.

Overall, the well-being index score for globally mobile individuals is 61.5 points, which is 1.8 points lower than their domestic counterparts. The most significant gap is in family well-being, which is 9.4 points lower.

“The results show that globally mobile individuals are more concerned than the general working population about their own health and well-being, and that of their

families,” said Jason Sadler, President, Cigna International Markets. “Without exception, this group is worried about the consequences of personal or family member illness; an issue compounded by a gap in health benefits provided by their employers. Cigna has a long history of supporting globally mobile individuals. We conduct this research to help us continually improve the range of health benefits and wellness solutions we offer them around the world.”

This survey follows the publication of [the 2017 Cigna 360° Well-being Survey](#) in April, which looked at five underlying trends that affect the health, well-being and sense of security of people around the world. In this study, Cigna examined the perceptions of globally mobile individuals living and working in 20 markets about their outlook on the same trends - physical, financial, social, family and work health.

### The bright side of being globally mobile

International exposure is a significant draw to working overseas. Globally mobile individuals highlighted the opportunity to accumulate wealth, better career prospects, good working hours and positive relationships with co-workers as bright aspects of their experience.

### But there are also challenges

While individuals have the opportunity to accumulate wealth while working overseas, only a third of respondents considered their current financial situation satisfactory. Lack of time spent with their family and their children’s education are other concerns; exacerbated by not having a family support network around them.

Globally mobile individuals often experience anxiety and all respondents are concerned about illness. Cancer and accidents are their main worries, followed by mental illness, such as depression. Twenty-five percent of globally mobile individuals raised concerns about diseases associated with alcohol; significantly more so than the general working population.

### **Safety concerns and long-distance loneliness**

Globally mobile individuals feel the world looks less secure due to political turmoil and other macro-economic factors. One-third of respondents feel less safe than they did 24 months ago. This sense of insecurity was highest in the U.S., with 42 percent of respondents feeling less safe, and in Africa, where 31 percent have an issue with their safety.

Many respondents also report having problems socialising outside of work. One-fifth suffer from loneliness, which increases to nearly one quarter for those who are single or live alone.

### **Minding the gap**

A significant gap in health insurance coverage may contribute to elevated levels of concern.

“The survey shows health benefits are a very important factor when deciding to take an overseas posting,” said Mr. Sadler. “Despite this, there is a significant gap. A surprising 40 percent of respondents do not have any medical benefits offered by their company, and 15 percent have no health coverage at all.”

“There is a clear need for employers to pay attention to the health and well-being of their globally mobile employees. This duty of care should extend outside of the office when employers are interacting with their families and the local community.”

### **About the Research**

A total of 2,003 online interviews were conducted with globally mobile individuals aged 25-59 who are working in markets outside of their birthplace across 20 markets in Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East, Africa and the United States.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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This study should be of great interest to both human resources directors and corporate travel managers. The travel & tourism industry has significant numbers of both expatriates living away from their home countries as well as road warriors constantly on the move. Improved health and well-being can certainly help improve their productivity and also allow them to enjoy their holiday periods.



# SDG 3: EU countries should use pesticides more sustainably



EU Agriculture



## SDG 3: EU countries should use pesticides more sustainably

Brussels, 10 October 2017 – European Union news release -- The [report](#) on the sustainable use of pesticides Directive adopted today by the Commission takes stock of progress made by the EU Member States in applying measures to reduce the risks and impacts of pesticides. It covers a wide range of topics such as aerial spraying, information to the public or training of professionals. The report indicates insufficient implementation of the [Directive on the sustainable use of pesticides](#).

Commenting on the report, Vytenis **Andriukaitis**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: “I know first-hand that citizens are concerned about the impact of the use of pesticides on their health and the environment. We take these concerns into consideration and we are working with the Member States to achieve sustainable use of pesticides in the way we grow and produce our food. I will continue encouraging and supporting Member States in their task of implementing the measures to reduce risks derived from the use of pesticides”.

### What are the main conclusions of the Report?

While the Directive offers the potential to greatly reduce the risks derived from pesticide use these improvements are limited and insufficient to achieve the environmental and health improvements the Directive was designed to achieve. This is largely due to the implementation of the Directive that remains patchy.

Some key findings from the report include:

- Aerial spraying is banned in all EU countries, with exceptions granted only under strict conditions.
- Pesticide use is banned or minimised in public parks, sports grounds, hospitals and schools.
- Protection of aquatic environments or specific areas such as public parks is difficult to assess given the lack of measurable targets in most National Action Plans (NAPs).



- [Integrated Pest Management](#) (IPM) remains underused by Member States. This is despite the fact that the number of EU-approved low risk/non-chemical pesticide substances has doubled since 2009. Compliance at individual grower level is not being systematically checked by Member States.
- Training and certification systems for professionals have been set up in all EU countries, and to date almost four million farmers have been trained to use pesticides safely. Furthermore, 900 000 sprayers have been tested for accurate and safe application.

### ***What is next?***

When revising their National Action plans, Member States need to improve their quality, primarily by establishing specific and measurable targets and indicators for a long term strategy for the reduction of risks and impacts from pesticide use.

The Commission will continue to monitor and support implementation by the Member States to provide assurance that the objectives of the Directive are being achieved. This monitoring includes a range of actions such as audits, the evaluation of revised NAPs and other follow-up

activities – for example exchange of best practices and training of professionals. The Commission will also work with Member States to develop EU harmonised risk indicators, based on Member States' experience with their national indicators.

Today, the Commission launched a new [website](#) which contains links to Member States' websites on sustainable use of pesticides, including Integrated Pest Management (IPM) , with a view to facilitate the exchange of information between them and increase the flow of relevant information to farmers and the general public.

The full [report](#) is accompanied by an [overview report](#) which includes a more detailed analysis and many examples of good practice being implemented by Member States.

Finally, the Commission also published a [Guidance](#) on monitoring and surveying of impacts of pesticide use on human health and the environment

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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This is another good reason for hotels and restaurants to buy more organic products. If this can be made an industry-wide practise, just imagine how it would contribute to an improvement in global health, and hence the fulfillment of SDG 3.





# **SDG 3: Yale University Team: Drug companies' R&D excuse for high drug prices is baloney**

# Curbing Unfair Drug Prices

## A Primer for States



**Global Health Justice Partnership Policy Paper**  
*August 2017*

**3** GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



### SDG 3: Yale University Team: Drug companies' R&D excuse for high drug prices is baloney

September 29, 2017 COLUMBUS, Ohio--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--Drug companies routinely say their pills cost a lot because the R&D that goes into making them costs a bundle. Wrong, says a team of Yale University researchers. In a lengthy report, the researchers concluded:

“Evidence has unequivocally shown that high drug prices are not linked to the actual costs of research, development and manufacturing. Instead, inflated drug prices are a result of drug manufacturers’ power to charge whatever price the market will bear.” The researchers also concluded that a politically paralyzed Washington, D.C. is incapable of fixing the problem of high drug prices. A better bet, they said, is that pricing reforms will emerge at the state level. Sounds like a plan!

Source: [Global Health Justice Partnership/Yale Law School report](#).

#### Background on Ohio Ballot Issue 2

The Yes on Issue 2 campaign is a broad-based, bi-partisan coalition. More than 200,000 Ohio voters signed petitions to put an amendment on the ballot in November that will lower drug prices for over 4 million Ohioans, including 164,000 children, save taxpayers \$400 million annually, reduce healthcare costs for everyone and teach greedy drug companies and their CEOs a lesson.

Learn more by visiting [yesonissue2.com](http://yesonissue2.com) or following on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

## Importance to travel & tourism

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The rapidly-growing medical tourism sector is a major market for over-priced drugs, a problem worsened by the commissions paid to doctors, hospitals and medical practitioners. Inflated drug prices artificially boost visitor expenditure and can also raise health care costs for local people. Smart marketers may see an opportunity here to fix this problem by providing more cost-effective treatments, which could become a unique selling proposition for the hospital or medical facility taking the first step.



# SDG 4: Empower teachers, give them the freedom to teach, UN urges



Children in their classroom as the teacher conducts the lesson at the St. Louis Primary School in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Photo: Dominic Chavez/World Bank



## SDG 4: Empower teachers, give them the freedom to teach, UN urges

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 5 October 2017 – Underscoring the critical important role teachers play in ensuring the future for every society, the United Nations today called for empowering educators with the freedom and support they need to undertake their vital mission.

“Being an [empowered teacher](#) means having access to high-quality training, fair wages, and continuous opportunities for professional development,” the heads of key UN agencies and programmes said today in a joint message on [World Teachers’ Day](#).

Empowerment also means teachers having the freedom to support the development of national curricula, the professional autonomy to choose teaching methods and approaches and being able to teach in safety and security during times of political change, instability and conflict, they added.

The joint message was issued by Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Guy Ryder,

the Director-General of International Labour Organization (ILO); Anthony Lake, the Executive-Director of UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF); Achim Steiner, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP); and Fred van Leeuwen, the General-Secretary of Education International (a global federation representing organizations of teachers and other education employees).

It emphasized that academic freedom – while important for teachers at all levels of education – is especially critical for higher-education to support the educators’ ability to innovate, explore, and stay up-to-date on the latest pedagogical research.

“This World Teachers’ Day, join us in empowering teachers to teach in freedom so that, in turn, every child and every adult is free to learn – to the benefit of a better world,” they urged.

The importance of building a skilled, valued and empowered education workforce has also been underscored in the [2030 Agenda](#)’s Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

Target 4C of Goal 4, in particular, calls for “substantially increasing” the supply of qualified teachers by 2030, and in that context, underlines importance of international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

Marked annually on 5 October since 1994, World Teachers’ Day commemorates the anniversary of the signing of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers – the primary reference framework that addresses teachers’ rights and responsibilities at the global scale.

The theme for this year’s commemoration is *Teaching in Freedom, Empowering Teachers*.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, which complements the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, stressing the importance of teacher autonomy and academic freedom in building a world in which education and learning are truly universal.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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Each and every one of us owes an unlimited debt of gratitude to our teachers. Innovative human resources managers may find it beneficial to develop creative ways of observing this annual day in their respective corporations.

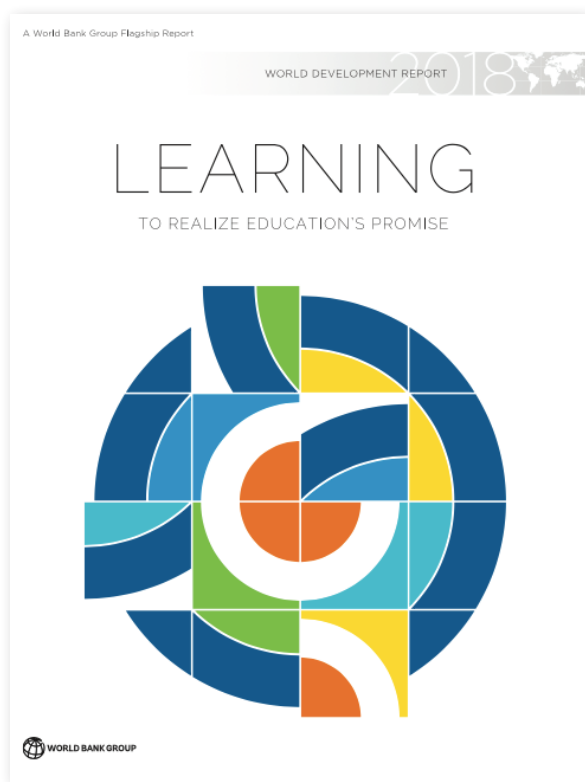




# SDG 4: World Bank warns of 'learning crisis' in global education



## SDG 4: World Bank warns of ‘learning crisis’ in global education



WASHINGTON, September 26, 2017 – Millions of young students in low and middle-income countries face the prospect of lost opportunity and lower wages in later life because their primary and secondary schools are failing to educate them to succeed in life. Warning of ‘a learning crisis’ in global education, a new Bank report said schooling without learning was not just a wasted development opportunity, but also a great injustice to children and young people worldwide.

**The World Development Report 2018: ‘Learning to Realize Education’s Promise’** argues that without learning, education will fail to deliver on its promise to eliminate extreme poverty and create shared opportunity and prosperity for all. Even after several years in school, millions of children cannot read, write or do basic math. This learning crisis is widening social gaps instead of narrowing them. Young students who are already disadvantaged by poverty, conflict, gender or disability reach young adulthood without even the most basic life skills.

“This learning crisis is a moral and economic crisis,” World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim said. “When delivered well, education promises young people employment, better earnings, good health, and a life without poverty. For communities, education spurs innovation, strengthens institutions, and fosters social cohesion. But these benefits depend on learning, and schooling without learning is a wasted opportunity. More than that, it’s a great injustice: the children whom societies fail the most are the ones who are most in need of a good education to succeed in life.”

Click here to download the [World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education’s Promise](#).

The report recommends concrete policy steps to help developing countries resolve this dire learning crisis in the areas of stronger learning assessments, using evidence of what works and what doesn’t to guide education decision-making; and mobilizing a strong social movement to push for education changes that champion ‘learning for all.’

According to the report, when third grade students in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda were asked recently to read a sentence such as “The name of the dog is Puppy” in English or Kiswahili, three-quarters did not understand what it said. In rural India, nearly three-quarters of students in grade 3 could not solve a two-digit subtraction such as “46 – 17”—and by grade 5, half still could not do so. Although the skills of Brazilian 15-year-olds have improved, at their current rate of improvement they will not reach the rich-country average score in math for 75 years. In reading, it will take 263 years.

These statistics do not account for 260 million children who, for reasons of conflict, discrimination, disability, and other obstacles, are not enrolled in primary or secondary school.

While not all developing countries suffer from such extreme learning gaps, many fall far short of levels they aspire to. Leading international assessments on literacy and numeracy show that the average student in poor countries performs worse than 95 percent of the students in high-income countries—meaning such a student would be singled out for remedial attention in a class in those countries. Many high-performing students in middle-income countries—young men and women who achieve in the top quarter of their groups—would rank in the bottom quarter in a wealthier country.

The report, written by a team directed by World Bank Lead Economists, Deon Filmer and Halsey Rogers, identifies what drives these learning shortfalls—not only the ways in which teaching and learning breaks down in too many schools, but also the deeper political forces that cause these problems to persist.

### **Significant progress is possible**

The report notes that when countries and their leaders make “learning for all” a national priority, education standards can improve dramatically. For example, from a war-torn country with very low literacy rates in the 1950s, South Korea achieved universal enrollment by 1995 in high-quality education through secondary school—its young people performed at the highest levels on international learning assessments. Vietnam’s 2012 results from an OECD test for high school students in math, science, and reading called PISA, showed that its 15-year-olds performed at the same level as those in Germany—even though Vietnam is a much poorer country.

Between 2009 and 2015, Peru achieved some of the fastest growth in overall learning outcomes—due to concerted policy action. In several countries (such as Liberia, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga) early grade reading improved substantially within a very short time, due to focused efforts based on evidence.

“The only way to make progress is to ‘find truth from facts.’ If we let them, the facts about education reveal a painful truth. For too many children, schooling does not mean learning,” said World Bank Chief Economist, Paul Romer.

Relying on evidence and advice gathered during extensive consultations in 20 countries, with governments, development and research organizations, CSOs, and the private sector, the report offers three policy recommendations:

### **First, assess learning, so it can become a measurable goal.**

Only half of all developing countries have metrics to measure learning at the end of primary and lower secondary school. Well-designed student assessments can help teachers guide students, improve system management, and focus society’s attention on learning. These measures can inform national policy choices, track progress, and shine a spotlight on children who are being left behind.

### **Second, make schools work for all children.**

Level the playing field by reducing stunting and promoting brain development through early nutrition and stimulation so children start school ready to learn. Attract great people into teaching and keep them motivated by tailoring teacher training that is reinforced by mentors. Deploy technologies that help teachers teach to the level of the student, and strengthen school management, including principals.

### **Third, mobilize everyone who has a stake in learning.**

Use information and metrics to mobilize citizens, increase accountability, and create political will for education reform. Involve stakeholders, including the business community, in all stages of education reform, from design to implementation.

“Developing countries are far from where they should be on learning. Many do not invest enough financial resources and most need to invest more efficiently. But it is not only a matter of money; countries need to also invest in the capacity of the people and institutions tasked with educating our children,” said Jaime Saavedra, a former Peruvian Education Minister, and now the World Bank’s Senior Director for Education. “Education reform is urgently needed and requires persistence as well as the political alignment of government, media, entrepreneurs, teachers, parents, and students. They all have to value and demand better learning.”

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

By sheer dint of its training facilities, the travel & tourism industry makes an enormous contribution to the global education effort. It can always do more at the grassroots levels by supporting community schools, offering more scholarships and sending its own trainers to share their experience and expertise.



# SDG 5: Progress on gender equality far too slow, says OECD



## SDG 5: Progress on gender equality far too slow, says OECD

OECD – Paris, 4 October 2017 - Countries need to do much more to close gender gaps worldwide, according to a new OECD report.

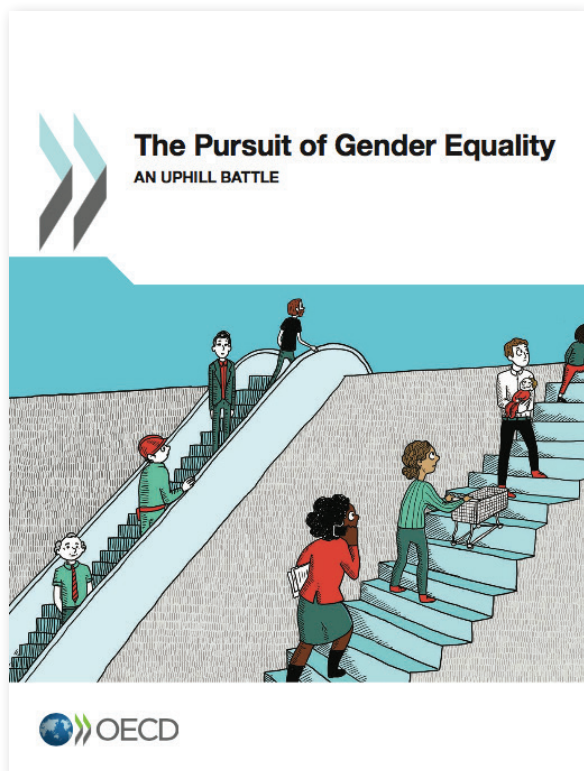
In the latest survey carried out in 2012 on the pursuit of gender equality, OECD countries identified the three most important gender inequality issues: violence against women, the persisting large gender wage gap, and the unequal sharing of unpaid work.

Many countries are now prioritising these issues in policy, and many are also pushing to get more women into public and private sector leadership.

Some progress has been made, the report notes. Most OECD countries are tackling workplace harassment through stronger laws and regulations. Several countries, including Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico and the United Kingdom, have introduced measures to encourage more young girls to choose science, technology, engineering and manufacturing (STEM) and young men to study and work in health and education.

Nonetheless, gender gaps persist in all areas of social and economic life across countries, and the size of these gaps has often changed little in recent years. While today young women in OECD countries leave school with better qualifications than young men, they are less likely to study in the higher earning STEM-related fields.

Women's labour force participation rates have moved closer to men's rates over the past few decades, but in every OECD country women are still less likely than men to engage in paid work. When women do work, they are more likely to do it on a part-time basis, are less likely to advance to management positions, are more likely to face discrimination, and earn less than men. The median female worker earns almost 15% less than her male counterpart, on average, across the OECD – a rate that has barely changed since 2010.



[\*The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle\*](#) presents a stark call to action, highlighting that very little progress has been made since the 2012 OECD report *Closing the Gender Gap Now*.

“The pursuit of gender equality must be a priority to achieve sustainable, inclusive growth for the benefit of every citizen,” said OECD Chief of Staff and G20 Sherpa Gabriela Ramos at the launch of the report in advance of the Women’s Forum taking place in Paris. “There is no reason for women to trail behind men in social, economic, and political outcomes. Countries need to do much more to reach the gender equality goals.”

Women are less likely to be entrepreneurs, and female-owned businesses tend to earn less than male-owned ones. Gender gaps tend to increase with age, reflecting the crucial role that parenthood plays in gender equality. Much more than fatherhood, motherhood typically has sizable negative effects on workforce participation, pay and career advancement.

Gender inequalities pervade public life, as well: women are underrepresented in political office, holding less than one-third of seats in lower houses of national legislatures, on average, in the OECD. Affirmative action is needed but alone is insufficient to bring about gender equality. Countries also need to invest in female leadership opportunities through for example mentoring opportunities and network supports. At the same time male role models in senior management need to drive the change in gender stereotypes and norms that continue to hamper women's access to leadership.

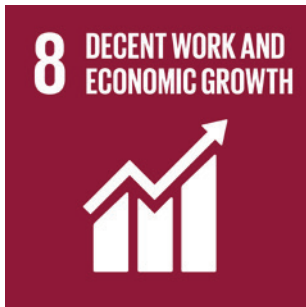
Clearly much remains to be done to narrow, and ultimately close, gender gaps across all countries. The report outlines not only the social but also the strong economic case for action: reducing the gender gap in labour force participation by 25% by 2025, as agreed by G20 leaders, could add 1 percentage point of growth to projected baseline GDP growth across the OECD over the period 2013-25, and almost 2.5 percentage points if gender participation gaps were halved by 2025.

Since 2013, about two-thirds of OECD countries have put in place new equal pay policies, involving greater transparency on pay with companies increasingly required to analyse and disclose their gender wage gaps. Many countries have also introduced measures to improve access to quality early childhood education and care, as well as encouraged fathers to take parental leave: several, including Canada, Japan, Korea and Poland, have increased subsidies or benefits for childcare; and others, including Norway and the UK, have introduced or expanded free childcare.

## Importance to travel & tourism

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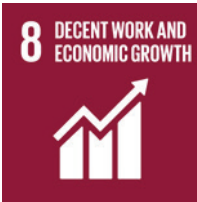
An ongoing issue in travel & tourism, one of the biggest employers of women. The momentum to ensure that women are paid the same as men is building and will gather steam. It will not be without its downsides, however. Increased costs may accelerate a shift to robotics and worsen unemployment.



# **SDG 8: Global unemployment passes 200 million in 2017 - UN labour agency**



Factory workers producing shirts for overseas clients, in Accra, Ghana. Photo: Dominic Chavez/World Bank



## SDG 8: Global unemployment passes 200 million in 2017 - UN labour agency

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 9 October 2017 – More than 200 million people are out of work around the world – an increase of 3.4 million since last year, the United Nations labour agency said Monday, calling for policies that can recharge “sluggish” growth of small and medium-sized businesses.

In the new addition of its flagship report, [World Employment and Social Outlook 2017: Sustainable Enterprises and Jobs](#), the International Labour Organization (ILO) warned that small and medium sized enterprises has “stagnated,” the impact of which is worst in developing economies, where more than one in two workers are employed in small and medium-sized firms.

According to the report, private sector enterprises accounted for the bulk of global employment in 2016; they employed 2.8 billion individuals, representing 87 per cent of total employment. The sector, which also covers medium-sized firms, accounts for up to 70 per cent of all jobs in some Arab States, and well over 50 per cent in parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

But ILO research revealed these companies are struggling to grow. The latest data from more than 130 countries shows that small and medium business had faster job growth than larger firms before the global financial slump in 2008.

From 2009 however, job creation in the small and medium sector was simply “absent”, according to the ILO report, which calls for government intervention to reverse the trend.



“To [reverse the trend](#) of employment stagnation in [small and medium enterprises], we need policies to better promote SMEs and a better business environment for all firms, including access to finance for the younger ones,” said Deborah Greenfield, ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy.

The ILO research shows that full-time female permanent employees in the formal sector are more likely to be found in small and medium enterprises than in large firms. On average, and across all regions, around 30 per cent of full-time permanent employees in these businesses are women, compared with 27 per cent in large enterprises.

As such, greater numbers of women in enterprises may therefore have a positive impact on growth and development, because micro-enterprises and small businesses often offer women an entry point into the formal labour market.

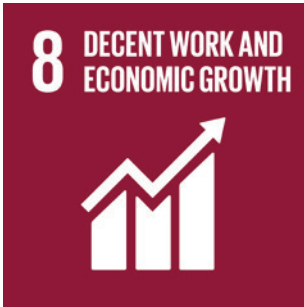
Another aspect of the ILO’s World Employment and Social Outlook report is on how people’s working conditions can play a role in sustainable development. It says that providing training for staff can lead to 14 per cent higher wages and almost 20 per cent higher productivity.

Conversely, relying on short-term contractors tends to be associated with lower wages and lower productivity.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

As one of the world’s most rapidly growing economic sectors, travel & tourism is making a significant contribution to job creation. More detailed research could go a long way towards specifying the exact nature of this contribution. It could also identify impediments. For example, is a job in travel & tourism as appealing as a job in other growth sectors such as health, telecommunications or finance? Would be well worth finding out.





# **SDG 8: Action plan for \$64 billion Mekong projects endorsed**



## SDG 8: Action plan for \$64 billion Mekong projects endorsed

HA NOI, VIET NAM (20 September 2017) Asian Development Bank— Ministers from the six member countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) today endorsed a five-year action plan framework that includes \$64 billion in projects to help the subregion achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development.

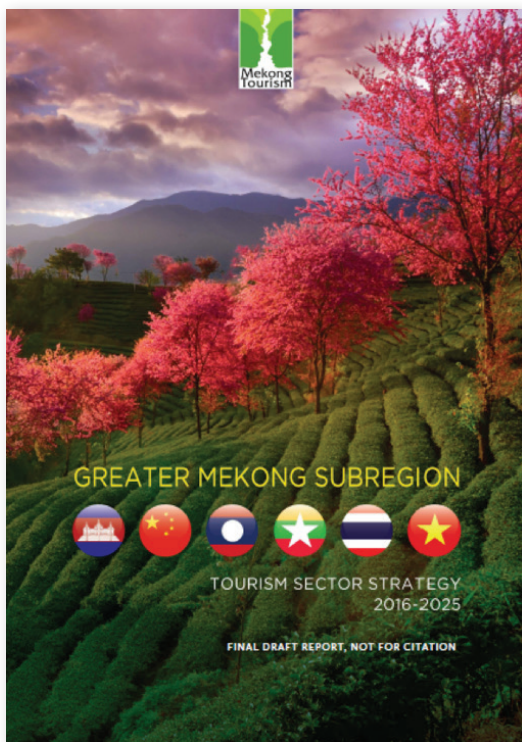
“Although ADB facilitated the process, the initiative was driven by the countries themselves, with a sharp focus on joint action to address common challenges,” said ADB Vice-President Stephen Groff. “The GMS Program has been guided by the 3 Cs: connectivity, competitiveness, and community. This overarching approach to regional development produced significant results.”

At the meeting, the ministers welcomed the preparation of the Ha Noi Action Plan (HAP) 2018-2022, which calls for an expansion of economic corridors to boost connectivity between countries as well as within rural and urban centers to ensure a more equitable distribution of the benefits of economic growth. They also endorsed the GMS Regional Investment Framework 2022, to support the HAP through a pipeline of 222 investment and technical assistance projects valued at \$64 billion. The ministers urged greater engagement of development partners and private sector to meet financing requirements in the GMS.

The ministers extended strong support for a new GMS Transport Sector Strategy that aims to build a seamless, efficient, reliable, and sustainable GMS transport system. This will be achieved through the improvement of the subregion’s links with South Asia and other parts of Southeast Asia, better cross-border transport, strengthened intermodal transport links and logistics development, as well as enhanced road safety.

Ministers at the 22nd GMS Ministerial Conference celebrated 25 years of economic cooperation, acknowledging the achievements of a program that has created a strong bond of openness, mutual trust, and shared commitment.

Six countries — Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (specifically Yunnan Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam — entered the program in 1992, with assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), to enhance economic relations. Under the program, investment projects worth more than \$19.1 billion have so far been undertaken.



The GMS Tourism Sector Strategy 2016-2025 was also endorsed to enable more competitive, balanced, and sustainable destination development. The ministers welcomed the progress towards the formal establishment of the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office as an intergovernmental organization.

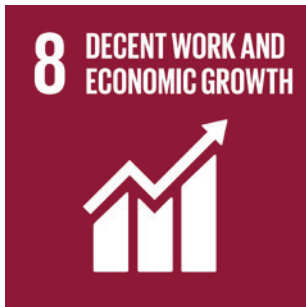
In agriculture, they welcomed the endorsement by the Second GMS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting of a strategy to promote safe and environment-friendly agriculture products, and a plan to strengthen value chain integration involving smallholder farmers, rural women, as well as small and medium-sized agro-enterprises.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, ADB is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2016, ADB assistance totaled \$31.7 billion, including \$14 billion in co-financing.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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The GMS has been one of the world's most successful tourism development stories. More growth is on the way. Making it more balanced and sustainable is the order of the day, but will not be easy. Given the different stages of development between the GMS countries, achieving sustainability and balance may still be a very uneven process.



# **SDG 8: Tapping into talents of older persons can boost SDGs**



Women in Liberia. Picture source: UN News Centre



## SDG 8: Tapping into talents of older persons can boost SDGs

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 1 October 2017 – On the International Day of Older Persons, the United Nations is urging the world to tap into the often overlooked contributions of older persons, and calling for integrated care to improve well being and ensure they have the opportunity to contribute to development.

“By the year 2050, [one in five people](#) in the world will be aged 60 and older. It’s our goal to ensure that all older people can obtain the health services they need, whoever they are, wherever they live,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) in a news release.

Older adults are more likely to experience chronic conditions and often multiple conditions at the same time. Yet today’s health systems generally focus on the detection and treatment of individual acute diseases.

WHO’s new [Guidelines on Integrated Care for Older People](#) require health and social care providers to coordinate their services around the needs of older people through approaches such as comprehensive assessment and care plans.

Yet, even in the rich world, people may not be getting the integrated services they need. In a survey of 11 high-income countries, up to 41 per cent of adults aged 65 or older reported care coordination problems in the past two years.



“The world’s health systems aren’t ready for older populations,” said John Beard, Director of the Department of Ageing and Life course at WHO, adding that WHO’s new guidelines provide the evidence for primary care workers to put the comprehensive needs of older people, not just the diseases they come in to discuss, at the centre of the way they provide care.

The International Day of Older Persons is annually observed on 1 October to encourage efforts to counter negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older persons and ageing.

Also marking the Day, the UN Independent Expert on older people’s rights, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, urged those in power today to provide decent futures for older people – noting that they themselves will be affected by the issue in years to come.

“Unlike action on climate change, which will be our legacy for future generations, [young people in positions of power today will themselves not escape ageism](#), discrimination and the denial of human rights in older age unless we recognize now that there is a need for concrete action,” she explained.

With this in mind, she called on States to step up their efforts to determine the best way to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older people and to consider the various proposals that have been made, including the elaboration of a dedicated instrument on the rights of older people.

This year’s theme, ‘Stepping into the Future: Tapping the Talents, Contributions and Participation of Older Persons in Society,’ is about enabling and expanding the contributions of older people in their families, communities and societies at large.

The theme underscores the link between tapping the talents and contributions of older persons and achieving the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#), which is currently undergoing its third review and appraisal process.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

Ageing societies will pose a massive demographic challenge to many countries. Elderly people in poor health will be a drain. Conversely, elderly people in good health could enhance productivity and also be good, high-spending travellers. Today, excessive focus is placed on the needs and interests of millennials. Aged populations will be far more important.





# SDG 9: \$900 million for rural connectivity program in Sri Lanka



*The program will upgrade Sri Lanka's road network to connect vast rural populations to jobs and services. Source: ADB*

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



## SDG 9: \$900 million for rural connectivity program in Sri Lanka

Colombo, Sri Lanka (29 September 2017) Asian Development Bank— The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Board of Directors has approved financing of up to \$900 million for a program that will upgrade Sri Lanka's road network to connect vast rural populations to jobs and services.

"Improving Sri Lanka's poor rural transport infrastructure is key to achieving the government's development goals, which include generating 1 million jobs, boosting income levels, and developing the rural economy," said Kanzo Nakai, an ADB Senior Transport Specialist. "ADB's Second Integrated Road Investment Program aligns with the government strategy to fully connect rural development centers with upgraded rural access roads in an area that is home to about 10 million people."

Sri Lanka's economy has grown at an annual average of 6% since 2003, helping to slash poverty from 22.7% in 2002 to 6.7% in 2012-2013. Much of this progress has taken place in rural areas, where 82% of the population lives. But Sri Lanka still faces

several challenges, with poverty in some provinces and districts remaining as high as 20%. Even in comparatively better off provinces, large segments of the population live close to the poverty line and are highly vulnerable.

Progress is hindered by inadequate transport infrastructure, particularly badly maintained provincial and local roads. While there have been improvements over the last 12 years in addressing trunk road network deficiencies, work on upgrading provincial and rural roads has been relatively slow. Most rural roads cannot provide all-weather access, and parts of the trunk road network are in dilapidated condition. Providing access to markets and business opportunities will be key to boosting prosperity in rural areas.

Under a first ADB program, an \$800 million multitranché financing facility was approved in 2014 to upgrade the road network in Central,

North Central, North Western, Sabaragamuwa, and Southern Provinces, as well as a part of Western Province. The new program approved today complements this assistance by targeting three lagging provinces—Eastern, Northern, and Uva, as well as a part of Western Province—to complete coverage of all the country’s priority development centers.

About 3,400 kilometers (km) of rural access roads will be upgraded to all-weather standard, while about 340 km of national roads in the four provinces will be improved. Many of the roads are in areas that were affected by the country’s 26-year civil conflict. The program will also improve the capacity of the country’s road agencies for road safety, maintenance, research, design, and construction.

The program, which is due for completion in 2027, will deliver finance in five tranches to 2021, starting with a regular loan of \$90 million and concessional loan of \$60 million this year. The government will meet \$184.6 million of the total program cost of \$1.08 billion.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, ADB is celebrating 50 years of development partnership in the region. It is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2016, ADB assistance totaled \$31.7 billion, including \$14 billion in co-financing.

## Importance to travel & tourism

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Travel & tourism is a non-starter without transportation connectivity. The ADB has devoted massive financial resources to developing road transport networks across Asia. With its years of civil conflict now a thing of the past, Sri Lanka will also benefit from ADB funds. These roads will open up many new destinations in Sri Lanka and facilitate the role of travel & tourism as a part of the solution.



# SDG 9: \$70 million to enhance transport efficiency in Cambodia





*The project will help provide a more efficient, safe, and disaster resilient transport sector in Cambodia. Source: ADB.*



## SDG 9: \$70 million to enhance transport efficiency in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA (29 September 2017) — The Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) Board of Directors has approved a \$70 million loan to help provide a more efficient, safe, and disaster resilient transport sector in Cambodia, particularly by improving national roads in the provinces of Prey Veng, Siem Reap, and Svay Rieng along the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Southern Economic Corridor.

“In Cambodia, roads are the dominant mode of transport, making road transport critical to the country’s social and economic development. However, the road subsector in Cambodia remains inefficient and fragmented,” said Oyunchimeg Erdene, a Senior Transport Specialist at ADB. “Apart from enhancing existing roads in the three focus areas, the project will also help improve the government’s capacity in road asset management.”

Cambodia’s road networks currently have low levels of connectivity and efficiency due to incomplete regulatory frameworks, low institutional capacity, limited private sector participation, and the lack of sustainability of road assets. There is a need to repair and rehabilitate some of the over 15,400 kilometers (km) of national and provincial roads managed by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) to enhance Cambodia’s connectivity, particularly, with its neighboring countries within the GMS.

Specifically, the Road Network Improvement Project will improve 147 km of unsafe and flood prone national road sections, while providing all-weather connectivity and climate resilience. It will also enhance the government’s capacity, through MPWT, to better manage its road assets through better operations and maintenance. In addition, the project will improve people’s awareness of road safety and traffic regulations.

A notable feature of the project is the pilot testing of a hybrid performance-based contract for undertaking road works which involves construction and routine maintenance, increasing private sector participation in road maintenance. It is designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of road asset management in Cambodia by expanding the scope of contractors from project executors to road managers.

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## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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Another very important project for ASEAN and Asia as a whole. Cambodia shares land borders with Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Improved road transport will benefit trade, travel & tourism through all these countries, opening up new destinations and creating more jobs and prosperity.





# SDG 9: New policies needed to close the digital divide, says Internet Society



# Community Networks

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



## SDG 9: New policies needed to close the digital divide, says Internet Society

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, October 11, 2017 --(BUSINESS WIRE)--[The Internet Society](#) (ISOC), a global non-profit dedicated to ensuring the open development, evolution and use of the Internet, has today launched a new paper outlining policy initiatives that government, the private sector, and local actors can take to expand Internet access to underserved communities and remote areas.

In support of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and with half of the world's population still unconnected, the paper outlines the need for innovative approaches in policies to connect those in the hardest to reach places on the planet. It draws attention to Community Networks as a key example of new ways to close connectivity gaps and focuses on the need for new thinking on policies and regulations that support innovative ways to connect people.

Community Networks are built, managed and used by local communities. They offer a viable solution for affordable access in areas that traditional

networks do not reach, or a backup and redundancy solution in instances where traditional networks may fail or are insufficient.

The Internet Society is urging the 100+ Ministers attending the [World Telecommunication Development Conference](#) (WTDC) in Buenos Aires 9-20 October to implement policies on infrastructure and digital skills that enable connectivity for thousands of communities around the world.

"Enabling and supporting communities to actually connect themselves is a new way of thinking," explained Raul Echeberría, Vice President of Global Engagement for the Internet Society. "Policy makers and regulators should recognize that connectivity can be instigated from a village or a town and that they can help with innovative licensing and access to spectrum."

Access to affordable and available spectrum is critical for Community Networks and policy makers can play a key role in ensuring adequate access to it. The report examines the various ways that Community Networks can gain access to spectrum, including the use of unlicensed spectrum, sharing licensed spectrum, and innovative licensing. Network operators also play a key role in helping Community Networks. The report outlines recommendations for operators which include: access to backhaul infrastructure at fair rates, equipment and training partnerships, and the sharing of infrastructure as well as spectrum.

“For people to reap the social and economic benefits the Internet can bring, policy makers must ensure that adequate spectrum is available for community networks, citizens, and other groups seeking to develop networks and provide access to ICTs. Community Networks are a key way to help us achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, however governments must work with the private sector to promote local connectivity,” added Echeberria.

The cost to deploy Community Networks can be low. Often, the technology required to build and maintain the network is as simple as a wireless router. The networks can range from WiFi-only to mesh networks and mobile networks that provide voice and SMS services. While they usually serve communities under 3,000 people, some serve more than 50,000 users.

To read the Internet Society report entitled “Spectrum Approaches for Community Networks” please visit:

<https://www.internetsociety.org/policybriefs/spectrum>.

To learn more about Community Networks:

<https://www.internetsociety.org/issues/community-networks/>.

### **About the Internet Society**

Founded by Internet pioneers, the Internet Society (ISOC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring the open development, evolution and use of the Internet. Working through a global community of chapters and members, the Internet Society collaborates with a broad range of groups to promote the technologies that keep the Internet safe and secure, and advocates for policies that enable universal access. The Internet Society is also the organizational home of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).

Click here to download the report:

[https://www.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Spectrum-Approaches-for-Community-Networks\\_20171010.pdf](https://www.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Spectrum-Approaches-for-Community-Networks_20171010.pdf)

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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Travel & tourism forums which focus on technology also need to devote some time to bridging the digital divide. Helping local communities get connected can go a long way towards helping them attract new markets and information to upgrade the quality of their products and services.



# SDG 11: Sustainable cities key to implement SDGs





Aerial view of Lima, the capital of Peru. Photo: World Bank/Franz Mahr



## SDG 11: Sustainable cities key to implement SDGs

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 4 October 2017 – Noting the high speed of urbanization in Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations development arm in the region underlined the need to keep a close watch on the provision of services, equipment, mobility, housing and urban land to make sure they can match pace with the demand.

Speaking at the opening of the *Cities Conference*, Alicia Bárcena, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ([ECLAC](#)) underscored that despite significant progress in reducing poverty, high degrees of socioeconomic residential segregation continues to persist in metropolises and large and small cities and towns.

“Socioeconomic segregation deepens inequity and contributes to social fragmentation and the high levels of violence that characterize many cities in [the region],” she [said](#).

According to estimates, by 2030 – the timeframe to realize the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) – there could be more than 92 million additional people living in cities in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region is already the most urbanized developing region in the world.

Therefore, added Ms. Bárcena, it is necessary to guarantee the right to the city as a basic requirement for achieving sustainable development.

Concluding this Friday, the Cities Conference focuses on the regional implementation of the New Urban Agenda – the outcome of the [Habitat III](#) conference – to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.

Also at the inaugural session of the Conference, the head of ECLAC presented the Regional Action Plan for implementing the Habitat III outcome, proposing actions the countries of the region can take to ensure sustainable development of their cities and human settlements.

The Regional Action Plan is centred on six action areas, which include national urban policies; urban legal frameworks; urban and territorial planning and design; financing urbanization; local implementation; and monitoring, reporting and revision mechanisms.

The Cities Conference has been organized by ECLAC, the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the General Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean (known by its Spanish acronym, MINURVI) in Santiago, Chile.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

Cities are often the starting point of all forms of travel & tourism, whether as source-markets or destinations. Many cities are driving their sustainability agendas on the basis of improving their facilities for visitors. On the flip side, the more the hotels, malls and convention centres which come up, the more they worsen the problems of city life.





# SDG 12: Sustainable Stock Exchange report released

# Ranking the World's Stock Exchanges

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September 2017



## SDG 12: Sustainable Stock Exchange report released

(Toronto, September 27, 2017) -- The world's largest companies are under-reporting sustainability policies and performance, hampering investors' access to data that will allow them to play a full role in the transition to a low-carbon economy, according to a new report released today.

The study, [\*Measuring Sustainability Disclosure: Ranking the World's Stock Exchanges 2017\*](#), finds that of 6,441 large companies analysed, 78% disclosed payroll followed by greenhouse gases (43%) energy (40%), water (38%), waste (29%), injuries (24%) and employee turnover (15%). Over the past five years, corporate disclosure rates for GHGs, energy and waste and injuries have flat-lined while water and employee disclosure both improved at an annualized clip of 10%.

First commissioned by Aviva Plc in 2012 as part of the Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative, the report tracks corporate disclosure on seven sustainability indicators. Written by Corporate Knights, it also suggests how such disclosure can be translated

into actionable key performance indicators, which might help investors to distinguish companies that are incorporating sustainability into their value creation story.

Toby Heaps, Chief Executive Officer at *Corporate Knights*, said: "While it never made sense that investors could succeed in a society or planet that fails, emerging policy and technological drivers have advanced market fundamentals such that investing in a better world now makes sense and makes dollars. Unfortunately, the reporting gap is hobbling market feedback loops and gumming up the efficient allocation of capital. This constitutes a glaring governance failure that requires urgent redress."

Steve Waygood, Chief Responsible Investment Officer at Aviva Investors, said: "*Corporate Knights* has been among the institutional leaders on the Sustainable Stock Exchange initiative since the outset. This report shows that all the hard work has paid off. We now enjoy much better data on

environmental, social and governance issues than we did at the outset of this benchmarking work six years ago. However, while the trend is positive, the underlying rate of growth is not. At this rate, we will need to wait another generation before we have anything even approaching complete and comparable global data, even in the area of climate emissions, employee turnover and health and safety data. It is the role of IOSCO to correct market failures in this area. I believe they are currently reneging on their duty in this area. The time has come for them to step up.”

### **The report includes the following recommendation:**

In the short-term, exchanges and regulators should set a mandatory requirement for climate disclosure (building on the recommendations in the recent Financial Stability Report report of the Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures) on a “comply or explain” basis, which can help maintain clear expectations while allowing companies the flexibility they need.

### **Top exchanges**

The Helsinki Stock Exchange was the world’s best performing exchange when it came to disclosure of sustainability metrics. Over 50 per cent of its large listings disclosed all four environmental metrics – GHGs, energy, water and waste. Stock exchanges in European developed countries dominated the top

10 rankings, with the exception of the Australian Securities Exchange, Johannesburg Stock Exchange, and Stock Exchange of Thailand, which progressed from 40th place in the 2013 rankings to 10th place in this year’s ranking. The combination of voluntary reporting guidelines issued by the stock exchange in 2012 followed by mandatory disclosure requirements by the securities regulator in 2014 appears to have contributed to the continuous rise of the Stock Exchange of Thailand in the ranking.

The London Stock Exchange, which placed fourth in the ranking (up from 8th the previous year), saw 91 per cent of its large companies disclose GHGs, making it the exchange with the highest percentage of GHG disclosure among all stock exchanges surveyed. The UK’s 2013 update of the Companies Act Made GHG disclosure mandatory for listed UK incorporated companies. All of the top ten ranked stock exchanges have mandatory, prescriptive requirements for sustainability disclosure.

The Copenhagen Stock Exchange was found to be the exchange with the highest proportion of revenue from environmentally sustainable sources, at 4.4%, while Oil-rich Norway’s Oslo Stock Exchange was found to be the exchange with the highest percentage of corporate revenue from brown sources – oil & gas, thermal coal and electric utilities that use coal for electricity generation (44.5%) – followed closely by the Moscow Exchange at 43.9%. The Warsaw Stock Exchange is the most carbon-intensive stock exchange of the 55 exchanges studied, with 1,674 metric tons of GHGs per million of revenue in U.S. dollars in 2015, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq was found to be the one with the lowest carbon intensity at 76 metric tons of GHGs per million of revenue.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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Many travel & tourism companies are listed on global stock exchanges. With the stock exchanges also signing up to measure and monitor sustainability, the ripple-effect impact right across the corporate world is unlimited.



# **SDG 13: UN report sets course towards 'pollution-free planet'**



Woman wears mask to protect from pollution in China. Photo: World Bank/Curt Carnemark



## SDG 13: UN report sets course towards 'pollution-free planet'

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 28 September 2017 – While pollution has considerably negative impacts on human health and ecosystems, it is controllable and avoidable through political leadership, high-level champions and commitments, as well with local level action, says a new report launched today by the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)).

The report, Towards a pollution-free planet, was launched during the first Conference of Parties for the [Minamata Convention](#), which addresses mercury issues and ahead of the annual UN Environment Assembly, to be held in early December.

“[Pollution is a universal challenge](#) [but] the good news is that we already know what we need to do to prevent and reduce it,” UNEP Executive Director Erik Solheim said, stressing that “now the responsibility is on governments, businesses, cities and local authorities, civil society and individuals around the world to commit to act to beat pollution in all its forms.”

Outlining the negative impacts pollution has especially on the poor and the vulnerable and its direct threat to human rights; limited responses by governments, business and citizens to existing pollution; and the challenges of the current actions, the report suggests five overarching actions.

- A global compact on pollution would make pollution prevention a priority for all;
- Environmental governance needs to be strengthened at all levels;
- Sustainable consumption and production, through improved resource efficiency and lifestyle changes, should be promoted; waste reduction and management must be prioritized;
- Investment in cleaner production and consumption will help to counter pollution; and
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaborations are vital for the innovation, knowledge-sharing and trans-disciplinary research needed to develop technological and ecosystems-based solutions.

Also proposed in the report are 50 concrete actions to curb pollution in various forms, with a call for strong high-level political commitment and engagement of local government, civil society and other stakeholders.

The report stresses that although some forms of pollution have been reduced as technologies and management strategies have advanced, approximately 19 million premature deaths are estimated to occur annually as a result of the way societies use natural resources and impact the environment to support production and consumption.

“If consumption and production patterns continue as they are, the linear economic model of ‘take-make-dispose’ will seriously burden an already-polluted planet, affecting current and future generations,” the report’s foreword concludes.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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This report provides more food for thought about the need to balance the economic and ecological impact of travel & tourism. Making visitors buy more, eat more, stay longer is the survival mantra of travel & tourism. But the increased generation of garbage and waste, and consumption of energy and water, also worsens environmental problems. It’s a balancing act that travel & tourism has yet to master.





# **SDG 14: European Union sets €550 million for better governance of oceans**



## SDG 14: European Union sets €550 million for better governance of oceans

Malta, 6 October 2017, European Commission media release -- The European Commission has announced over €550 million of EU-funded initiatives to tackle global oceans challenges, at the Our Ocean Conference 2017 in Malta, co-hosted by High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

The commitments announced in Malta made by the Commission and by other public and private actors from 112 countries around the world reached over €6 billion. The resources will be invested to strengthen the fight against marine pollution and enlarge protected areas, reinforce security of the oceans, foster blue economy initiatives and sustainable fisheries and intensify the EU efforts against climate change, in line with the Paris Agreement and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) under Agenda 2030. Participants also announced the creation of new Marine Protected Areas spanning more than 2.5 million km<sup>2</sup>, or more than half the size of the entire European Union.

The full list of over 400 commitments ([36 from the EU](#), over 200 from third country governments, more than 100 from business and several others from NGOs, foundations, research institutes and international organisations) are available [online](#).

First Vice-President Frans Timmermans said: “The European Commission has demonstrated with concrete pledges its strong commitment to the sustainability, security and prosperity of our oceans. If they are at risk, so are we, for the oceans nourish our planet and our people, and they connect us to our partners around the world.”

High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini said: “The sea is a global common. It is Our Ocean because it belongs to humanity, to each and every human being. We all have a responsibility to preserve what’s common – to preserve it as a treasure and avoid that it turns into a threat. The European Union believes that a globalised world needs a more cooperative global governance. We believe in the power of diplomacy, we invest in it, we believe and invest in the power

of common rules and international institutions. And it is difficult, actually impossible, to imagine a global governance without a cooperative oceans' governance."

Commissioner Karmenu Vella said: "Three years ago I was asked by President Juncker to define the EU's global ocean role. I think together we have delivered. Our policies on land, like our commitment to the circular economy and reduced plastic waste; and at sea, on marine pollution, on protected areas, and on harnessing the ocean's clean energy, clearly demonstrate this. The European Union is earning respect and inspiring action across the planet".

Commissioner Neven Mimica said: "These two days have delivered on our Sustainable Development Goals ocean commitments. Small-scale fishermen around the world have a better chance of fishing safely, legally, and sustainably. Food chains are more secure. Coastal areas more protected. We are acting on the climate challenge. For many of our developing country partners, sustainable ocean governance is a question of survival. The road ahead is still long, but we are moving in the right direction."

The Our Ocean Conference has brought together public and private actors from six continents, who are collectively committed to the cause of better ocean governance and the sustainable use of the oceans. EU commitments reach far beyond its geographical region, to support sustainable international ocean use worldwide, focusing in particular on developing countries.

For the first time, the Conference gathered significant commitments from the private sector, including Airbus, Unilever, Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, Marks & Spencer, Carrefour, Royal Caribbean Cruises, AXA, Sky and others.

Commitments will be tracked and reported at the next Our Ocean Conference in Indonesia in 2018.

## Background

Previous conferences, hosted by the governments of the United States (2014, 2016) and Chile (2015), have seen a wide range of [commitments](#) and billions of euros pledged.

The Our Ocean 2017 Conference addressed the themes of marine protected areas, sustainable fisheries, marine pollution, and climate change. This year, the European Commission introduced the themes of blue economy and maritime security. Our Ocean engaged participants from around the globe to make significant commitments. With a focus on high-level engagement, partnership and action, the EU continues to drive other international efforts, such as delivery on the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) under Agenda 2030. The conference also complements the EU's [international ocean governance initiative](#), which set out an agenda for the future of the oceans around the world, proposing 50 concrete actions.

## More information

[Our Ocean 2017 website](#)

[Factsheet](#): EU leads the way with ambitious action for cleaner and safer seas

[MEMO](#): European Union generates global action for our ocean

## Importance to travel & tourism

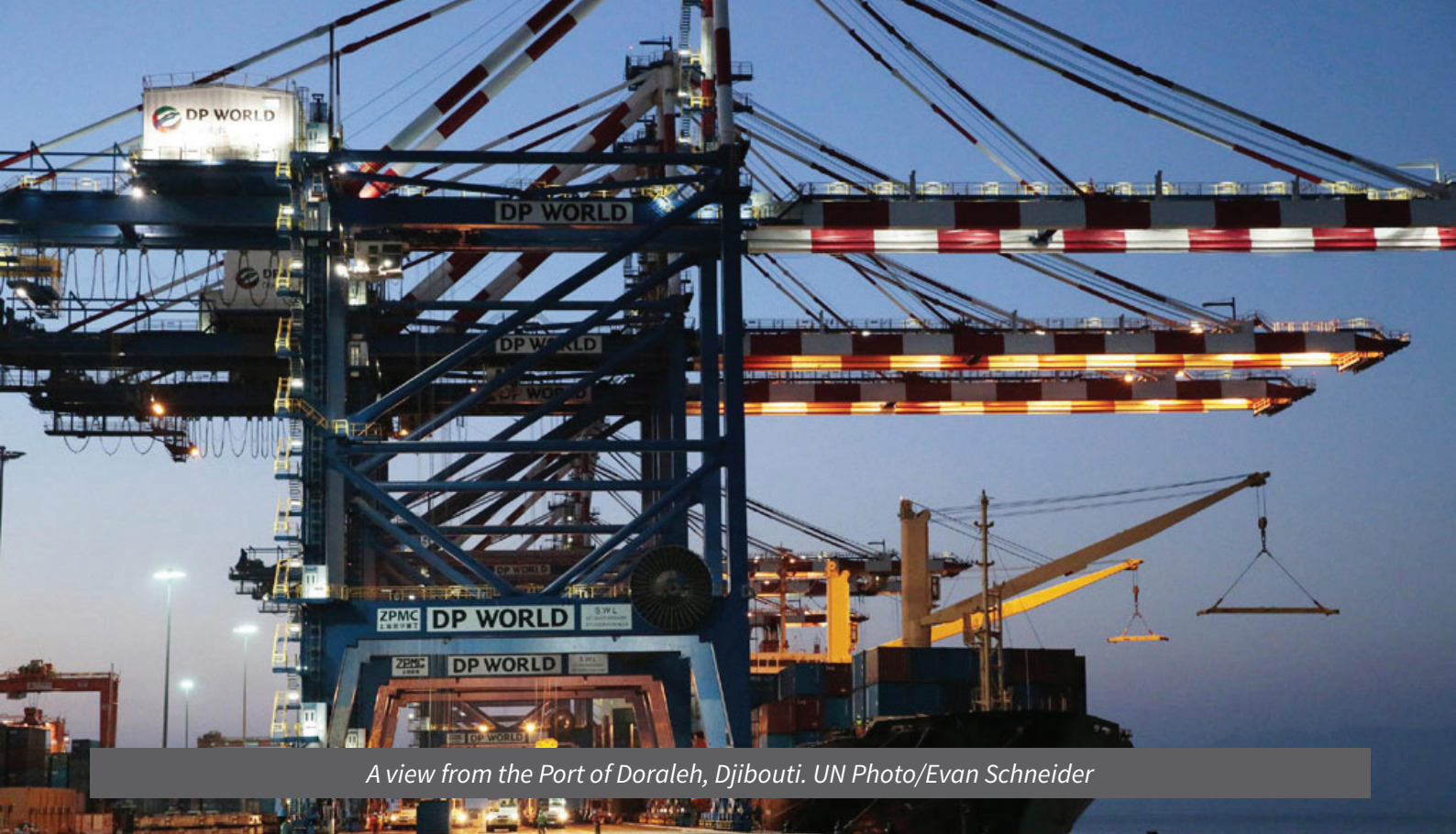
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This is a readymade blueprint for everyone involved in any form of beach tourism or marine tourism to follow, collectively and individually. All available free.



# **SDG 14: UN maritime agency flags link between shipping and sustainability**





*A view from the Port of Doraleh, Djibouti. UN Photo/Evan Schneider*



## SDG 14: UN maritime agency flags link between shipping and sustainability

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 28 September 2017 – Marking the World Maritime Day, the head of the United Nations maritime agency today highlighted contributions the shipping industry can make to the achievement of the global development goals.

“[Shipping and ports can play a significant role](#) in helping to create conditions for increased employment, prosperity and stability through promoting maritime trade. The port and maritime sectors can be wealth creators, both on land and at sea,” said Kitack Lim, the Secretary-General of International Maritime Organization (IMO), in his message for the Day, observed annually on 28 September.

To highlight this potential, the theme of the [Day](#) for this year is ‘Connecting Ships, Ports and People.’ “It will enable us to shine a spotlight on the existing cooperation between ports and ships to maintain and enhance a safe, secure and efficient maritime transportation system,” Mr. Lim said.

The benefits of a free and efficient flow of goods and trade extend far beyond the ships and ports themselves, and an effective interface between them can improve the lives of people everywhere, especially in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), adopted by UN Member States in 2015.

But, to be sustainable, human activities have to be balanced with the oceans’ capacity to remain healthy and diverse in the long term. The so-called ‘blue economy’ is a large and growing industrial sector; and, as it grows, it must remain safe and secure and not threaten the environment, he noted.

Ultimately, more efficient shipping, working in partnership with a port sector supported by governments, will be a major driver towards global stability and sustainable development for the good of all people, he concluded.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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Linked to the previous story on global oceans. What works for the commercial shipping sector can also work for the cruise sector and all forms of marine tourism. Clearly a call for all hands on deck.





# **SDG 15: Much of the planet's land severely degraded due to increased consumption**



*In Somaliland and Puntland, close to two million people are affected by the drought amid the El Niño phenomenon. WFP/Petterik Wiggers*

15 LIFE ON LAND



## SDG 15: Much of the planet's land severely degraded due to increased consumption

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 12 September 2017 – A new United Nations report warns that a third of the planet's land is now severely degraded thanks to a doubling in the consumption of natural resources over the past 30 years.

Some 15 billion trees and 24 billion tonnes of fertile soil are lost each year, according to the [Global Land Outlook](#) (GLO), launched today by the secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification ([UNCCD](#)), at the meeting of States parties taking place in Ordos, China.

The GLO takes a critical look at financial and socio-economic values of land, and its impact on the poor. It marks the first in-depth analysis of land functions viewed from multiple lenses such economic growth and global trade patterns, highlighting the inextricable links between land, these sectors, and the people that can work to save it.

“Smallholder farmers, women and indigenous communities are the most vulnerable, given their reliance on land-based resources, compounded by their exclusion from wider infrastructure and economic development,” stated a news release issued by [UNCCD](#).

Monique Barbut, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, said at the launch that land degradation and drought are global challenges and intimately linked to most, if not all aspects of human security and well-being, particularly food security, employment and migration.

“As the ready supply of healthy and productive land dries up and the population grows, competition is intensifying, for land within countries and globally,” she pointed out.

More than 60 countries have established national land degradation baselines and set neutrality targets.

In an effort to slow land degradation and maintain productive soil, over 110 countries have joined a global campaign to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal target of reaching land degradation neutrality by 2030 a national target for action.

Brazil, China, India, Nigeria, Russia and South Africa are among those that have committed to the national targets during the meeting in Ordos, a significant move for some of the world's largest and most populous nations that could mean regaining resources, job security and resilience to climate change.

Ms. Barbut noted that with the human population growing an extra 200,000 people daily, and 20 countries declaring drought emergencies over the last 18 months, there are unforeseeable challenges.

“We were clearly not sufficiently prepared for these challenges,” she said. “Hundreds of millions of people go to bed desperate, hungry and thirsty as a result. Under business-as-usual scenarios, there is no future relief.”

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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If land degradation is accelerating due to a doubling in the consumption of natural resources, it would be fair to blame travel & tourism to a considerable extent. Tourists are the most profligate consumers of water, food and energy, all three of which chew up natural resources. The proclivity to encourage shopping expenditure means more consumerism, and more consumption of natural resources. Worth thinking about.



# SDG 16: Switzerland needs to do more to keep 'dirty money' at bay, urges UN expert



*Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky. UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré*



## SDG 16: Switzerland needs to do more to keep 'dirty money' at bay, urges UN expert

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 4 October 2017 – Highlighting the problems posed by illicit financial flows globally, including undermining rule of law and human rights, a United Nations human rights expert has called on Switzerland to ensure that so called dirty money – which stems from tax evasion and corruption – does not enter its financial market.

“Despite significant efforts in adopting legislation and improving procedures to detect suspicious transactions, the [risk that the Swiss financial market is used for money laundering remains](#),” said Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, the UN [Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights](#), in a news release issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

Facilitated by weak institutions and lack of good governance in countries of origin and financial opacity in countries of destination, illicit financial flows, such as money laundering are a particular concern in developing and under developed countries, syphoning money and resources which could have otherwise used for public services.

In the case of Switzerland, the UN expert noted that the risk of money laundering is particularly highlighted by the involvement of several banks in the Petrobras corruption scandal and in the suspicious cash flows linked to the Malaysian sovereign fund 1MDB.



“It is especially troubling that these events are not from years ago – the money was still being accepted until quite recently,” added Mr. Bohoslavsky, who today concluded his first official visit to the European nation.

In the news release, the expert also underlined that criminal sanctions in Switzerland for assisting foreigners to evade taxes remained relatively weak noting that criminal liability arises only if the tax evaded in a foreign jurisdiction exceeds 300,000 CHF (about \$307,500).

He also urged that the staffing, resources and powers of the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority needed to be proportional to the size of the Swiss financial market, and those who infringed standards needed to be named to ensure individual corporate accountability.

Further, noting that favourable tax arrangements in Switzerland made it attractive for multinational corporations to establish their headquarters in the country, but also provided incentives for profit-shifting, affecting tax revenues in foreign countries.

“I call upon the Swiss authorities to carry out a social and human rights impact assessment of the proposed corporate tax reform package, which should include an analysis of how the reforms will impact on tax revenues available for the realization of economic and social rights within Switzerland and for individuals living abroad, in particular in developing countries,” said the UN expert.

Mr. Bohoslavsky visited the country at the invitation of the Swiss authorities, where he met with Government officials as well as with leaders in the banking, financial and trading sectors, civil society and the academia in Bern (the capital), Basel, Geneva and Zurich.

His findings and key recommendations will be presented in a comprehensive report to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council – the highest UN intergovernmental forum on rights issues – in March 2018.

Independent Experts and Special Rapporteurs are appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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Almost 100% of the focus for curbing terrorist financing is directed at the Islamic countries. This public comment shows that countries such as Switzerland have long been safe havens for money laundering, corruption and organised crime syndicates, and hence conduits for terrorism and conflict. Perhaps a more equitable sharing of the blame may help level the playing field.



**SDG 16: New UN Day honours interpreters who ensure diplomats are 'on the same page'**



*United Nations interpreters provide simultaneous translation for a Security Council meeting (November 2008).  
UN Photo/Paulo Filgueiras*



## SDG 16: New UN Day honours interpreters who ensure diplomats are ‘on the same page’

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 29 September 2017 – Recognizing the unsung heroes behind international diplomacy, the United Nations is celebrating – for the first time – International Translation Day, paying tribute to the work of the language professionals who play a vital role in facilitating dialogue and understanding among peoples and nations.

The simultaneous issuance of UN documents in the six official languages of Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish is made possible by UN translators who, transpose content from the original texts into their main language.

Katherine Durnin, head of the UN English translation service, explained to UN News how her work ensures that Member States are using the correct texts during their discussions, thereby contributing to the overarching goals of the Organization.

“We ensure that when they are debating any subject, they all understand the same message, enabling their discussion to move forward in the language they know,” Ms. Durnin said. “In that way, they can reach the proper agreement because with the translations they are all on the same page.”

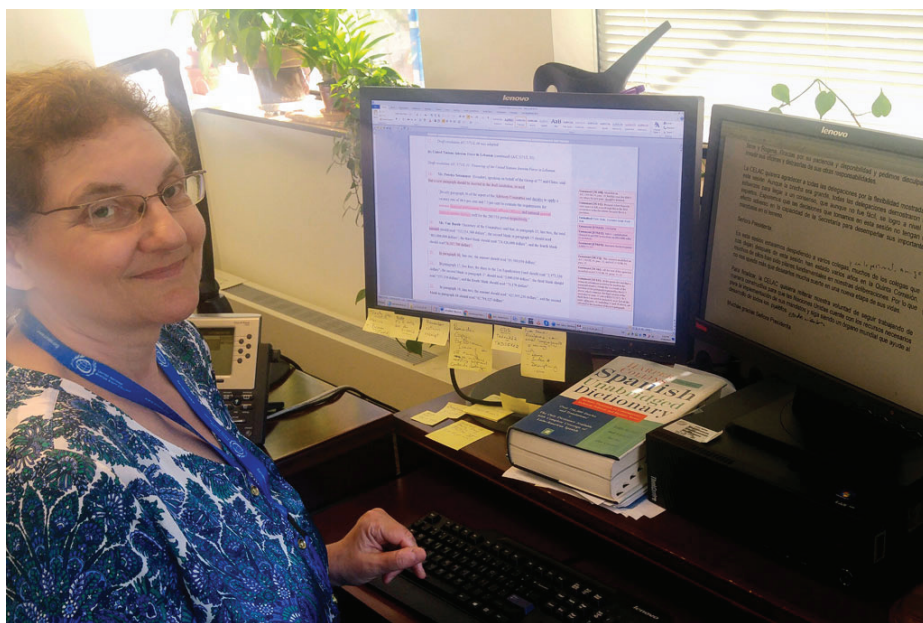
In declaring the [International Day](#) earlier this year, the General Assembly affirmed that “professional translation, as a trade and an art, plays an important role in upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, bringing nations together, facilitating dialogue, understanding and cooperation, contributing to development and strengthening world peace and security.”



Ms. Durnin noted that this recognition has lifted morale “amongst translators, interpreters, editors... anyone who works on documentation.”

“We play a behind-the-scenes role and we understand that,” she stated. “The idea of being a translator is that someone doesn’t actually know that the text they are looking at is a translation; we are supposed to be invisible.”

“But,” she added with a smile “it is great to have that recognition now and then. Once a year, now we can pat ourselves on the back before we recede back into the background.”



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*Katherine Durnin,  
head of the UN English  
translation service.  
Photo: Elizabeth Scaffidi*

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Ms. Durnin also admitted that it is nice to be acknowledged outside of the profession, saying “we ourselves understand the difficulty of the work that we do, but it is great to have that recognition across the UN in general.”

Professional translation also includes interpreters, verbatim reporters and terminologists.

Translators handle a range of documents that cover every topic on the UN’s global agenda – with new issues arising every day. They not only command multiple languages, but are also well versed in the proper way to go about translating them – indispensable in a political climate.

“We spend a lot of time doing research, becoming sort of experts in the areas that we are translating from,” said Ms. Durnin. “A lot of the behind-the-scenes work that we do involves clarifying, understanding the message and understanding the meaning that was intended,” she explained, adding that they often have to do research or go directly to the experts for explanations.

“It is very exacting, difficult work to do,” she stated, adding that interpreters have to understand and clearly express what the speaker intends to say during meetings – in real time.

#### *Translation at the UN*

The UN is one of the world’s largest employers of language professionals. Several hundred such staff work in UN offices in New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, or at the UN regional commissions in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Geneva and Santiago.

Translators are only one type of “language professionals” employed at the UN. They also include: interpreters; editors; verbatim reporters; terminologists; reference assistants; and copy preparers/proofreaders/production editors.

Some of the first UN translators had no official training, but instead spoke multiple languages at home. Over the years that has changed, and to be hired now as a UN translator one must meet several criteria, including educational requirements and passing a language exam.

Fortunately, more universities are training translators with the UN in mind. A number of them have signed a memorandum of understanding with the UN to ensure that their curriculums cover the different areas needed by the Organization.

“That has really helped to create a pipeline of new young well-trained translators, who even as they are graduating, already have a good grounding in the type of work we need for the United Nations,” Ms. Durnin said.

Asked about modern-day apps and software programmes that offer instant translations, her response was enthusiastic: “I think they’re wonderful!”

She credited them with bringing people on holiday together, “to communicate with the locals,” making travellers “so much more aware of the beauty of communicating with other people.”

However, she pointed out, while they do well with small segments of texts, they will not replace a professional translator, who will provide “the full complete message in proper English.”

Ms. Durnin confirmed the use of computer-assisted translation at the UN, but only to help with efficiency. “Human language is always going to be more complex than something that machines can deal with,” she noted. “If you want to have an agreement between countries on nuclear non-proliferation, I don’t think you want to leave it up to a machine.”

## Importance to travel & tourism

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Every MICE organiser knows the importance of translators and interpreters. Recognising their contribution as unsung heroes has been long overdue. Finally, that day has arrived.





# **SDG 17: UN Deputy Chief shown how Japanese society has embraced SDGs**



Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed visits “Fashion as Action: Supporting Sustainable Society Through Clothes”, an exhibition of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Photo: UNIC Tokyo/Takashi Okano

17 PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



## SDG 17: UN Deputy Chief shown how Japanese society has embraced SDGs

WASHINGTON, September 26, 2017 – Millions of young students in low and middle-income countries face United Nations, (UN News Centre) 3 October 2017 – Concluding her three-day visit to Japan today, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed today noted how much the Japanese society has embraced the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) as a compass guiding to a more prosperous future for themselves.

“Throughout my visit, I have been impressed to see how much the [SDGs](#) are embraced enthusiastically in Japan by the business community represented by Japan Business Federation (*Keidanren*), civil society, media, and young students,” said Ms. Mohammed.

Referring to her visit to the Paralympic Support Center at the Nippon Foundation, which is extremely inclusive in its barrier-free structure and in its workforce, as well as her meeting with the ‘Tokyo2020’ Olympic and Paralympic Games Organizing Committee, she expressed her high expectation that taking Paralympic sport as starting point, Japan would open up towards people with disabilities as a whole. The Deputy Secretary-General shared these observations in her meeting with Foreign Minister Kono Taro today.

Ms. Mohammed also paid a visit to the exhibition at JICA Global Plaza on ethical fashion titled “Fashion as Action: Supporting Sustainable Society Through Clothes.” The exhibition explains how consumers can contribute to sustainable development by being sensitive to how fashion items they buy are produced and disposed. The Deputy Secretary-General was extremely impressed with how these messages were communicated with fun in an innovative way.

## Importance to travel & tourism

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Japan has reinvented itself many times through history. It is doing so again, in line with the new set of global priorities. Other countries will eventually do the same. As a sector, travel & tourism can also take a lead in this endeavour.



# **SDG 17: OECD Ministers rethink development and call for a new box of co-operation tools**





# EMBRACING DEVELOPMENT'S COMPLEXITY

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## SDG 17: OECD Ministers rethink development and call for a new box of co-operation tools

OECD Development Centre, Paris, 3 October 2017  
- Policy makers in developing economies are confronted with increasingly complex decisions as they balance their economic, social and environmental agendas. While rising income levels help improve development outcomes, they also bring about new challenges and demands from emerging middle-classes.

Those issues were addressed at the Fourth High-level Meeting of the OECD Development Centre Governing Board held today in Paris, in the framework of the Centre's 55th Anniversary and its *Development Week* under the heading of "Embracing Development's Complexity". The meeting, opened by OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría, brought together officials from 52 member countries, international organisations and civil society representatives, under the co-chairmanship of Argentina and Cabo Verde.

The discussions focused on the opportunities and challenges faced by countries *transitioning* to higher income levels, the consequences of *international migration* for developing countries, and the drivers of *gender inequality*. Participants also acknowledged the role of the extractive sector in development and welcomed the achievements of the OECD Policy Dialogue on Natural Resource-based Development. Advancing the agenda of these policy areas is instrumental for the Development Centre's work in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"New partnerships, more dialogue, better measurements and more innovative tools will all be necessary for a sustained transition. Our priority now is to translate "development in transition" into "development in action," which



expands opportunities for all countries and people”, said OECD Development Centre’s Director and Special Advisor to the OECD Secretary General on Development Mario Pezzini.

Debates around *development in transition* welcomed the developing world’s significant progress in terms of stronger growth and poverty eradication, but also recognised persistent and new challenges countries face as they move across levels of income. They agreed on the need to sustain successful development trajectories by adapting international cooperation to current development realities. To this end, they called for a broad set of development and well-being indicators, beyond income-based metrics, to better assess progress and needs of countries at different levels of development.

Member countries asked the Governing Board of the Development Centre to be an open platform to shed light on the consequences of transitions and develop a box of tools to tackle them – from domestic policy to international co-operation, including South-South and Triangular Co-operation. The Centre will work with Member countries, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the Finance Centre for South-South Cooperation, and other relevant stakeholders to advance this agenda.

The High-Level Meeting saluted the work of the Development Centre on migration in developing countries and the outcomes of its first Policy Dialogue on *Migration and Development*. It emphasised the importance of better managing the complex interrelations between migration and other public policies, with specific focus on emerging and developing economies.

It also agreed on the need to promote greater coherence to enable the positive contribution of international migration to development, using tools such as the *Dashboard of indicators for measuring policy and institutional coherence for migration and development*, developed jointly by the Development Centre, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank Group, within the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD).

In their discussion of *gender equality and women’s economic empowerment*, participants reaffirmed the importance of tackling discriminatory social

norms and institutions in the identification of evidence-based policies in support of achieving the SDGs. They stressed the prominence of the Centre’s Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) as an official data source to track progress on SDG 5. This complements the Centre’s actions through the Policy Dialogue on Women’s Economic Empowerment and support for the G20 *eskills4girls initiative*.

Countries adopted a [Policy Statement on Natural Resource-based Development](#) and welcomed the OECD Development Centre’s contribution to the G7 CONNEX Initiative.

Participants gathered at the High-Level Meeting agreed to :

- Contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and provide tools of measurements for development notably through the launch of a new open platform on Development in Transition within the Governing Board of the OECD Development Centre, to exchange knowledge and best practices and develop concrete proposals.
- Broaden and promote the use of the Dashboard of migration indicators to foster policy and institutional coherence so as member and partner countries along regional organisations can better enable the positive contribution of international migration to development in developing countries of origin, transit and destination.
- Advance the national and international implementation of SDG 5 on gender equality, while enhancing data collection and the impact of the Centre’s work on SIGI, not only as a strong data source to monitor discriminatory social norms and institutions, but also as an instrument for evidence-based policy guidance in developing countries.
- Develop principles for contracts in the extractive sector, in partnership with CONNEX, and explore ways to develop synergies between sustainable management of renewable and non-renewable natural resources for countries’ long-term development.

Finally, the High-Level Meeting reaffirmed the OECD Development Centre's unique role in the international architecture as a platform for analysis and policy dialogue on an equal footing amongst countries at different stages of development capable of providing tailored solutions to complex policy challenges to stimulate growth and improve living conditions.

Access the full version of the [High-Level Meeting Communiqué](#) and the [Policy Statement on Natural Resource-based Development](#).

## **Importance to travel & tourism**

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There's that critical word again: BALANCE. Indeed, balancing the complexity of the development process is now the over-arching priority. An elusive pursuit in search of a solution.



# **SDG 17: Natural disasters to become more destructive in Asia-Pacific**

## Disaster impacts in Asia and the Pacific, 2016

	Lives lost	People affected	Estimated damage (million \$, current)
Floods	3,250	13,785,307	35,846
Storms	880	6,345,793	11,409
Droughts	-	13,381,000	3,000
Extreme temperature	336	158,100	1,727
Earthquakes	198	613,022	24,407
Others	323	240,480	835
Total	4,987	34,523,702	77,223

Source: EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database. (Accessed on 4 July 2017)



## SDG 17: Natural disasters to become more destructive in Asia-Pacific

Bangkok (ESCAP News) 10 October 2017 -- Natural disasters are becoming more frequent and intense and disaster risk is outpacing resilience in Asia-Pacific, the most disaster-prone region in the world, according to the latest report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

In recent months, the region has seen Typhoon Hato unleash large scale damage in Hong Kong, and Macau, that stretched all the way to Vietnam, along with torrential monsoon rains in Bangladesh, India and Nepal that claimed more than 900 lives and affected another 41 million people.

*Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2017* shows that the greatest impacts of disasters are in countries which have the least capacity to prepare or respond to these events. Between 2000 and 2015, the low- and lower middle-income countries in the region experienced almost 15 times more disaster deaths than the region's high-income countries.

Launching the report at the first ESCAP Disaster Resilience Week in Bangkok today, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP Dr. Shamshad Akhtar underlined that action on early warning systems is critical, and called for more innovative sources of disaster risk financing to protect people's livelihoods.

"Disasters can very quickly strip poor people of their livelihoods bringing deeply disruptive impacts that push them back into absolute poverty or trap them in an intergenerational transmission of poverty. Developing cost-effective financing is needed to decrease the existing resilience gaps," said Dr. Akhtar.

“The absence of an institutionalized insurance culture and adequate post disaster financing threaten our extraordinary economic and developmental achievements. Promoting more, and deeper, collaboration among countries in the region on disaster risk financing will be an ESCAP priority. We have the opportunity to get it right and we cannot fail as millions of peoples’ lives and livelihoods depend on it,” she added.

Beyond the human costs, ESCAP research indicates that between 2015 and 2030, forty per cent of global economic losses from disasters will be in Asia and the Pacific, while the region accounts for around 36 per cent of global GDP. It also shows that future natural disasters may have greater destructive potential. The greatest burden of the losses as a proportion of GDP will be borne by Small Island Developing States with average annual losses close to 4 per cent of their GDP while the least developed countries will have annual losses of around 2.5 per cent of GDP.

The report examines the relationship between the impact of disasters, poverty and inequality, highlighting a 0.13-point increase in the Gini coefficient per disaster incidence in the region, and points out the scientific and technical advances in forecasting that can identify new risks and vulnerabilities, and anticipate extreme events.

ESCAP argues that measures for disaster risk reduction should take account of the shifting risks associated with climate change, especially in risk hotspots where a greater likelihood of change coincides with a higher concentration of poor, vulnerable or marginalized people. Although interventions to reduce disaster risk cannot alone prevent conflict, they should be part of an integrated approach to conflict prevention and peace-building.



*The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report aims to assist policymakers, in both public and private sectors, to better understand disaster risk and resilience and take the many opportunities for action.*

The report was launched at the opening of the ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction, where senior policy makers from across Asia and the Pacific will discuss how to build regional resilience in the context of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Please find the report here: <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Asia-Pacific%20Disaster%20Report%202017%20%28Full%29.pdf>

## Importance to travel & tourism

Nothing disrupts travel & tourism more than hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, etc. The UN ESCAP report contains many valuable suggestions about what can be done to at least alleviate the damage and destruction. It's not very different from fire protection and prevention.



