



THE OLIVE TREE

Edition 3. September- October 2017

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

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THE OLIVE TREE

Design & Layout: **Nusreen Ekachon**



MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE EDITOR

IMTIAZ MUQBIL

Welcome to Edition 3 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 September-October 2017 edition commemorates both the International Day of Peace (Sept 21) and World Tourism Day (Sept 27). As the theme of this year's World Tourism Day is Sustainability, the conceptual content of this edition focuses on peace and sustainability, both of which are conjoined twins.

This edition contains five items of critical relevance to the youth, the emerging millennials who unfortunately are en route to inheriting a world that is neither at peace nor sustainable, thanks to the mistakes of the outgoing generation.

Two thought-provoking items are the interview with UN Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake on how the global youth can lead implementation of the SDG agenda and the interview with outgoing UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien on preventing conflict.

Another three items are about stepped-up efforts to measure the progress of the SDG challenge, which will make it possible to analyse the return on investment and resource allocation. One very important item is targeted at educators, and offers guidance on how to teach the SDGs.

The lead story highlights the global essay competition on promoting the SDGs organised with UN support. That project has motivated me to initiate the first such essay competition specifically for the travel & tourism industry. Details will be published on my website: www.travel-impact-newswire.com.

I trust the wealth of data, policies, projects and information resources compiled here will help readers take a broader and far-sighted view of this industry of peace, and strive to influence change rather than be influenced by it.

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

Feedback and comments are welcome. Email: Imtiaz@travel-impact-newswire.com



MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR OF MACAO GOVERNMENT TOURISM OFFICE

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

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) and its subsidiary Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa (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:

Winners of Multilingual Essay Contest on SDGs

6 June 2017 Princeton, New Jersey - ELS Educational Services is pleased to announce that 60 students have been selected as winners of the 2017 *Many Languages, One World*® international essay contest. 2017 is the fourth year ELS Educational Services and the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) have sponsored *Many Languages, One World*.

This year ELS and the UNAI also welcome Northeastern University as the host of the *Many Languages, One World* Global Youth Forum and the sponsor and organizer of the Northeastern University Global Youth Symposium.

The *Many Languages, One World* contest challenged college and university students around the globe to write an essay in one of the six official languages of the United Nations: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. More than 6,000 individuals from 170 countries and over 1,950 universities participated in the initial phase of the contest.

Participants attend many prestigious universities including Jiangsu University, The University of Cambridge, Columbia University, The University of Edinburgh, Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, McGill University, Clemson University, Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne, Universiti Putra Malaysia, The University of British Columbia, New York University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Tecnológico de Monterrey, SRM University, and Bowling Green State University. At the Global Youth Forum, students were organized into groups based on the languages of their essays, and were asked to form action plans related to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On 21 July, 2017, students presented those action plans in the UN General Assembly. The presentations were broadcast live in the six official languages on WebTV.UN.org.

Winners also attended the Northeastern University Global Youth Symposium, sponsored and organized by Northeastern University, where they attended educational symposiums and visit notable sights throughout Boston including the Freedom Trail and Fenway Park.

Of the 60 winners, nine were unable travel to the event due to issues with obtaining visas or prior commitments. Those students were invited to share a video, spoken in the language of their essay, to be shown at the United Nations in lieu of their speeches.

The event was promoted via social media using the hashtag #MLOW2017.

The winners are as follows:

NAME	UNIVERSITY	HOME COUNTRY
ARABIC GROUP		
Abdul Gafoor Kunnathodi	Jawaharlal Nehru University	India
Adrien Canaan	Sciences Po	France
Ashham Saleel	Mahatma Gandhi University	India
Nellikkaavatitayil		
Chu Fang	Peking University	China
Mohammad Affan	Jawaharlal Nehru University	India
Muhammed Shereef	Jawaharlal Nehru University	India
Muhammed Mansu Mansoor	Madeenathul Uloom Arabic College	India
Kattilasserri		
Natalya Vladimirovna Schneider	Defense Language Institute	United States
Shabab Anwar	University for Foreigners of Perugia	India
Yiqing Shen	The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Rothberg International School	China
CHINESE GROUP		
Bolor Mendbayar	New Medicine Medical Institute	Mongolia
Chanmi Hwang	Seoul National University	South Korea
Gugulethu Jemaine Nyathi	Jiangsu University	Zimbabwe
Humay Abdurahmanova	Zhejiang University	Turkmenistan
Jimena Chacon Quesada	Beijing Language And Culture University	Costa Rica
Meerim Zholdosbekova	Shanghai International Studies University	Kyrgyzstan
Oleksandra Stryzhak	Kyiv National Linguistic University	Ukraine
Olga Efrim	Northwest Normal University	Moldova
Paraskeva Verginis	Beijing Language And Culture University	Greece
Timur Viktorovich Ivanov	Central University of Finance and Economics	Kazakhstan
ENGLISH GROUP		
Albina Chymbru	Ewha Womans University	Ukraine
Annelijne Veronique Verburgt	Stockholm University	Netherlands
Barbara Rafaela Da Silva Machado	Universidade Federal De Minas Gerais	Brazil
Clara Mayerl	University Of Essex	France
Indira Boutier	Aix-Marseille Universite	France
Jamilya Nurkanova	Nazarbayev University	Kazakhstan
Marwa Hagi	University Of Bologna	Italy
Milena Malteze Zuffo	University Of Sao Paulo	Brazil
Sara Jeffar	Ibn Tofail University	Morocco
Viktoria Budyakova	Southern Federal University	Russia
FRENCH GROUP		
Chenyang Yin	University Of Cambridge	China
Lin Hur	The Universite Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3	South Korea
Marwa Azelmat	National School Of Applied Sciences Kenitra	Morocco
Michaela Christine Hylen	Truman State University	United States
Miguel Madrid Vertel	Ecole Nationale Supérieur d'architecture de Paris-La Villette	Colombia

NAME	UNIVERSITY	HOME COUNTRY
FRENCH GROUP		
Nada Zeineb Ben Jemaa	American University of Beirut	Tunisia
Natalia Florencio	Sciences Po Lyon	Brazil
Nick Samuel Bloom	University of Bristol	United Kingdom
Safaa Guennoun	IMT Atlantique	Morocco
Saloni Ashish Ghatnekar	H.R. College of Commerce and Economics	India
RUSSIAN GROUP		
Giuzal Abdullaeva	Issyk-Kul State University	Kyrgyzstan
Iana Scvarovskaia	Kyiv National University of Trade and Economics	Moldova
Karina Kaliyeva	E.A. Buketov Karaganda State University	Kazakhstan
Nargiza Mukhtorova	University of World Economy and Diplomacy	Uzbekistan
Nigina Fayzullo qizi	Bukhara State University	Uzbekistan
Yuldasheva		
Olena Olehivna Onufriiv	Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv	Ukraine
Saikal Amanbekovna	Moscow State Institute of International Relations	Kyrgyzstan
Amanbekova		
Serhii Lashyn	Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University	Ukraine
Sokhib Saidov	Mari State University	Uzbekistan
Zhanara Kangtarbay	Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations And World Languages	Kazakhstan
SPANISH GROUP		
Adriana Stejeran	Babes-Bolyai University	Romania
Amanda Moraes Azevedo	Universidade Federal Da Bahia	Brazil
Aynur Garayeva	Azerbaijan University of Languages	Azerbaijan
Camila Negrao Guilherme	Federal University of ABC	Brazil
Julia Rabelo Mousinho	University Centre of the Federal District	Brazil
Long Cheng	Beijing Foreign Studies University	China
Matheus Reis Da Silva	University of Sao Paulo Medical School	Brazil
Oksana Vedmidska	University of Hildesheim	Ukraine
Rafal Jennek	Uppsala University	Poland
Reina Rabi Hamdan	Lebanese University	Lebanon

Importance to travel & tourism

Following on from the UN essay competition, this edition of The Olive Tree will mark the launch of a corresponding essay competition in the travel & tourism industry, the first of its kind. The objectives will be the same as the global competition. Further details will be announced separately and posted on the Travel Impact Newswire website: www.travel-impact-newswire.com



SDG 1:

World Bank: Three reasons why Indigenous Peoples matter



Photo: hbieser / Pixabay



SDG 1: World Bank: Three reasons why Indigenous Peoples matter

(World Bank update) -- August 9 was the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. Worldwide, there are about 370 million Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities living in more than 90 countries worldwide. No matter where we live or who we are, we should all care about Indigenous Peoples. Why?

First, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities are more likely to be poor.

Although Indigenous Peoples make up only 5% of the global population, they account for about 15% of the world's extreme poor. They are overrepresented.

And if you're from an indigenous family in Latin America, then you're three times more likely to be in poverty than someone from a non-indigenous family in the same region.

[Download report: [*Indigenous Latin America in the Twenty-First Century*](#)]

Second, while there have been advances, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities continue to face exclusion and marginalization, and lack equal access to basic services.

From India to Peru, indigenous women are less likely to use healthcare facilities for childbirth because of discrimination, mistreatment, and a lack of respect for cultural practices.

Indigenous Peoples' life expectancy is up to 20 years lower than the life expectancy of non-indigenous people worldwide.

In Latin America, despite the major expansion of basic services, indigenous populations' access to sanitation and electricity is 15% and 18% lower, respectively, than that of others in the region.

[**Download report:** [Inclusion Matters: The Foundation of Shared Prosperity](#)]

Third, Indigenous Peoples help protect our environment, fight climate change, and build resilience to natural disasters, yet their rights aren't always protected.

While Indigenous Peoples own, occupy, or use a quarter of the world's surface area, they safeguard 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity.

Over 20% of the world's tropical forest carbon is stored in Indigenous People's territories in the Amazon Basin, Mesoamerica, the DRC, and Indonesia.

However, only a fraction of indigenous lands are officially recognized by states.

The year of 2017 marks the 10th anniversary of the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

It reminds us just how big the challenge remains – to secure Indigenous Peoples' basic rights and make sure they're included in the development process, so they have the opportunity to live safer, healthier, and more prosperous lives.

Related:

- [Facebook Live on Indigenous Peoples - English](#)
- [Facebook Live on Indigenous Peoples - Spanish](#)
- Learn more about the world's Indigenous Peoples [here](#).
- **Subscribe** to our [Sustainable Communities newsletter](#)
- **Follow us** on Twitter ([@WBG_Cities](#)) and [Flipboard](#)

Importance to travel & tourism

Travel & tourism refers to indigenous people as “local communities” or “hilltribes”. Many have benefitted from tourism, but many others have been displaced by other forms of mass development projects. Travel & tourism can, and does, play a major role in helping them preserve their culture, heritage and traditions. They deserve to get a more prominent voice, profile and presence at global travel & tourism events.



SDG 1: The Tech Revolution That's Changing How We Measure Poverty



Melissa Grant/The Human Geographic/World Bank



SDG 1: The Tech Revolution That's Changing How We Measure Poverty

The World Bank, July 27, 2017 - The world has an ambitious goal to end extreme poverty by 2030. But, without good poverty data, it is impossible to know whether we are making progress, or whether programs and policies are reaching those who are the most in need.

Countries, often in partnership with the World Bank Group and other agencies, measure poverty and wellbeing using household surveys that help give policymakers a sense of who the poor are, where they live, and what is holding back their progress. Once a paper-and-pencil exercise, technology is beginning to revolutionize the field of household data collection, and the World Bank is tapping into this potential to produce more and better poverty data.

It wasn't long ago that to conduct household surveys, data collectors from national statistical offices would set off on a journey across the country to interview respondents on a set of questions, equipped with nothing but a paper questionnaire on which to jot down the information. Most were

incredibly diligent. Others, less so. Either way, these data collectors would return to the statistical office, their hand-written notes would be transferred to a computer system, and after a bunch of data calculations, voila: a country's poverty rate.

Understandably, this method had its flaws. Beyond simple human error, the act of transferring the data from paper to a computer created mistakes.

These days, technology is helping to weed out these data quality issues without changing the underlying process. Data collectors still have to travel to towns and cities near and far, but now they are equipped with tablets, which not only automatically sync survey answers to a centralized system as they are entered, but also include GPS trackers to ensure that those collecting the data are going where they need to and interviewing the right respondents. This has helped cut down on data errors and streamlined the process.

And when data collectors (also called enumerators) cannot travel to certain areas, or when a country simply wants more frequent, real-time poverty and welfare data, mobile phones have become the tool of choice to reach a broad sample of people and better understand their experiences in a cost-effective way. Mobile phone surveys have become a reliable and useful complement to household surveys, and in many cases are enabling countries to reach and respond to their citizens during crises, conflict, and economic shocks when face-to-face data collection would be extremely difficult and when immediate information is critical.

“Technology can be harnessed in three different ways,” says Utz Pape, an economist with the World Bank. “It can help improve data quality of existing surveys, it can help to increase the frequency of data collection to complement traditional household surveys, and can also open up new avenues of data collection methods to improve our understanding of people’s behaviors.”

As technology is changing the field of data collection, researchers are continuing to find new ways to build on the power of mobile phones and tablets.

The World Bank’s [Pulse of South Sudan](#) initiative, for example, takes tablet-based data collection a step further. In addition to conducting the household survey, the enumerators also record a short, personalized testimonial with the people they are interviewing, revealing a first-person account of the situation on the ground. Such testimonials allow users [to put a human face](#) on data and statistics, giving a fuller picture of the country’s experience.

Real-time data through mobile phones

At the same time, more and more countries are generating real-time data through high-frequency surveys, capitalizing on the proliferation of mobile phones around the world. The World Bank’s Listening to Africa (L2A) initiative has piloted the use of mobile phones to regularly collect information on living conditions. The approach combines face-to-face surveys with follow-up mobile phone interviews to collect data that allows to monitor well-being.

The initiative hands out mobile phones and solar chargers to all respondents. To minimize the risk

of people dropping out, the respondents are given credit top-ups to stay in the program. From monitoring [health care facilities in Tanzania](#) to collecting data on [frequency of power outages in Togo](#), the initiative has been rolled out in six countries and has been used to collect data on a wide range of areas.

“While collecting data through mobile phones is a relatively recent phenomenon, in five years, this will become a very common approach to data collection,” says Johannes Hoogeveen, a lead economist in the Poverty Global Practice in the Africa region. “The technology revolution has just begun and with the right capacity in national statistical offices and with a proper funding model, the opportunities for collecting data through technology from a development standpoint are limitless.”

Hoogeveen thinks that this approach could work particularly well in [fragile and conflict settings as well as during crises](#) such as natural disasters, famine, and pandemics. For instance, mobile phone surveys were used to monitor the Ebola crisis in West Africa, the floods in Dar es Salaam, and the forced displacement in Mali.

But Hoogeveen cautions that the approach is still in its early stages and it needs to strengthen linkages with policy responses so that its true value is realized, and that could help bring in additional funding and aid in further scaling up.

Technology-driven data collection efforts haven’t been restricted to the Africa region alone. In fact, the approach was piloted early in Peru and Honduras with the [Listening 2 LAC program](#). In Europe and Central Asia, the World Bank has rolled out the [Listening to Tajikistan](#) program, which was designed to monitor the impact of the Russian economic slowdown in 2014 and 2015.

Initially a six-month pilot, the initiative has now been in operation for 29 months, and a partnership with UNICEF and JICA has ensured that data collection can continue for the next 12 months. Given the volume of data, the team is currently working to create a multidimensional fragility index, where one can monitor a set of well-being indicators – ranging from food security to quality jobs and public services - on a monthly basis.

“Using technology to collect data can be seen as a new solution to an old problem,” says Joao Pedro Azevedo, a lead economist with the Poverty Global Practice at the World Bank, who co-leads the Listening to Tajikistan initiative with William Hutchins Seitz. “However, what we really need is a change in our mindset since we often catch ourselves only applying new technology to an old paradigm. Moving forward, we also need to explore what new questions can and should we be asking with this new survey modes, and how to use such platforms to monitor results directly.”

A look into the future

Already, we can see a glimpse of this future. In Tajikistan, the team is installing Smart Survey boxes in selected households to monitor energy usage. Given the country’s massive energy challenge, the boxes are sending automatic data about power outage in real-time and could help monitor energy quality. The team is also collaborating with the big data unit of the World Bank to calibrate and validate machine learning algorithms trained on geospatial information such as night light, which will enable them to understand the patterns of power outages beyond the 150 locations with the Smart Survey boxes.

In a pilot project in Somalia, a team is using about 200 GPS trackers to study the migration pattern of nomads. The effort will aim to help include nomads being represented in future surveys, provide more analysis on when, how, and where do they migrate, and could help improve public service delivery.

There are other initiatives, such as in Mexico where the [World Bank and its partners are using satellite imagery](#) and survey data to estimate how many people live below the poverty line down to the municipal level, or guiding data collectors using satellite images to pick a representative sample for the Somali High Frequency Survey. However, despite the innovation, these initiatives are not intended to replace traditional household surveys, which still form the backbone of measuring poverty. When better integrated, they can prove to be a formidable set of tools for data collection to provide the best evidence possible to policymakers.

Alvin Etang Ndip, a World Bank economist who leads the Listening to Africa initiative, aptly summed up these innovations: “The tech revolution is really changing the way we work. For the better.”



Children run in the mountain village of Pastigov, Tajikistan. The Listening to Tajikistan initiative uses mobile phones to monitor the well-being of people and collects data on a host of indicators ranging from food security to jobs and public services. Credit: Ronan Shenav

Importance to travel & tourism

This World Bank project could be of significant benefit in helping the travel & tourism industry prove its contribution to poverty alleviation. As the World Bank is getting more closely involved in the travel & tourism sector globally, improved data quality could open up enormous opportunities for generating “measurable” information for presentation to policy-makers.



SDG 2: Fighting famine: 'Unprecedented crisis' putting 20 million people at risk



An 8-year-old displaced girl in Banki, Borno state, Nigeria, with her 5-year-old brother. Photo: OCHA/Yasmina Guerda



SDG 2: Fighting famine: ‘Unprecedented crisis’ putting 20 million people at risk

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 14 August 2017 – Twenty million people risk dying of hunger in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and the north-east of Nigeria, including 1.4 million children suffering from severe malnutrition, the United Nations food relief agency said, spotlighting today its worldwide campaign to fight famine.

“Famine is declared when there is evidence of extreme conditions regarding food access, child malnutrition and an increase in the death rate,” [stated](#) the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)), while launching in Spain a global [Fighting Famine](#) campaign in Spain to warn about this unprecedented food crisis.

Commending “the intense response mounted by the humanitarian community,” WFP said the famine declared in two counties of South Sudan in February had been overcome and, to date, Somalia, Yemen and northeast Nigeria have averted it.

“Nonetheless,” the agency cautioned, “the situation is still critical.”

WFP pointed out that apart from Yemen, the other three countries are entering the lean season – the time of year when the previous season’s harvest has run out and food stocks are at their lowest. Also, the rains are making access by land difficult, and even impossible. While air transportation may sometimes be possible, it costs up to seven times more.

The severe food crisis in Yemen is caused by the consequences of armed conflict devastating the country, according to the UN agency.

WFP has implemented emergency response mechanisms that include food airdrops in remote areas in South Sudan and trucking in supplies to areas where people have fled from Boko Haram in Nigeria.

In June, agency assisted 11.8 million people in the four famine-facing countries, underscoring that “almost half of them are in Yemen, where lack of funding has meant that WFP has been forced to make the difficult decision to reduce the amount of food each person in order to stretch resources further.”

To shine a spotlight on the unprecedented food crisis, WFP is taking part in a worldwide #FightingFamine campaign.

The UN agency noted that in Spain, Mastercard and MediaCom have donated resources and advertising space so that the initiative is channeled through press, online media, digital screens and street furniture. WFP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions, and with this campaign, it urges “the private sector and individuals to take action to help prevent a looming humanitarian disaster.”

As WFP depends on the generosity of donor governments, supporters and partners to quickly deliver food to affected people in these four countries, it urgently needs \$900 million to meet immediate needs and avoid the spread of famine for the period of August to January 2018.

Importance to travel & tourism

The world seems to have no shortage of money for weapons but never enough to help the starving. This item is designed to make travel & tourism think more deeply about the need to cut back on the appalling levels of food wastage. One good way would be to start measuring it. Most hotels know exactly how much food gets thrown away every day. Reducing that by even a few percentage points would make an enormous amount of difference.



SDG 3: **Global panel to address** **“disruption” in the world** **of work**



Photo: World Bank/Simone D. McCourtie

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: Global panel to address “disruption” in the world of work

Geneva, UN News Centre, 21 August 2017 – The United Nations labour agency has launched a high-level international body that will chart the course towards a future of decent and sustainable work opportunities for all, and to tackle the challenges of delivering social justice in today’s rapidly transforming world of work.

“It is fundamentally important that we confront these challenges from the conviction that [the future of work is not decided](#) for us in advance,” said Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at the launch of the [Global Commission](#) on the Future of Work.

According to ILO, the global body is expected to undertake an in-depth examination of the future of work that can provide the analytical basis for the delivery of social justice in the 21st century. It will in particular on the relationship between work and society, the challenge of creating decent jobs for all, the organization of work and production, and the governance of work.

Mr. Ryder reminded the audience attending the launch ceremony in Geneva that these are key issues of our time, which increasingly occupy political life and define hopes, and sometimes fears, of families across the world.

“It is a future that we must make according to the values and preferences that we choose and through policies that we design and implement,” he added.

Co-chairs Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the President of Mauritius, and Stefan Löfven, the Prime Minister of Sweden, announced the 20 members of the Commission, as the ILO chief underscored that the membership “reflects a balance of geographical regions, of different disciplines. There is gender balance and there is representation of workers and employers.”

The Commission was set up under the ILO’s Future of Work Centenary Initiative launched in 2013 by Mr. Ryder.

Over the past 18 months, in the run-up to the launch of the Global Commission, the ILO's tripartite constituents – governments, employer and worker organizations – have held national dialogues in over 110 countries. Their outcome will feed into the independent report that will be submitted to the Centenary Conference of the ILO in 2019.

Importance to travel & tourism

A very important resource for Human Resources directors in travel & tourism. Due to its diversity and status as one of the world's best job-creators, travel & tourism is a natural candidate to both test and implement many of the recommendations being explored in the Future of Work.



SDG 4: 3 Organizations Helping Educators Teach the SDGs

LEARN ABOUT THE SDGS.

THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ARE A GLOBAL VISION FOR HUMANITY
SIGNED BY 193 HEADS OF STATE. BUT MAKING THEM REAL IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.

LEARN MORE

LATEST NEWS

Photo: 17goals.org



SDG 4: 3 Organizations Helping Educators Teach the SDGs

(www.17goals.org) June 29, 2017 - Educators have one of the most important jobs there is, helping empower young people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to thrive—not only in their own lives but as responsible citizens of the world. And there's no question that [young people are one of the keys to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals](#). But how do you go about teaching the goals? Here are three organizations that are ready to help.

1. [The World's Largest Lesson](#)

Initiated by [Project Everyone](#), The World's Largest Lesson is a platform dedicated to to make sure every young person around the world knows about the SDGs and feels empowered to take action. On their website you can access a free online SDG teaching course, and a library full of downloadable templates, lesson plans, and other resources ready for use in the classroom.

Examples of resources:

- [Take Action lesson plan](#)
- [Gender Equality: Why it Matters reading material](#)
- [Life Below Water infographic](#)

2. [The Teach SDGs Project](#)

The Teach SDGs Project is run by a global task force of educators committed to teaching the SDGs to children and collectively creating a better world. They invite educators to join in by [taking the #TeachSDGs pledge](#), helping spread the word about teaching the SDGs, and take action in their own classrooms. They additionally offer a resource bank organized by goal.

Examples of resources:

- [Transform Our World teaching course](#)
- [#TeachSDGs blog](#)
- [Economic Sustainability 8th grade math unit](#)

3. [Practical Action](#)

Practical Action is an international NGO devoted to using technology to help empower people in poor communities to build skills and knowledge that helps them produce the sustainable and practical solutions they need and transform their lives for the better. Their website includes free resources for schools, including a templates, teachers' notes, and other materials that support teaching the SDGs to pupils aged 7-18.

Examples of resources:

- [Global Goals String Activity](#)
- [Energy and the Global Goals activities](#)
- [The Global Goals Word Search](#)

[Importance to travel & tourism](#)

This is of enormous importance to educators right across the travel and tourism sector. It offers a perfect template to educate and enlighten their students and constituents, and saves them a vast amount of time in reinventing the wheel.



SDG 5: **'Cracking the code'** **to help women advance** **in science, technology,** **engineering,** **mathematics (STEM)**



Photo: UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, centre, with Malaysian Director-General of Education, Tan Sri Dr. Khair Bin Mohamad Yusof, left, and Thai Vice Minister of Education Dr Sophon Napathorn, right. Credit: Warren Field.



SDG 5: 'Cracking the code' to help women advance in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM)

Bangkok, UNESCO media release (28 August 2017) – Girls and women are significantly underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions worldwide, a divide rooted in girls' earliest days of socialisation and schooling and one that a UNESCO international symposium opening here today aims to address.

"Science is a vocation that begins with a dream, with an aspiration. Today, too many girls are not encouraged to follow this dream," said UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova in her opening remarks at the three-day UNESCO International Symposium and Policy Forum, "Cracking the Code: Girls' Education in STEM".

"[The STEM gender gap] disempowers girls and women and throws a shadow over entire societies, placing a break on progress to sustainable development. In this new age of limits, when every country is seeking new sources of dynamism, no one can afford to shunt aside 50 percent of its creativity, 50 percent of its innovation."

Ms Bokova officially launched UNESCO's groundbreaking new global report, "Cracking the code: Girls' and women's education in STEM", on the barriers stifling girls' and women's engagement in and contributions to the STEM fields, as well as practical solutions on how these barriers can be overcome.

The "Cracking the code" publication highlights the systemic impediments girls face at every step of their educational pathways that push them out of these fields. The study shows that by higher education, females represent only 35 percent of all students enrolled in STEM-related fields of study globally. Socialisation and learning processes that perpetuate the false stereotype that "STEM subjects are for boys" carry a pernicious influence.

The report recognises the multifaceted nature of the challenge and proposes a response that is equally comprehensive, including changes to teacher training, learning contents, materials and equipment, assessment methods and tools as well as the overall learning environment and socialisation process in school.

The symposium brings together more than 300 participants, from the highest level of educational policy-making and leading specialists to the field to pioneers in gender-equality in education in multiple cultural contexts and leading female role models who have excelled in their respective fields.

Participants will focus on four themes: gender-responsive quality STEM education; addressing stereotypes and bias hindering girls' participation; reaching out, engaging and empowering girls and women; and partnerships, cross-sector learning and cooperation.

As the "Cracking the code" report notes, girls need positive female role models in STEM. The UNESCO symposium brings together several such exemplars, including keynote speaker Aditi Prasad, COO of Robotix Learning Solutions, which runs the Indian Girls Code (ICG) initiative, providing free robotics and coding education to underprivileged girls.

Ms Prasad described launching ICG at an orphanage in the small city of Trichi in South India where the typical life cycle of a girl "would be completing free public school, joining a local tailoring shop, getting married and sending their children back to the same orphanage". ICG sought to break this cycle by empowering girls with new skills.

"Our dream is to see these girls... graduate from university and work in jobs that change their perspective, and thereby their entire family's perspective and prospects," Ms Prasad said. "That's where our work starts. With a single girl and the opportunities we can afford her."

In his opening remarks, Thai Vice-Minister of Education Dr Sophon Napathorn said the full

realisation of every citizen's potential, including girls and women, is essential to national and global development – both his country's "Thailand 4.0" plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

"STEM education is currently integrated and will be extended to all schools nationwide. Thailand has also created a STEM education network to ensure that STEM is broadly spread across the country," Dr Sophon said at the opening of the conference. "I firmly believe [the forum's] success will suggest innovative ways for countries to introduce STEM education."

Over the next three days, participants will explore the gender inequalities that still persist in STEM education, but also the innovative solutions empowering girls and women worldwide, and how these can be shared and replicated. The goal is for that work to have tangible consequences for girls' outcomes far after the symposium's completion.

"I see the face of the 2030 Agenda as a young teenager," Ms Bokova said when launching the 'Cracking the code' publication, "in school, not forced into marriage or work, empowered to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics – supported by her family and community to become everything she dreams ... an engineer, a research, a medical doctor. Without this, no society will prosper."

During her third visit to Thailand and first since 2012, the Director-General will also be signing the official MOU establishing the International Training Centre in Astronomy, a Category 2 centre under UNESCO, hosted by the National Astronomical Research Institute of Thailand.

Further information

[Cracking the code: Quality education, equally for all \(Symposium opening video\)](#)

[Key Findings](#)

[Facts and Figures](#)

[Infographic](#)

[Girls' Education in STEM: Women on the Frontlines of Change](#)

(Part one of #GirlsCrackTheCode social media campaign)

[Organizations Doing Amazing Things to Advance Girls' Education in STEM](#)

(Part two of social media campaign, highlighting symposium delegates' initiatives)

[Girls' Education in STEM: The Facts](#)

(Part three of social media campaign, highlighting statistics illustrating the importance of helping #GirlsCrackTheCode)

Importance to travel & tourism

This is an area where travel & tourism, in its capacity as one of the world's largest employers of women, can share its expertise with the STEM sectors. Travel & tourism has already “cracked the code” in many areas of gender equality which can and should be shared by other industries and sectors.



SDG 6: World Water Week: Water is Fundamental to Achieving the Global Goals



SDG 6: World Water Week: Water is Fundamental to Achieving the Global Goals



Credit: Worldwaterweek

STOCKHOLM, August 29, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- World leaders, water experts, development professionals, policy-makers, and one astronaut, have gathered in Stockholm for a week-long meeting focused on finding ways to better use, and reuse, the world's increasingly scarce fresh water.

As the pressures of growing populations and less available freshwater are felt around the world, realization is growing among policy-makers, businesses, and citizens that we need to become more efficient water users.

“World Water Week is a key meeting place for the water and development community; it is here that we come together and make sure that the very best ideas are brought forward,” said SIWI’s Executive Director, Torgny Holmgren.

The President of the United Nations General Assembly, Peter Thomson, called the world’s climate and water resources the “fundament of our existence”, and said that “Without proper stewardship of that fundament the 2030 sustainable development agenda obviously goes nowhere. Because without the fundament we can’t exist.”

Astronaut and Member of Sweden’s Royal Academy of Science, Christer Fuglesang described the intricate water reuse systems that are necessary during space missions, enabling food to be grown on board, and ensuring a drinking water supply - both helping to inform research, and optimize methods for increased water use efficiency on earth.

“The Week’s theme, Water and waste: Reduce and reuse, touches the very core of our daily lives. To reduce, some drastic changes will be necessary - especially by the main water users, including industries, energy producers and the agriculture sector,” said SIWI’s Torgny Holmgren.

He added that changes are also needed in how we think about reuse of water: “I think that it is very important to try and change the mind-set around waste. Rather than presenting us with a problem, we can view waste as an asset.”

Stephen McCaffrey, 2017 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate and a Professor in water law, spoke of the need for water cooperation and water diplomacy. He told participants that although the ingredients for potential water conflicts exist, such as higher population pressure, climate change, and much of the world's fresh water being shared by two or more countries, studies show that water sharing is much more likely to lead to cooperation than conflict.

Information about World Water Week and Stockholm International Water Institute;
<http://www.worldwaterweek.org> and <http://www.siwi.org>

Importance to travel & tourism

World Water Week is an annual event that highlights the role of water for global survival. Quite likely, very few in the travel & tourism industry even know it exists. To boost awareness, and advance the cause, there is no reason why similar events with a more local and regional focus cannot be held in Asia, ASEAN or individual countries.



SDG 6: **At World Water Week,** **UN Assembly President** **says water and** **sanitation goals need** **‘major push’**



Two boys, 16 and 12 years old , collect water from a damaged pipe on the outskirts of Juba, South Sudan. The water is pumped from the White Nile River, but is untreated, risking the health of those who consume it. Photo: UNICEF/Hatcher-Moore



SDG 6: At World Water Week, UN Assembly President says water and sanitation goals need ‘major push’

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 28 August 2017 – Encouraging global action to support clean water and sanitation, United Nations General Assembly President Peter Thomson today underscored that when it comes to the environment, everything is connected.

“None should imagine that the state of sanitation and coral reefs are anything but directly connected,” Mr. Thomson said, delivering the [keynote address](#) at special event in Stockholm to start World Water Week. “It makes no sense to consider terrestrial environmental issues, fresh water challenges or climate change in isolation.”

He urged the international community to take an “inclusive, integrated approach,” and put to use all skills, idea and energies.

Water and sanitation are among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) which were adopted by the 193 Members of the UN in September 2015, and which are guiding the work of the development efforts of the international community through 2030.

Combined with the Paris [Agreement](#) on lowering the impact of climate change, the [SDGs](#) represent “the best chance our species has to achieve a sustainable way of life on Planet Earth before it is too late,” Mr. Thomson said.

He commended [World Water Week](#) for bringing together more than 3,000 participants from nearly the entire world. The 2017 edition of the week will address the theme “Water and waste: reduce and reuse.”

Experts, practitioners, decision-makers, business innovators and young professionals from a range of sectors and countries come to Stockholm to network, exchange ideas, foster new thinking and develop solutions to the most pressing water-related challenges of today.

In his address, Mr. Thomson noted [The Ocean Conference](#), which, held in New York in June, was meant to raise attention and start working on stopping marine pollution – mainly plastics – ocean acidification, ocean warming, overfishing, damage to biodiversity and ecosystems, and strengthen governance on these issues.

The Conference resulted in a political declaration, partnerships dialogues and nearly 1,400 voluntary commitments to help overcome these issues.

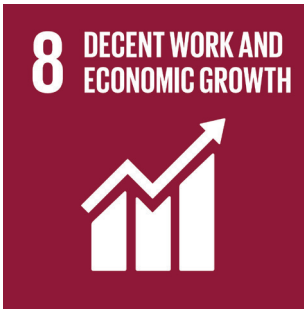
“North and south east and west, the ocean unites us and we have to bring humanity back into a relationship of balance and respect with the water: that great reservoir of H₂O which is of course shared by clouds into the rivers and lakes that give us the fresh water that we drink,” Mr. Thomson said.

He said The Ocean Conference gave a boost to a global movement to deliver on SDG14, or the so called Ocean Goal, and similarly, it is time to push for world action on SDG 6, related to water and sanitation.

“[SDG6](#), the water and sanitation Goal, is in need of a major push. The time is right, thus I encourage you all to join together to develop concerted global action to deliver on the targets of [that Goal],” Mr. Thomson said.

Importance to travel & tourism

Another speech which underlines the importance of water conservation. In an era when water is going to become more important than oil, World Water Week is a goldmine source of material on how travel & tourism, a profligate consumer and waster of water, can become a part of the solution.



SDG 8:

Migrant workers in South-east Asia need better access to fair, responsive legal remedies



Migrant workers, like these in northern Thailand, often work in high-risk sectors, such as construction. The ILO works to strengthen national occupational safety and health systems to improve protection of migrant workers. Photo: ILO/John Hulme

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



SDG 8: Migrant workers in South-east Asia need better access to fair, responsive legal remedies

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 27 July 2017 – Access to justice is often out of reach for migrant workers in South-east Asia, the United Nations labour agency reported today in a study that shows non-governmental organizations assisting more often than Government officials or trade unions.

“Barriers to accessing formal assistance are one of the key reasons why migrant workers are vulnerable to labour rights violations during recruitment and employment,” said Tomoko Nishimoto, UN International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, in the forward to the report [Access to justice for migrant workers in South-east Asia](#).

The report found that while the estimated 20.2 million migrant workers originating from South-east Asia have equal access to labour rights and social protections in the countries in which they work, “they frequently experience unequal and discriminatory treatment in practice.”

Lack of written evidence, high cost of legal assistance, fear of retaliation and language barriers are among the challenges to accessing justice noted in the report.

The authors argue that there is a substantial and largely unmet demand for fair and responsive remedies in the countries surveyed.

The study is based on complaint case data gathered by Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs) from 2011 to 2015. Detailed information on over 1,000 cases involving more than 7,000 women and men migrant workers was documented in Cambodia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam, establishing the largest regional dataset of migrant complaints compiled within South-East Asia.

“Migrant workers’ [vulnerability to exploitation](#) is exacerbated by the absence of fair, efficient and accessible means to resolve grievances when they occur, said says Ben Harkins, ILO Technical Officer and lead author of the report.

Barriers to accessing justice for migrant workers in South-East Asia



Most migrant workers who are faced with situations of exploitation and abuse seek practical resolutions, such as disbursement of unpaid wages, deployment to destination countries and return of identification documents, ILO reported.

“It is clear that these demands are not adequately met through enforcement of labour and human trafficking laws currently and that greater efforts are needed to ensure that migrant workers are provided with just remedies,” said Mr. Harkins.

Its release comes ahead of the World Day against Trafficking in Persons, marked annually on 30 July.

Importance to travel & tourism

Migrant workers abound in the travel and tourism industry — from Myanmar citizens working in shopping malls of Bangkok, to Filipinos on the cruise ships, to Bangladeshi street-stall vendors in Malaysia. Even white-collar workers holding managerial and executive positions are also, technically speaking, migrant workers. Regardless of their status and income, all are filling a manpower resource gap. All deserve to have some kind of protection for their rights. This report provides some food for thought.



SDG 9:

Mobile broadband subscriptions to hit 4.3 billion in 2017



Boys and girls from a youth-centre in Nairobi, Kenya, expressing their thoughts about their future through Facebook during a UNFPA visit to the Horn of Africa region. UNFPA/Roar Bakke Sorensen (file)

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



SDG 9: Mobile broadband subscriptions to hit 4.3 billion in 2017

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 31 July 2017 – Mobile broadband subscriptions are expected to reach 4.3 billion globally by the end of 2017, according to a new report released by the United Nations telecommunications agency.

New data from the International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)) also show that 48 per cent of the world's population now uses the Internet. The proportion is 71 per cent for the group of young people aged 15-24.

“ITU’s [ICT Facts and Figures 2017](#) shows that great strides are being made in expanding Internet access through the increased availability of broadband networks,” [said](#) ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao in a press release.

“Digital connectivity plays a critical role in bettering lives, as it opens the door to unprecedented knowledge, employment and financial opportunities for billions of people worldwide,” he added.

Of the 830 million young people online worldwide, 320 million, or 39 per cent, are in China and India, the report finds.

In the least developed countries (LDCs), 35 per cent of the individuals using the Internet are young people aged 15-24, compared with 13 per cent in developed countries and 23 per cent globally.

In developed countries, 94 per cent of the youth population uses the Internet, while the proportion is 67 per cent in developing countries and only 30 per cent in LCDs.

The report also reveals that mobile broadband subscriptions have grown more than 20 per cent globally in each of the last five years.

Between 2012 and 2017, the LDCs saw the highest growth-rate of mobile broadband subscriptions. However, the number of mobile subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in these countries remained the lowest, at 23 per cent.

The number of fixed-broadband subscriptions has increased by nine per cent annually in the last five years.

There has been an increase in high-speed fixed broadband subscriptions parallel to the growth in the number of fibre connections. Most of the increase in high-speed fixed broadband subscriptions in developing countries can be attributed to China, which accounts for 80 per cent of all fixed-broadband subscriptions at 10 Mbit/s or above in the developing world.

Mobile broadband prices, as a percentage of gross national income per capita, dropped by half between 2013 and 2016.

Mobile broadband is more affordable than fixed broadband in most developing countries.

While the Internet user gender gap has narrowed in most regions since 2013, the proportion of men using the Internet remains slightly higher than the proportion of women using the Internet in two-thirds of countries worldwide.

In 2017, the global Internet penetration rate for men stands at 50.9 per cent compared to 44.9 percent for women.

In the Americas, the number of women using the Internet is higher than that of men.

The report demonstrates that ICTs continue to play an increasingly critical role in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“ICTs continue to be a key enabler of economic and social development, bridging the digital divide and fostering an inclusive digital economy,” ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau Director Brahima Sanou.

The [World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017](#) will take place 9 to 20 October in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the theme ‘ICT for Sustainable Development Goals.’

Importance to travel & tourism

ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao says that digital connectivity “opens the door to unprecedented knowledge, employment and financial opportunities for billions of people worldwide.” Once people benefit from those opportunities, travel is a natural next step. As the mobile revolution booms, so too will travel. The rising hordes will require far more emphasis to be placed on across-the-board management of travel & tourism.



SDG 9: Ten Sustainable Development Solutions for the Asia-Pacific



SDG 9: Ten Sustainable Development Solutions for the Asia-Pacific

UNITED NATIONS, 6 June 2017 (UN News Centre) – A report from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) showcases ten projects that are transforming the course of development in the Asia-Pacific region.

Entitled “10 Solutions to Help Meet the SDGs,” the report describes large-scale projects in ten countries in the region – Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste – that have demonstrably accelerated progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“The Asia-Pacific region is fast becoming the world’s economic centre of gravity,” said Haoliang Xu, Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. “These stories show how transformation can work – and with our long history in the region, UNDP is fully engaged in the process of identifying development solutions that unlock and scale up progress.”

Among the highlights of the report are China’s Green Lights Project, a groundbreaking initiative among the Chinese government, private companies and UNDP to replace costly, energy-draining conventional incandescent light bulbs with more efficient compact fluorescent bulbs. Enlisting the light bulb industry from the start, the project helped to retrain and incentivize light bulb manufacturers to develop conversion techniques and improve production. The resulting improvements in the production of energy-efficient bulbs led to better quality products, which in turn incentivized the public to ‘go green’, taking advantage of dramatically widened access to better lighting options.

By 2016, incandescent bulbs of 15 watts or higher had been banned for sale in China, part of an ambitious national drive to phase out incandescent bulbs entirely, thereby slashing carbon dioxide emissions by up to 48 million tons a year annually, and by up to 237 million tons by 2025.

“We are supporting innovation not only in development solutions, but also in how those development solutions are designed and implemented,” said Xu. “These projects demonstrate the levels of innovation required to make good on our pledge to leave no one behind.”

**10 SOLUTIONS
TO HELP MEET
THE SDGs
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

#MeetTheSDGs



Despite spectacular growth and transformation over the past 15 years, the Asia-Pacific region remains plagued by significant development challenges: a widening gap between the wealthiest and poorest people; patterns of consumption and production that threaten stability of populations and the environment; and the world's highest vulnerability to natural disasters.

However, noted Xu, the region is also increasingly well equipped to handle these challenges.

“Each development intervention needs to aim for transformation, reaching large numbers of people, and strengthening the range of institutions and services that underpin both human and environmental well-being,” he said. “It is a tall order, but far from an impossible one.”

In addition to energy efficiency and climate change adaptation, the report includes projects to expand financial inclusion, access to legal services, and civic participation among women and marginalized groups.

In the Solomon Islands, for example, the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme, a joint initiative by UNDP and the UN Capital Development Fund, supported the Central Bank in rolling out mobile and branchless banking services across the 1,000 far-flung islands comprising the nation. As a result, the number of bank account holders doubled within six years. By 2016, over 195,000 new accounts had been opened, and over 100,000 people could bank using mobile apps.

Xu pointed out that such innovations were intrinsic to the UNDP way of doing business in the region, and acknowledges the organization's own successful transformation from donor to development advisor and provider of development services.

“This report reflects the confidence that governments in Asia and the Pacific have placed in our new direction,” he said. “The 2030 Agenda is the most ambitious benchmark the world has ever seen. We at UNDP have the experience, expertise and personnel to support the region in meeting, and perhaps even exceeding, the SDGs.”

Download the report: <http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20%26%20Publications/sustainable-development/GCS2%20report%2009.pdf>

Importance to travel & tourism

This is a great way of keeping track of success stories which are of stand-alone importance in their own right, rather than award winners. Certainly, these places would be worth visiting and studying for potential replication in travel and tourism. Similarly, the travel and tourism industry can come up with his own list of successful projects that meet the SDG criteria.



SDG 10: Asian Solutions for SMEs' difficulties in accessing finance

SDG 10: Asian Solutions for SMEs' difficulties in accessing finance

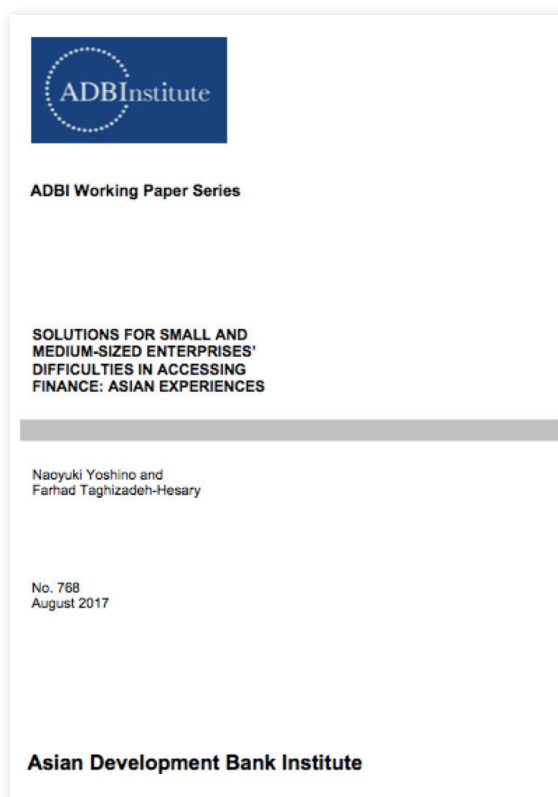
Manila, August 2017, (Asian Development Bank)
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the Asian economy. They make up more than 96% of all Asian businesses that provide 2 out of 3 private sector jobs in the continent. Therefore, it is vitally important for the Asian economies' economic success that they have fully functioning support measures for SMEs.

However, SMEs face major challenges in accessing cheap finance, mainly because there is an asymmetric information problem between suppliers and demanders of funds, which hinders their growth. We highlight the difficulties of SMEs in accessing finance, and provide remedies for mitigating them.

The remedies proposed in here include the development of credit information infrastructures for SMEs to remedy the asymmetric information problem, utilization of credit rating techniques for SMEs, the development of a sustainable credit guarantee scheme, the development of specialized private banks for SME financing, and the introduction of new ways of providing community-based financing such as hometown investment trust funds.

We will provide operational examples from developed Asian economies such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, and developing Asian economies such as Thailand with a view to them being implemented in the rest of Asia.

Click here to download: <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/348741/adbi-wp768.pdf>



Importance to travel & tourism

SMEs are widely known to comprise the backbone of travel & tourism. This backgrounder deserves to be widely circulated throughout the industry, especially by the various trade associations which can then develop specific strategies and plans adapted to their own needs. Regardless of whether they are in the travel & tourism sector or the construction or agriculture sector, all SMEs face the same challenges. This ADB publication essentially does all the homework required to address them.



SDG 11: UN convenes first Asia-Pacific Summit on the Environment

SDG 11: UN convenes first Asia-Pacific Summit on the Environment

Bangkok, 24 Aug 2017, (ESCAP-SCAS) -- The Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment will be held in Bangkok from 5 to 8 September 2017, jointly organized by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and UN Environment.

Held under the theme ‘Towards a resource-efficient and pollution free Asia-Pacific’, the Summit provides an opportunity to assess the state of environmental sustainability in the region, identify regional perspectives and priorities, and agree on concerted actions to promote sound environmental management and sustainable use of natural resources.

For the first time, the Summit will bring together two UN ministerial-level meetings on the environment, namely the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, and the second session of UN Environment’s Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

High-level officials from over 30 countries in the region will attend, including ministers from Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR Korea, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Cook Islands. The Summit will be opened on 7 September by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, and Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment.

Highlights:

CSO Forum on the Environment

The CSO Forum is intended to provide a platform for civil society and social movements to organize their positions and strategic inputs and ensure that voices of marginalized sectors and grassroots are included in the Ministerial Summit. The outcome of the CSO Forum will present a collective CSO input to the Ministerial Summit and a regional CSO input to 2017 UN Environment Assembly.

The CSO Forum will aim to:

1. Ensure the effective and meaningful participation and engagement of civil society and social movements in the Ministerial Summit;
2. Organize and provide a platform for CSO deliberation on the issues in the agenda of the Ministerial Summit and how to advance Ecological Justice;
3. Facilitate the formulation of common CSO positions and inputs to be presented in the official sessions of the Ministerial Summit and of 2017 UN Environment Assembly, in consultation with grassroots communities;
4. Ensure adequate representation and active strategic engagement in official sessions at the Ministerial Summit to strongly present the voices and views of civil society and social movements; and
5. Enable civil society and social movements to optimize the engagement with Member States and UN agencies in realizing Ecological Justice.

Pavilion of Partnerships for Environment and Development

The Pavilion will provide an informal space for member States, UN agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders to share and showcase good practices on issues of concern for environment and development.

Participants in the Pavilion of Partnerships for Environment and Development are most welcome to share their knowledge products, audio-visual materials and other non-traditional means of information sharing and interactive engagement of audiences in addition to posters, hand-outs, leaflets, booklets, publications) at designated booths in the exhibition area, as well as during side events and networking sessions taking place during the Ministerial Summit.

Strengthening Regional Ocean Governance and Partnerships towards ‘Clean Seas’

There is growing recognition of the urgent need to address marine pollution including marine litter, which is not only impacting the coastal and marine environment but also has serious social and economic implications. It is estimated that 10 to 20 million tonnes of plastic are finding their way into the world’s oceans each year, costing approximately US\$13 billion per year in environmental damage to marine ecosystems, including financial losses incurred by fisheries, tourism and beach clean ups.

It is estimated that global plastic production has increased by 8.7% per year on average over 1950-2012 and that ocean plastics cost the tourism, fishing and shipping industries in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region alone US\$1.3bn a year. In a business-as-usual scenario, the ocean is expected to contain more plastics than fish (by weight) by 2025. Countries in Asia and the Pacific are major sources of marine pollution, including marine plastic litter, and also highly vulnerable to its impacts. Strengthening regional ocean governance and partnerships is essential in addressing these issues effectively.

More information: [Concept Note \(pdf\)](#)

Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards

The Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards publicly recognize and celebrate excellence in enforcement efforts by public institutions and individuals to fight environmental crime in Asia. The Awards are given annually by UN Environment, with the generous support of the Swedish International Development Agency through the Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste project. The theme for this year’s Awards is ‘Fighting Pollution Crime in Asia’ and up to eight recipients (four organizations and four individuals) will be given the Award.

More information: [Concept Note \(pdf\)](#)

Is the Asia-Pacific ready for Climate Geoengineering?

The Carnegie Climate Geoengineering Governance initiative (C2G2) will host an informal evening reception to share the latest thinking on climate geoengineering and the need to establish global governance around its development and deployment.

More information: [Concept Note \(pdf\)](#)

Side-Event “Solutions towards an Air-Pollution Free Planet”

Air pollution is the world’s largest environmental health risk. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), exposure to air pollution costs the lives of 7 million people each year. Bulk of the burden is happening in the Asia Pacific region, where there are 3.3 million deaths linked to indoor air pollution and 2.6 million deaths related to outdoor air pollution (2012 estimates). Besides its health impacts, air pollution also poses a threat to the region’s economy, in terms of the lost labour income and welfare losses, food and water security, and climate system, thereby undermining poverty alleviation and achievement of sustainable development goals.

More information: [Concept Note \(pdf\)](#)

Importance to travel & tourism

This conference is of vital importance to travel & tourism, in its entirety. Details of the outcomes could not be published in this edition of The Olive Tree as the event began just after the publishing deadline. However, full details, including the various documentation, speeches and reports, are available here www.apministerialenv.org/ and deserve to be closely studied by the travel & tourism industry. They provide an unmatched resource bank of ideas, data and policy perspectives.



SDG 13: ADB Calls for National Financing Mechanisms to Accelerate Green Growth in Asia



SDG 13: ADB Calls for National Financing Mechanisms to Accelerate Green Growth in Asia

MANILA, PHILIPPINES, ADB news release (29 August 2017) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB), in a report launched today, has proposed the creation of national green financing vehicles to catalyze environmentally and financially sustainable infrastructure investments in Asia and the Pacific.



The report, titled *Catalyzing Green Finance: A Concept for Leveraging Blended Finance for Green Development*, highlights the constraints for developing a large pipeline of bankable green infrastructure projects and calls for an integrated approach to transforming country financial systems.

The report outlines the concept of a Green Finance Catalyzing Facility (GFCF), which would serve as a model for countries to create their own financing vehicles and implementing mechanisms. This would leverage public funds and policies to catalyze a blend of financing from private sources for increasing green infrastructure investments. Mobilizing additional funds from the capital

markets is a major objective of these vehicles. Public funds would be used as risk mitigators to create bankable projects and crowd in private funds, technology, and efficiency improvements.

GFCF's nature as a facility, rather than a fund, would enable a holistic approach to green finance, through raising private funds not just for projects but also at the portfolio level, providing project development and structuring support, and establishing a financing mechanism which links financial incentives with green targets, leveraging, credit ratings, and capital markets access.

"A paradigm shift in infrastructure planning and design is an imperative for dynamically changing Asia. The choice that Asia makes in bridging infrastructure gaps will have profound implications for its people and the planet," said Bambang Susantono, ADB Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development. "The publication is timely in providing practical institutional solutions for enhancing countries' financial systems to help them chart a greener, more sustainable future."

The report directly responds to ADB member countries' needs to address the persisting shortfalls in infrastructure investments, estimated at over \$1.7 trillion annually until 2030, taking into account climate change mitigation and adaptation costs. The proposed national green financing vehicles would help meet these needs while ensuring the best use and conservation of scarce natural resources.

Green finance covers a much bigger scope than climate finance and includes all financing instruments and investment decisions that are geared towards low-carbon, sustainable, and inclusive development. The private sector, regarded as a critical contributor to meeting the region's development financing needs, would have to contribute over 50% of required green investments in many countries. In the People's Republic of China (PRC), this contribution is estimated at 90%.

The report is targeted at government and private sector professionals and informs country-specific structures that can assist in strengthening green growth initiatives, while allowing countries to reduce their national-level fiscal burden.

The catalyzing green finance concept emerged late last year during ADB meetings with key government officials, various G20 green finance task force members including from the PRC and the United Nations Environment Programme, and experts from the private sector. ADB worked with several of these experts to develop the report.

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 cofinancing.

Importance to travel & tourism

Travel & tourism has always been a primary beneficiary of all forms of Green Growth initiatives. This ADB report opens up opportunities for raising private sector money to back Green Growth. They may be worth exploring by emerging, energy-intensive projects such as airports, convention centres and hotels.



SDG 14:

UN Assembly President sounds alarm on behalf of world's endangered oceans



Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (at podium), rings the Nasdaq Opening Bell. Photo: Christopher Galluzzo/Nasdaq, Inc.



SDG 14: UN Assembly President sounds alarm on behalf of world's endangered oceans

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 21 August 2017 – The President of the United Nations General Assembly opened the trading day in New York this morning to send the message that the world's ocean health is in distress.

“The ocean is in trouble,” said Peter Thomson prior to ringing the Opening Bell of the Nasdaq Stock Market in its Times Square headquarters.

Outlining the perils that lie ahead for the world's oceans – including warming, acidification, declining fish stocks and a growing hypoxic zone where no life exists – Mr. Thomson noted that as for marine pollution, “there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish by 2050, if we continue on these current trends.”

He highlighted [The Ocean Conference](#) in June, citing the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) as a programme “to reverse the cycle of decline in which the ocean has been caught.”

Hailing from the island State of Fiji, Mr. Thomson has throughout the Assembly's Seventy-First session raised global awareness of the [SDGs](#) – with a particular spotlight on [Goal 14](#), conservation and sustainable use of the ocean's resource.

Turning to the general sustainability of the earth's resources, he stressed that “from the elimination of poverty to the protection of our environment,” the 17 SDGs encapsulated the way to “secure place on this planet for humanity.”

Read more: [On International Day, UN spotlights threatened coastal mangrove ecosystems](#)

Importance to travel & tourism

Travel & tourism is dependent on the quality of water, be it rivers, lakes, seas or the oceans. This would be a very good area for the entire marine tourism industry, especially the cruise sector, to become a critical part of the solution. Equally important, they have an opportunity to crank up the publicity machinery to show what they are doing, and set an example for the rest of the travel & tourism industry to follow suit.



SDG 16:

History of Slave Trade can help combat social injustice



Shackles used to bind slaves. UN Photo/Mark Garten



SDG 16: History of Slave Trade can help combat social injustice

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 23 August 2017 – Remembering the universal demand for freedom that led to the 1791 insurrection by slaves in what is now Haiti, the head of the United Nations cultural and educational agency today marked the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition by underscoring the importance of teaching this history to young people.

“We are counting on the teaching of this history to place tomorrow’s citizens on the path to peace and dignity,” said Irina Bokova, in a [message](#) to mark the Day, which is observed annually on 23 August.

Ms. Bokova is the Director-General of UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), which has played a leading role within the UN system in fostering understanding and recognition of the slave trade.

“Everyone must know the scale of the crime of the slave trade, the millions of lives broken and the impact on the fate of continents up to this very day. Everyone must be fully informed of the struggle that

led to its abolition, so that together we can build societies that are fairer, and thus freer,” the senior UN official said.

She pointed to modern slavery and human trafficking, as well as ongoing social injustices, racism and racial discrimination, and said the legacy of the 1791 insurrection offer hope to eradicating those scourges.

“Freedom of rights, hard won by force, must be translated into real freedom through public policies that guarantee to people of African descent the full exercise of economic, social and political equality, and full and equal participation in society,” Ms. Bokova said.

“The 1791 uprising, like so many others across the world, shows us the way, but the path ahead is still long, she said, adding: “Ignorance is our enemy: it is used as an alibi by the indifferent who state that ‘we cannot change anything,’ and sanctions the lies of those who claim that ‘they did not know.’”

Everyone, continued the UNECSCO chief, must know the scale of the crime of the slave trade, the millions of lives broken and the impact on the fate of continents up to this very day. “Everyone must be fully informed of the struggle that led to its abolition, so that together we can build societies that are fairer, and thus freer.”

To honour the history of the slave trade and its abolition, UNESCO earlier this year added to its World Heritage List the Mbanza Kongo, Vestiges of the Capital of the former Kingdom of Kongo (Angola) and the Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site (Brazil), as an acknowledgement of their “outstanding universal value.”

In 2015, the Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site was recognized as a site of memory associated with the UNESCO Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage. Recognition of this heritage is decisive in raising the awareness of the general public, educating young people and in the processes of conciliation and social cohesion.

The [Slave Route](#) project, established in 1994, consists of creating opportunities to promote mutual understanding and international reconciliation and stability through consultation and discussion.

It also raises awareness, promotes debate and helps build consensus on approaches to be taken on addressing the issue of the slave trade and slavery.

This year, the [International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition](#) is also part of the [International Decade for People of African Descent](#), which began in 2015, and seeks to help boost political commitments in favour of people of African descent.

Importance to travel & tourism

The Slave Trade was discrimination and racism at its worst. Unfortunately, racism and discrimination appears to be re-surfacing in a more ugly and unpredictable format. In the travel and tourism sector, it's called racial profiling, and is being marketed as a means of ensuring safety & security. Over time, it will backfire and create more problems than it will solve. A warning that is implicit in this report, and should not be ignored by the travel & tourism sector.



SDG 16:

Preventing conflict key to relieving suffering, stresses outgoing UN humanitarian chief



*During a visit to Yemen earlier this year, USG O'Brien speaks with Mariam (left), 13, and her siblings, who were displaced from Taizz city. Mariam is now the head of the household, living in a school in Ibb, which is home to 17 families.
Photo: OCHA/Daniel Pfister*



SDG 16: Preventing conflict key to relieving suffering, stresses outgoing UN humanitarian chief

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 28 August 2017 – Preventing conflicts from breaking out in the first place, and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions once they do, is vital to relieving the suffering seen in many parts of the world, according to the top United Nations humanitarian official, Stephen O'Brien.

“That’s the issue about conflict, it’s man-made, and, therefore, it’s capable of being unmade by man and the humanitarian suffering that is brought about by it can be reduced and eliminated over time,” Mr. O’Brien, who has served for over two years as Under-Secretary-General and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, said in an interview with *UN News*.

For the past two years, the British national has witnessed some of that suffering first hand, meeting some of the millions affected by conflict and crises in, among others, Iraq, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

As he prepares to wrap up his assignment with the UN, Mr. O’Brien discussed what he will remember most about being the UN humanitarian chief, some of his frustrations, UN reform efforts and how to avoid a sense of hopelessness from setting in given the numerous crises around the world and the ever increasing needs.

UN News: When you look back at the past two years, what is the one encounter that will stay with you the most, that encapsulates what the job’s been about for you?

Stephen O’Brien: In Yemen, when I visited a school that was occupied by internally displaced persons (IDPs) – there are millions in Yemen because of the terrible conflict – there was a girl called Marie, who was looking after eight of her siblings in the absence of any parents and they were struggling to get food.

They had at last become registered so they were getting supplies from the very brave aid workers, from the UN and other NGO partners. But it was not possible as yet to give them schooling so they brought home to me more than anything else, that they should not be victims in other people's wars, and also that the international community was doing an amazing job in giving them the lifesaving as well as the protection they needed.

UN News: Where do you think you have been most effective in the job, and what has been your biggest frustration?

Stephen O'Brien: I look at the extraordinary work of all of these humanitarian workers around the world in these very tough spots in the two years that I've been in the post and I've been really inspired by the courage, persistence and determination of these people who want to make sure that the people affected by the crisis, through no fault of their own, are given the lifesaving and protection that they need.

While that has been rewarding, the job itself is extraordinarily challenging because the rise in humanitarian needs around the world has been exponential, and notwithstanding that we have managed to secure record amounts of funding in that period, the gap has grown wider.

The frustration is that we are simply not able to raise our ability to respond at the same pace that the needs are arising. And in that period, we haven't had – thank goodness, but it's not to say that we will not have in the future – a very large humanitarian need as a result of natural hazards, so our primary focus has been on the humanitarian needs out of conflict.

UN News: Your time in office has been dominated by some of the worst conflicts and humanitarian crises of the modern era. Is there any more that the UN could be doing in Syria, or is it really all up to the Security Council to act, as you've often said in your briefings?

Stephen O'Brien: One of the great privileges that the Emergency Relief Coordinator has is that here in New York you get to speak to the Security Council on a fairly regular basis about the challenges that are arising as a result of conflict and other disasters and emergencies. It has been very clear to me that it is a duty, an obligation and, indeed, expected by General Assembly resolution 46/182, that I raise very difficult issues and often speak truth to power.



USG O'Brien during a visit to Homs, Syria, in August 2015. He has repeatedly called on the Security Council to do more to ensure humanitarian access, allowing aid agencies to reach those in need in the strife-torn nation.
Photo: OCHA/Emmanuel Bargues

It can be a little uncomfortable, it can be challenging, but it is very important that the facts are before all of the Member States, here at the United Nations, the highest body in the world, which has the capacity, diplomatically and politically, to find a resolution and to prevent conflicts that result in producing humanitarian needs, which could be avoided.

That's the issue about conflict, it's man-made, and, therefore, it's capable of being unmade by man and the humanitarian suffering that is brought about by it can be reduced and eliminated over time.

UN News: As Syria and Yemen stand out, do you worry that some of these complex conflicts will prove to be unsolvable?

Stephen O'Brien: I never accept that these are unsolvable because with a will, when people come together, when we put our fellow human beings around the planet first, rather than [focusing on] the dispute for power or competition for resources...the issues can be solved. As long as we put a huge premium on our ability to talk through our differences. At the same time, we must recognize that we have the highest possible public duty internationally to relieve the suffering of our fellow human beings, wherever that arises, be that for their protection in conflicts where innocent civilians are put at risk, or for their lifesaving in natural hazards and the terrible risks that happen because of that.



Briefing the Security Council in May 2017, USG O'Brien said the people of Yemen are being subjected to deprivation, disease and death as the world watches. He added that this a direct consequence of actions of the parties, and is also "a result of inaction – whether due to inability or indifference – by the international community".

UN Photo/Evan Schneider

UN News: What will you miss most about being UN relief chief?

Stephen O'Brien: I'm certainly not shy of putting in a hard day's work, but what I will miss most is working with extraordinary people doing an extraordinary job. I mean that both within my own team in the [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) here and across about 40 countries. These are extraordinarily dedicated, skilled, committed and very brave people who are often serving in what we call non-family duty stations.

I shall be extremely sorry to miss the inspiring context of being able to do something about the suffering through the people we have here at the UN and through our partners in the international NGOs or through the many local people we work with to get that last mile.

I will also miss the relationships and the professional approach with Member States and their representatives here, in Geneva and across the world because it's only by harnessing all these energies that we can make that difference and we can try and make the world a better place.

UN News: Is the problem that you can only do as much as the Security Council allows, in a way?

Stephen O'Brien: I don't think the Security Council is the complete constraint. I do think it is a very, very important part of the peace and security make-up, but the General Assembly, which includes all the 193 recognized Member States of the UN and some very important observers as well, engage in passing resolutions, which are intended to bind the world.

It really matters to all of us here, and certainly has mattered to me, that we do our very best to live out the values that are encapsulated in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which are our founding documents that have stood the test of time for 72 years.

While yes, there are disputes around the world and there are things that are causing terrible humanitarian suffering that should be relieved, we are in a better place to meet the suffering of people when emergencies strike. Now we need to continue to commit to doing a better job to prevent conflict and relieve the suffering of people.

UN News: Looking back, is there anything that you would have done differently, any crisis that you might have handled in a different way?

Stephen O'Brien: We can always, with the benefit of hindsight, think of ways to improve. We can see by the massive and widening gap there is between the needs and the resources. The inefficiency of our response is something that hurts and is clearly part of our inability to be fully accountable to affected people. So in looking back, I wish I'd found a better way to raise more resources.



In South Sudan, in July 2015, USG O'Brien saw first-hand the devastating humanitarian consequences of the conflict as well as efforts by aid organizations to respond to escalating needs.
UN Photo/JC McIlwaine

UN News: What advice do you have for your successor?

Stephen O'Brien: Above all, go out and meet the people to whom we are ultimately accountable, the people who need us most.

As I have sought to do, make sure all you do is rooted in the principles of international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law.

Make sure that we call people to account so that there is a better deterrent to those causing humanitarian suffering today.

UN News: The Secretary-General has made UN reform a priority. Do you have any constructive advice as to how that can be managed in the humanitarian field?

Stephen O'Brien: The Secretary-General's emphasis on prevention as core to policy and the ability for the UN in the world that we face today, and looking ahead and particularly to be relevant to the vast number of younger generations. We need to make sure it is reformed to reflect that world.

That needs much better resolution of conflict, prevention in the first place, a greater participation of stakeholders, recognizing that so many of the world's problems, particularly humanitarian, but also for enabling development and the equality of women's rights, all need to come together in a way that is relevant to today's generation.

The reforms that the Secretary-General is pushing are all to be welcomed and supported. I am pleased that in OCHA, we have been doing this over the last two years. We have somewhat blazed a trail with our own reforms and put us in a fitter and better position to make sure that we are strategically aligned, nimble and adaptable.

UN News: What is the key message you relayed for your last World Humanitarian Day?

Stephen O'Brien: We should make sure to put a real focus on how humanitarian aid workers around the world are #NotATarget. This was articulated at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. The protection of aid workers is paramount. People put themselves at great risk to reach people in need in some of the most dangerous environments in protracted crises around the world.

Humanitarian workers are operating across the world, often in countries for many years, despite insufferable difficulties. World Humanitarian Day is an opportunity for us to focus on protecting these humanitarian aid workers, particularly in the medical field.



Mr. O'Brien (front centre left) and Secretary-General António Guterres (front centre) pose for a group photo with participants at a special event under the theme, "Staff Stand Together", marking this year's World Humanitarian Day.
UN Photo/Evan Schneider

UN News: Isn't the problem for the UN that there's little more that we can do than try to persuade perpetrators of violence and war, and power-hungry politicians, to change their ways?

Stephen O'Brien: It's all about persuasion, and we should never be deterred. Yes, there will be knock backs, more disputes, more terrible violence but we must be clear that it is worth the effort every day to save lives and protect the people, particularly in conflict.

But, also remember that there is a real need to recognize that we have the capacity to make a difference. It requires political will and relationships with players [everywhere] to acquire access to reach the people in need.

The UN is very well placed to make sure we do this at the scale that the world needs and to bring it all together with that sense of courage and conviction.

We must make sure that the perpetrators of violence are held accountable for their actions. This is why it is important that we adhere to the international norms, laws and principles that we've all agreed to, and do our best to bring forward the evidence and to make sure that people are held to account.

UN News: You said there is never enough funding. How do we stop a sense of hopelessness, even cynicism, from creeping in and overwhelming us on the humanitarian front?

Stephen O'Brien: We can never cease to seek to persuade people that this is a fantastic investment. We know that if you leave humanitarian need or poverty unaddressed, it has the potential to be exploited by those of malign intent. If we do not address it today, the higher cost in the future will simply be borne by future generations. It is in all of our mutual interest in the cause of peace and community but also in the value of doing the right thing by our fellow human beings.

Importance to travel & tourism

Prevention, prevention, prevention. If this is becoming the overarching driving force in the pursuit of physical/mental health and wellness, ditto in the world of geopolitics. If travel & tourism can better harness its formidable talent and resources as a force for preventing geopolitical conflict, the ripple-effect benefits for travel & tourism will be incredible.



SDG 16:

UN Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake:

Youth will lead implementation of SDG agenda



Jayathma Wickramanayake delivers her first public remarks as Youth Envoy at the commemoration of World Youth Skills Day at UN Headquarters. Credit: Jess Walker



SDG 16: UN Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake: Youth will lead implementation of SDG agenda

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 August 2017 – Hailing from Sri Lanka, the second-ever United Nations Youth Envoy is no stranger to rolling up her sleeves to get things done.

Before taking on her role as UN Youth Envoy, 26-year-old Jayathma Wickramanayake worked diligently in her mother country to transform the youth development sector. From 2013 to 2015, she served as a Senator at the Sri Lankan Youth Parliament and from 2016 to 2017 as Secretary to the Secretary-General of the Parliament of Sri Lanka.

Now working at the UN, her dedication to including youth globally comes out in force as she vows to do everything in her capacity to strive towards making the UN an inclusive system in which all youth is welcomed. Speaking to UN News, she stressed that as Youth Envoy, she wants to ensure that all youth have a home at the United Nations.

UN News: Can you elaborate on your role as UN Youth Envoy?

JW: Since my school days, I have been very active in community work – volunteering both in and outside of school. When I entered university, the Sri Lankan Ministry of Youth Affairs organized the first-ever competition to select emerging young leaders in the country. I became the runner up.

I was then invited by the Youth Ministry and the UN Country Team in Sri Lanka to contribute to different programmes and policies being drafted at that time, such as the National Youth Policy of Sri Lanka, the Youth Employment Action Plan and the World Health Organization's Noncommunicable Disease Prevention Programme.

Little by little I became introduced to the UN, including by becoming part of the UN Volunteer force. In 2012, when Sri Lanka started the Youth Delegate Programme, I was selected as one of my country's first Youth Delegates to participate in the UN's 69th General Assembly.

In preparation, I travelled around Sri Lanka for a month, speaking with different young people from a variety of communities to formulate a statement on the issues they wanted the UN to hear, which I subsequently delivered to the Third Committee [Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs Committee].

As I was finishing my tenure as Youth Delegate in 2013, Sri Lanka was preparing to host the 2014 World Youth Conference, for which I was appointed to the International Youth Task Force that advised on its programme, proceedings, agenda, and declaration.



Jayathma Wickramanayake speaking at the National Youth Council of Sri Lanka. Credit: Media Unit, National Youth Council of Sri Lanka.

At that time, 74 million youth globally were unemployed and there was a huge gap in terms of school-to-work transition, which underscored a need for skills development.

For about one year and a half I worked on the Conference with a team of energetic young people from 10 parts of the world, including 10 Sri Lankans. I then worked closely with the UN and the Sri Lankan government to adopt the resolution to declare World Skills Day.

Back in Sri Lanka, I started a grassroots youth organization with other Sri Lankan former UN Youth Delegates called Hashtag Generation to build the capacity of young people to participate in politics.

UN News: What inspired you to take on the role of UN Youth Envoy?

JW: I served as Youth Delegate during the formulation process of the [SDGs](#) [Sustainable Development Goals]. In the UN, I saw how young people came together with diverse ideas, proposals and plans of action to weigh-in on framing the future development agenda.

I also recognized that there is a need for the UN to engage young people and get their perspective on how the world should look in 2030 because, ultimately, it is the youth who will lead the implementation of this agenda.

I think this is a time in history that we can really make a change because the future will depend on the implementation of the SDGs, and young people will have a crucial role to play.

The new Secretary-General's vision, which is to place youth at the centre of the UN's work, also inspired me to become engaged in the process as the Youth Envoy.

UN News: What are some your goals as UN Youth Envoy?

JW: The terms of reference under the Secretary-General's vision for young people focuses on the meaningful participation of youth across the four pillars of the UN's work, namely development; human rights; peace and security; and humanitarian action.

My goal would be to ensure that young people have a voice in all of these processes at the UN, with a special focus on the participation of girls and young women.

Institutionalizing youth participation in the UN is important because, as a Youth Delegate, I saw young people working hard on the ground – but without access to UN discussions that institutionalize youth participation. Instead, they often participate in very informal ways through their networks, non-governmental organization or during side events at forums that take place at the UN.

There is a need to formally recognize youth as partners in core processes at the UN. For example, when a government brings a delegation to negotiate a declaration on, say, peace and security, we can always include a youth delegate – ensuring that there is space for young people in the meeting room.

UN News: You have been in office for less than a month. Can you tell us about what you have already done in your first weeks here?

JW: It was quite iconic because I started my tenure as the Youth Envoy on 15 July, World Youth Skills Day, for which I had worked to adopt the pertinent resolution.

That and the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), where my office in partnership with other UN actors and Member States organized many events around

youth and skills development and the engagement of young people in voluntary national reviews of the SDGs.

So, my first week was full of activities around the HLPF and gave me the opportunity to meet different stakeholders who were in town at that time.

On my fourth day in office, I had a special meeting with all the youth representatives, who were in New York for the forum. I was able to get their ideas of

how they see the role of Youth Envoy and what they expect from me. It was a very good experience.

UN News: What has surprised you about the job so far?

JW: Not sure I would call it a surprise, but in this role, every day I meet young people who work tirelessly on the ground, who sometimes sacrifice their lives, compromise so much for causes that they believe are true.

It really inspires me, and on a daily basis. I think that is the best part of this job!

UN News: What do you foresee as your biggest challenge?

JW: There is a growing rhetoric about young people's participation in formal processes. While everyone acknowledges that they should have a seat at the table, when it comes to implementing this, most often we take a step back. We find excuses not to include youth in discussions about investing in young people, or to find avenues for young people from different backgrounds to participate.

I see the challenge is actually converting this talk to work.



The Youth Envoy addresses a High-Level Luncheon on the demographic dividend – organized by the President of the General Assembly, President of Economic and Social Council and the UN Population Fund.
Credit: Eddie Wright

UN News: What changes do you think the UN needs to make in order to reach and be more relevant in young people's lives?

JW: There are two approaches that we can adopt. Firstly, I think the UN has a responsibility to go to young people and meet them where they are. We cannot expect all youth from different communities, religions and ethnic backgrounds to come to the UN.

For example, this International Youth Day, 12 August, I am celebrating with young people in Iraq, where the theme of “Youth Building Peace” is very relevant in their national context. I come from a region that is constantly affected by conflict, and have personally seen the effects it has had on young people. In Iraq, I will meet with close to 1,000 youth, discussing the problems they are facing.

There, I will also convene meetings with the Government and other stakeholders to see how we can resource youth development in Iraq and devise methods to constantly and substantively engage young people in preventing conflicts as well as in post-conflict reconciliation activities.

Most often the UN jargon is not very familiar to the young people doing good work in advancing the lives of youth in their villages and communities. By taking the UN closer to young people I do not necessarily mean physically, but through new technologies, such as social media, to connect with youth in a language they can understand.

The second approach is to have the UN system look at young people. Today they comprise more than half of the world's population – the largest youth population in the history of the world. ***There is a need to see young people not as a liability but as an opportunity, and to see how we can proactively engage them in all discussions, at all levels.***

Importance to travel & tourism

This powerful interview shows how the creativity, power, energy and commitment of motivated young people can be harnessed to “really make a change.” She has called for young people to be “proactively engaged in all discussions at all levels.” That is happening in travel & tourism, but perhaps a little too slowly and narrowly. It deserves to be both expanded and expedited. Another opportunity to expand the travel & tourism agenda beyond the focus on “start-ups.”



SDG 16:

Youth can play 'critical role' in creating a peaceful world



Young children play outside after the school day ends in rural Nepal. Photo: Aisha Faquir/World Bank



SDG 16: Youth can play ‘critical role’ in creating a peaceful world

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 August 2017 – In the lead-up to [International Youth Day](#), marked annually on 12 August, the United Nations kicked off a commemorative event at its New York Headquarters with a message from [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, who underscored his commitment to young people.

“I’m truly happy to address you on International Youth Day,” the Secretary-General said in a video [message](#). “As Secretary-General of the United Nations, I am committed to the empowerment and inclusion of every young person around the world,” he added. “In this spirit, I have appointed an impressive new Youth Envoy,” he said, introducing 26-year-old Jayathma Wickramanayake of Sri Lanka as the youngest and “one of the most important” members of his team.

“Governments must work with young people to successfully achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)). Empowered young men and women can play a critical role in preventing conflicts and ensuring sustainable peace,” continued Mr. Guterres.

After the Youth Envoy invited everyone to join in mobilizing young people, the Secretary-General said, “Together, we can create a peaceful world for generations to come.”



Participants listen to speakers at the “Youth Building Peace” event commemorating International Youth Day. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

Against the backdrop that many of the world’s 1.2 billion young people are affected by the hardship of conflict and war, the 2017 edition of the International Day will be celebrated under the theme ‘Youth Building Peace.

Considering matters of youth, peace and security from a social developmental perspective, this year, the Day recognizes that more and more societies around the world are recognizing the role of youth as agents of change and critical actors in preventing conflict and building peace.

Organized by the UN Division for Economic and Social Affairs in collaboration with the Inter-agency Network on Youth Development, [today’s event](#) draws together experts from youth civil society, government and the United Nations to explore the various ways in which young people are contributing to building and sustaining peace.

Meanwhile, in Iraq, on her first official trip, the Secretary-General’s new Youth Envoy is conducting dialogues with young people and meeting with UN officials.

In December 1999, the UN General Assembly endorsed the recommendation made by the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth that 12 August be declared International Youth Day.

Importance to travel & tourism

This is a very important quote from the UN Secretary General: “*Empowered young men and women can play a critical role in preventing conflicts and ensuring sustainable peace.*” Millions of young people are turning to travel & tourism as potential sources of jobs and income. It is time to harness their potential to achieve a greater purpose, and train them not just to service guests and boost sales but also ways to build and sustain peace. It would make a very useful theme for industry events rather than just focus on “start-ups”.



SDG 16:

15 Ways Young People Can Fight Corruption

SDG 16: 15 Ways Young People Can Fight Corruption

Aug 11, 2017, (Transparency International) On International Youth Day, we celebrate youth around the globe and their power to help shape a fairer and more just world. Many young people are fighting corruption and making a big difference. And we celebrate all of you. For those who are interested in tackling corruption, but don't know where to start, here are 15 great ideas from Transparency International's youth anti-corruption tool kit.

1. Follow the money

Governments have vast sums of public money to spend and this can pose a serious corruption risk. By keeping tabs on government expenditure, you can help shed light on how your country's taxes are being spent and expose any abuses.

2. Count supplies

Schools receive lots of supplies from governments, like textbooks, lab equipment or other classroom necessities. It's not rocket science to keep track of this. It just takes commitment and transparency. Ask to see how many Bunsen burners are supposed to be in the biology labs and if the numbers don't add up – ask what's happened.

3. Citizen Report Cards

Most people have an opinion of their government or the services it provides, but how often do they take the time to write down their views? You can help by collecting citizen report cards that provide feedback on public services by the people who use them.

An individual card might not seem meaningful in itself, but a collection of hundreds or thousands of completed cards can generate new perspectives on government performance – which can then be shared with media and used by the public to bring about change.

4. Tech solutions

If you're tech-savvy, you can help communities document cases of corruption by developing reporting platforms on the web or through mobile apps. Social media, in particular, is an effective way to address corruption in real-time. See I paid a bribe – it's a good example.

5. Comics and cartoons

Comics are a powerful way of raising awareness about anti-corruption. Through a combination of images and text, comics can also help spark debate – and they are easy to produce. All you need is a pen and paper.

6. Theatre and drama

You can get creative by taking your anti-corruption drive on stage. Music, drama, poetry or dance can be used to show citizens how to combat negative societal forces – like corruption – as well as give ideas about how to improve your own community.

7. Board games

Games are a valuable and fun form of education – even for serious topics like corruption. They develop knowledge, attitudes and values, and can be highly effective in encouraging teamwork and collective action.

8. Sports

What's your favourite sport? From running against corruption to scoring a goal for transparency, you can raise your community's anti-corruption awareness through any sport you want.

9. Youth groups

Youth groups share their disapproval of corruption and are found at local and national levels. Different groups have different goals, but they have one thing in common: a willingness to talk openly about their opposition to corruption and raise awareness about its adverse effects on society. These groups can be formed to take part in a one-off event, around a single issue – stopping bribery for grades in school, for example – or for longer term campaigns.

10. Integrity camps

Fighting corruption doesn't have to be serious business. With integrity camps you can get friends and peers together to take on corruption. Check out our annual School on Transparency.

11. “Zero” bribes

The “zero currency” note is a visual aid that encourages people to say “no” to corrupt officials who demand a bribe and to expose where and when bribes are demanded. The concept originated in India where it was known as the “zero rupee” movement and has proved to be a formidable tactic in fighting corruption.

Here’s how it works: when asked for a bribe, you “pay” with a bill that resembles real currency but is actually fake paper money that includes anti-corruption messages.

12. Protests

Protest events are a way for citizens and groups to come together in public to show large scale support for or opposition to a particular issue. Protests, marches, demonstrations and rallies can be a powerful tool for anti-corruption campaigners.

13. Petitions

A petition is a collection of signatures from people supporting your cause. That petition is then presented to decision makers – like government or education officials – that have the power to create the change you want. We have a good example at Transparency International. We petition people to sign our Declaration against Corruption.

14. Election Pledges

Politicians may be running for office – but they shouldn’t be able to hide. During the lead-up to elections, candidates are in the spotlight and this is a good time to hold them accountable for their campaigning and election promises.

You can ask your local candidates to sign a pledge against corruption or agree to take specific steps to stop corruption. They can, for example, pledge not to buy or sell votes during the election, a very common form of corruption.

15. Crowd sourcing election monitoring

Tweet. Text. E-mail. From accessing your mobile phone to surfing the web on your computer, it’s never been easier or quicker to monitor elections in real-time. Through online crowdsourcing you can let the world know of voting irregularities in your country with just a few clicks. Some of the information can even be plotted onto an interactive map online, allowing you also to see what others in your community are reporting.

We hope you find these 15 suggestions useful! If you want specific details on how to make any of these ideas a reality, download our anti-corruption toolkit.

http://files.transparency.org/content/download/1443/10770/file/2014_AntiCorruptionKit_Youth_EN.pdf

Importance to travel & tourism

Becoming anti-corruption watchdogs and whistleblowers is one of the best ways for young people to become agents of change. These 15 points offer a readymade checklist and are a perfect follow up to the comments in the earlier stories by both the UN Secretary-General António Guterres and the UN Youth Envoy Jayathma Wickramanayake.



SDG 17: 50 Years of ASEAN Progress: Tracing the Journey with Statistics

SDG 17: 50 Years of ASEAN Progress: Tracing the Journey with Statistics



JAKARTA, 9 August 2017, [ASEAN Secretariat News](#) - With the commemoration of the Association of South East Asian Nations' (ASEAN) golden jubilee, the ASEAN Statistics Division (ASEANstats) of the ASEAN Secretariat joined in the celebration by launching three landmark publications. These are *Celebrating ASEAN: 50 Years of Evolution and Progress*, the *ASEAN Statistical Report on Millennium Development Goals 2017*, and the *ASEAN Community Progress Monitoring System (ACPMS) 2017*.

Celebrating ASEAN: 50 Years of Evolution and Progress presents an overview of ASEAN evolution and progress since its founding through a selection of key socio-economic indicators. The publication is organised into four key themes, namely economic progress, social progress, economic connectivity, and narrowing development gap. This publication is supported by the European Union Delegation through the EU-ASEAN COMPASS Project.

Download: http://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ASEAN50_Master_Publication.pdf

The ASEAN Statistical Report on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2017 examines the progress and achievements of the ASEAN Member States with regards to the MDGs. The report provides estimates for the 25 MDG indicators every five years from 1990 to 2015, and compares the final change from 1990 to 2015 with the MDG targets. This publication is also supported by the European Union Delegation through the EU-ASEAN COMPASS Project.

Download: http://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ASEAN_MDG_2017.pdf

Finally, *the ASEAN Community Progress Monitoring System (ACPMS) 2017 Report* is the third of the ACPMS report series which provides statistics on key integration outcomes in ASEAN. In this third report, the selection of indicators is aligned with the envisaged characteristics of the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025. The report contributes to and complements ASEAN's broader integration monitoring framework. The ACPMS Report 2017 is supported by the Australian Government through the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Phase II.

Download: http://www.aseanstats.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ACPMS_2017.pdf

Importance to travel & tourism

All three publications are exceedingly important in advancing the cause of ASEAN integration, and giving it strength, focus and direction. As travel & tourism is now one of the most vital components of holistic and comprehensive ASEAN integration, information in all three publications can help the industry upgrade its own contribution to the cause.

