



New UN websites & publications

UN in General



Shaping our Future Together – UN75 Final Report

<https://www.un.org/en/un75/finalreport>

People worldwide have overwhelmingly highlighted their faith in multilateralism to address global challenges, the results of a year-long survey by the United Nations have shown. The [UN75](#) initiative was launched by Secretary-General António Guterres, in January last year, to understand the global public's hopes and fears for the future, as well as their expectations and ideas for international cooperation, and for the UN in particular. More than 1.5 million people from 195 countries took part in the campaign through surveys and dialogues. Announcing the findings at the UN Office at Geneva on 8 January 2021, Fabrizio Hochschild, [Special Adviser to the Secretary-General](#) on the commemoration of UN's 75th anniversary, said that together with UN75 conversations and

surveys, innovative methodologies and artificial intelligence analysis were employed to gauge world opinion, including through traditional and social media.

see also: <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2021/01/1081642>

Looking back at 2020, In Case You Missed It

English: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1081092>

French: <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2020/12/1085492>

Spanish: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2020/12/1486082>

At UN News, 2020 started with a hope that the year would be one of peace for Syria's children. However, in the weeks that followed, the news cycle was upended by the coronavirus pandemic, that not only changed what we covered, but also how we covered UN-related news around the world.



UN News Centre: 2020 - Looking Back

Highlights and top stories from our coverage over the past year

English: <https://news.un.org/en/icymi/06-dec-2019>

French: <https://news.un.org/fr/icymi/28-dec-2020>



Secretary-General's New Year Message: After year of 'trials, tragedies and tears', UN chief sends message of hope for 2021

English: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1080962>

French: <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2020/12/1085442>

Spanish: <https://news.un.org/es/story/2020/12/1486052>

Portuguese: <https://news.un.org/pt/story/2020/12/1737362>



2020 in Photos

UN Photo Website: <https://dam.media.un.org/asset-management/2AM9LOGTTCC3?Flat=y>

UN Photo Flickr: https://www.flickr.com/photos/un_photo/albums/72157717479501642

UN Geospatial launches new and improved website

<https://www.un.org/geospatial/>

To mark the Geospatial Information Systems Day, celebrated on 18 November, the Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) launched this new United Nations Geospatial website. The UN Geospatial website provides insights on international, regional or national context and location, and informs on geospatial activities and mandates carried out by the Organization. New features include: web-mapping services available to all, a gallery of examples of earth observation, Secretariat services, thematic products, work programmes, and partnerships, and a history of geospatial information in the United Nations.

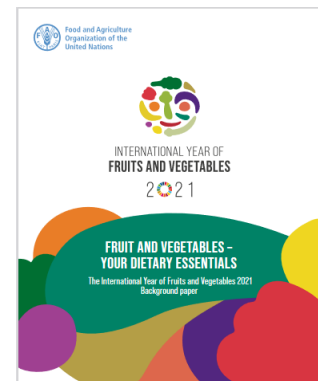


Fruit and Vegetables – Your Dietary Essentials: The International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021; Background paper (FAO)

English: <http://www.fao.org/3/cb2395en/CB2395EN.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.fao.org/3/cb2395es/CB2395ES.pdf>

The International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021 (IYFV), as declared by the UN General Assembly in Resolution [A/RES/74/244](#), aims at raising awareness of, directing policy attention to, and sharing good practices on the nutritional and health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption, the contribution of fruit and vegetable consumption to the promotion of diversified, balanced and healthy diets and lifestyles, and reducing loss and waste of fruits and vegetables. This background paper outlines the benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption, but also examines the various aspects of the fruit and vegetable sector from a food systems approach: from sustainable production and trade to loss and waste management. This paper provides an overview of the sector and a framework and a starting point for discussion for the Year, highlighting the interlinkages of stakeholders and key issues to be considered for action during the IYFV.



A foodies choice of UN food resources to celebrate the New Year



UN Food Links

<https://unric.org/en/a-foodies-choice-of-un-food-resources/>

Check out our post for food links - starting with healthy diets, over to food waste and ending with a selection of recipes available from UN system websites.

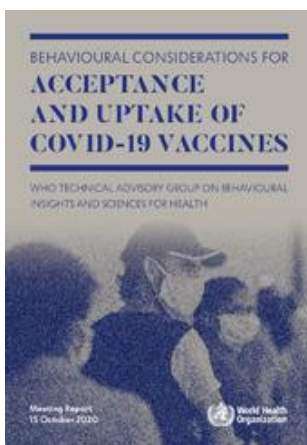
Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



COVID-19 data portals and platforms

<https://unric.org/en/info-point-library/online-databases/covid-19/>

We have created a new page on the UNRIC Info Point & Library website providing an overview with UN data portals and platforms on COVID-19 information.



Behavioural considerations for acceptance and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines (WHO)

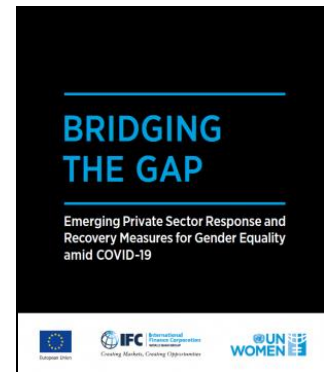
<https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/337335>

The Behavioural Insights Unit of the WHO released a [meeting report](#) of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on the special session on acceptance and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, held on 15 October 2020. The meeting report outlines the factors that drive people's behaviour in relation to vaccine acceptance and uptake: an enabling environment, social influences and motivation.

Bridging the Gap: Emerging and Innovative Private Sector Responses to Support Gender Equality During COVID-19 (UN Women / IFC)

<https://www.weeps.org/resource/bridging-gap-emerging-private-sector-response-and-recovery-measures-gender-equality-amid>

A new report by UN Women and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), released on 11 December 2020, highlights how companies are responding to the pandemic with practices that support gender equality. The emerging practices that are shared in the report aim to curb inequalities women are facing as the pandemic radically transforms the world of work. The pandemic threatens to push 47 million women and girls below the poverty line, the new report highlights how companies are supporting women in the workplace, marketplace and community during this critical time. The report features emerging and innovative private sector practices across six main areas of action impacting women's economic empowerment: well-being and mental health, flexibility and family-friendly policies, equal access and use of digital technologies and platforms, equal access to financial and non-financial services, strengthening inclusive supply chains and support for women-led businesses, and preventing and mitigating gender-based violence.



COVID-19 Data Futures Platform (UNDP)

<https://data.undp.org/>

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) launched on 10 December 2020 a new [COVID-19 Data Futures Platform](https://data.undp.org/) – an open access and interactive platform that aggregates multiple sources of information across UNDP and UN agencies,



COVID-19
Data Futures Platform

academia, and the private sector. The platform offers simulation option that allows any user to visualize costs, impact of socio-economic policies and interventions across countries and regions; and welfare implications of targeting vulnerable households. The Data Futures Platform comes at a time when countries around the world are dealing with the consequences of multiple waves of the pandemic, a protracted economic recession, and rapidly shrinking foreign and domestic financial resources. In addition, the current trend of plummeting income support measures for individuals and households worldwide has exacerbated the vulnerability of groups dependent on social protection programmes and support measures for subsistence.

COVID-19, the Environment, and Food Systems: Contain, Cope and Rebuild Better (UNEP)

<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/covid19-environment-and-food-systems-contain-cope-and-rebuild-better>

COVID-19 is threatening to plunge millions of people into poverty and worsen global hunger, undermining the long-running push for sustainable development, warns a new report from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The report, released on 17 December 2020, calls on states to use their response to the coronavirus to build more sustainable, resilient food systems and monitor their recovery efforts against sustainable development targets.

COVID-19 Vaccine Market Dashboard (UNICEF)

<https://www.unicef.org/supply/covid-19-vaccine-market-dashboard>

As the designated [COVAX](https://www.unicef.org/supply/covid-19-vaccine-market-dashboard) procurement coordinator and procurement agent, UNICEF has launched the COVID-19 Vaccine Market Dashboard on 21 December 2020 – an interactive tool for countries, partners and industry to follow the developments of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 vaccine market and the efforts of the COVAX Facility to ensure fair and equitable access for every country in the world. In this first release, the dashboard provides a regularly updated overview of the global research and development pipeline, the projected production capacity, publicly announced bilateral and multilateral supply agreements, as well as reported price points.

Green approaches to COVID-19 recovery: Policy note for parliamentarians (UNEP / IPU)

<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/green-approaches-covid-19-recovery-policy-note-parliamentarians>

This new policy note- a joint publication of UNEP and the Inter-Parliamentary Union - guides states in developing environmentally-conscious legal responses to the effects of COVID-19. It specifically targets parliamentarians, who play a key role in the COVID-19 emergency and recovery processes through their legislative and policy oversight functions. The note highlights practical legislative approaches towards an environmentally-sustainable economic recovery, with corresponding best practices at national and regional levels. Such approaches include clean energy, circularity, just transition to green jobs and environmental rule of law among others. Adoption of these approaches will safeguard environmental protection as a key element of states' COVID-19 response, and ensure a green pandemic recovery as is recommended by UNEP's [Emissions Gap Report 2020](#). Parliamentarians are encouraged to examine more best practices on the UNEP and IPU websites, and to share examples of their national legislative response with press@ipu.org, in order to foster the sharing of lessons learned.

Recovering Better: Sport for Development and Peace; Reopening, Recovery and Resilience Post-COVID-19 (UN DESA)

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/12/Final-SDP-recovering-better.pdf>

Sport is about participation. It brings individuals, communities and countries together and, in doing so, often bridges cultural, ethnic and national divides. But the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on the world of sport, both in the professional and in the recreational spheres. Many sporting events were postponed or cancelled due to the risk of mass gatherings amplifying the transmission of the virus, as well as risks to athletes and professionals supporting these players and events. It was many months into the crisis before, with much innovation and collaboration, athletes began to return to arenas, in most cases, with fans still absent, and with varying consequences for the athletes and their families. UN DESA launched this advocacy brief on 15 December 2020, co-led by UN-Women. The brief was collaboratively drafted by sport focal points in the following entities: World Health Organization, UN Office for Drugs and Crime, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, International Labour Organization, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Children's Fund, UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, UN Climate Change, UN Environment Programme and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism. The brief sets out a vision to support the reopening, recovery and resilience of sport. The brief first highlights critical intersects between sport, physical activity, SDG achievement, and COVID-19 impact, the consequences of these intersects for our individual and collective wellbeing and ideas for addressing these consequences. It then presents critical actions or issues to be addressed across four key areas – promoting human rights and combatting discrimination; ensuring equal access to sport and physical activity; safeguarding participants; and ensuring integrity in sport- seeking to imagine the necessary course adjustments for bringing the sporting world safely back into full operation with renewed and refocused vigor.



UN/DESA Policy Brief #89: Strengthening Data Governance for Effective Use of Open Data and Big Data Analytics for Combating COVID-19

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-des-a-policy-brief-89-strengthening-data-governance-for-effective-use-of-open-data-and-big-data-analytics-for-combating-covid-19/>

Governments are using big data analytics to get prepared, react effectively, and develop both short term and long-term strategies. Yet, increasing public concerns about data privacy and security put in jeopardy public trust in data collection, use and dissemination by government, business and relevant non-government institutions.

UNODC Research Brief: Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions on homicide and property crime

https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/covid/Property_Crime_Brief_2020.pdf

The latest research brief from UNODC, released on 11 December 2020, shows that – while property crime during the first COVID-19 lockdown period has decreased around the world, and homicide rates have decreased in some countries– changes were only short-lived and numbers have quickly reached pre-pandemic levels. Based on data from 30 countries, UNODC Research found that homicide rates have undergone a short-term decline of 25% or more in some countries; while in others, there was no visible change or the variability remained within its pre-pandemic range. Homogeneous changes were more visible in Europe and other regions, while trends were quite heterogeneous across Latin America. This can be explained by differences in the strictness of the restrictive measures imposed during lockdowns.

Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

The 2020 Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction (UNEP)

<https://globalabc.org/news/launched-2020-global-status-report-buildings-and-construction>

Emissions from the operation of buildings hit their highest-ever level in 2019, moving the sector further away from fulfilling its huge potential to slow climate change and contribute significantly to the goals of the Paris Agreement, according to a new report released on 16 December 2020. However, pandemic recovery packages provide an opportunity to push deep building renovation and performance standards for newly constructed buildings, and rapidly cut emissions. The forthcoming updating of climate pledges under the Paris Agreement – known as nationally determined contributions or NDCs – also offer an opportunity to sharpen existing measures and include new commitments on the buildings and construction sector. The report, from the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC), found that while global building energy consumption remained steady year-on-year, energy-related CO₂ emissions increased to 9.95 GtCO₂ in 2019. This increase was due to a shift away from the direct use of coal, oil and traditional biomass towards electricity, which had a higher carbon content due to the high proportion of fossil fuels used in generation.

Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI): physical activity, screen time and sleep of children aged 6-9 in Europe (2020) (WHO/Europe)

<https://bit.ly/359e4Qe>

A recent analysis of results from the WHO Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) provides a unique overview of the physical activity habits of children in the WHO European Region. The study shows that more can be done to increase physical activity, reduce screen time and ensure quality sleep among children in the Region and that there are clear differences in the prevalence of these behaviours between countries.

FeedUP@UN to help address food loss and waste (UNECE)

<http://feedup.unece.org/>

With one third of food produced for human consumption lost and wasted every year and over 820 million people going hungry or suffering from malnutrition, understanding when, where and why perfectly edible food drops out of our food supply chains is crucial. In response, UNECE has launched FeedUP@UN, a blockchain-powered online system which identifies, quantifies, and traces the food that disappears from food supply chains before ever reaching the points of retail. By identifying the food loss hotspots, FeedUP@UN will open new income and employment opportunities. FeedUP@UN will help policy makers reach informed decisions to tackle food loss and waste and transition towards more circular food production and responsible consumption, supporting progress towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on zero hunger, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable economic growth, climate action and more.



Global Ocean Science Report 2020: Charting Capacity for Ocean Sustainability

Report in English, Executive Summary in English, French & Spanish:
<https://en.unesco.org/gosr>

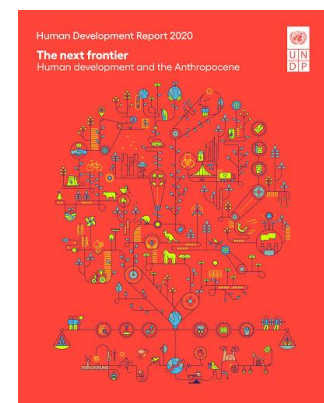
Lack of funding is hampering the development and implementation of marine research and its valuable applications, according to the Second Global Ocean Science Report, published by UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) on 14 December 2020, ahead of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development 2021-2030. On average, States devote only 1.7% of their research budgets to sciences of the ocean (0.03% to 11.8%, depending on the country), much less than they spend on other major scientific fields. This is incomprehensible considering the fundamental role of the ocean in regulating the climate and its rich biodiversity. Moreover, discoveries in oceanography feed almost all sectors of the economy and society with applications in medicine, in the preservation of biodiversity, and in the development of new industrial processes. Applications for climate change mitigation and adaptation account for the majority of patented oceanographic technologies.



Human Development Report 2020: The Next Frontier; Human Development and the Anthropocene (UNDP)

English: <http://report.hdr.undp.org/>
French: <http://report.hdr.undp.org/fr/>
Spanish: <http://report.hdr.undp.org/es/>

The COVID-19 pandemic is the latest crisis facing the world, but unless humans release their grip on nature, it won't be the last, according to a new report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which includes a new experimental index on human progress that takes into account countries' carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint. The report, released on 15 December 2020, lays out a stark choice for world leaders - take bold steps to reduce the immense pressure that is being exerted on the environment and the natural world, or humanity's progress will stall.



The Migrant pay gap: Understanding wage differences between migrants and nationals (ILO)

Report, Executive Summary & Key findings: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_763803/lang--en/index.htm

Migrants earn nearly 13 per cent on average less than national workers in high-income countries, according to a new International Labour Organization (ILO) report, released on 14 December 2020. In some countries such as Cyprus, Italy and Austria the pay gap in hourly wages is higher, at 42 per cent, 30 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. In Finland it is lower than the average, at 11 per cent and in the European Union as a whole it is almost 9 per cent. In the last five years, the migrant pay gap has widened in some high-income countries: In Italy for example, migrant workers earn 30 per cent less than nationals according to the latest data, compared to 27 per cent in 2015. In Portugal the pay gap is 29 per cent compared to 25 per cent in 2015, and in Ireland 21 per cent compared to 19 per cent in 2015. However, in all countries they face problems of discrimination and exclusion, which have been aggravated by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#), the ILO study shows.



SDG Good Practices: A compilation of success stories and lessons learned in SDG implementation (First Edition)

<https://sdgs.un.org/publications/sdg-good-practices-2020>

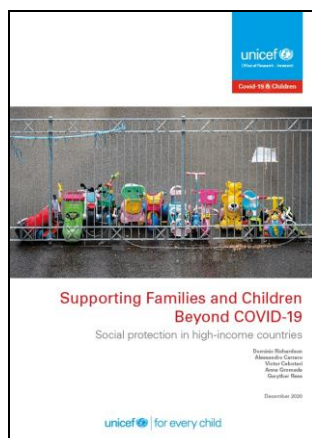
This publication presents 16 SDG Good Practices from across the globe, received in response to the first open call for good practices in SDG implementation issued by UN DESA between 2018 and 2019. Sorted by geographical region, the publication describes the diverse examples in detail and features reflections on their impact and results. As the world pursues a transformative recovery from COVID-19 and embarks on the Decade of Action for the SDGs, this publication could provide inspiration to Governments and stakeholders in their efforts to address the crisis, reduce the risk of future potential emergencies and deliver on the ambitious and inclusive vision of the 2030 Agenda.



State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries 2020 (FAO)

Report, Summary, Infographics: <http://www.fao.org/gfcm/publications/somfi/en/>

After decades of increasing human pressures on the Mediterranean and Black Sea marine ecosystems and fisheries resources, the latest data suggest that a corner is finally being turned on overexploitation of the region's vital fish stocks. According to a new report on the *State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SoMFi 2020)*, released on 14 December 2020, while 75 percent of fish stocks remain subject to overfishing, this percentage fell by more than 10 percent between 2014 and 2018. Exploitation ratios are down by a similar proportion. Taking into account newly assessed stocks, the number of fish stocks with high relative biomass has doubled since the last edition published in 2018. The SoMFI report is published biennially by the [General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean \(GFCM\)](#) - a FAO statutory body which operates under FAO Governing Bodies. The report has been produced by FAO staff within the GFCM Secretariat with the collaboration of select experts and on the basis of the data sent by fisheries administrations along the Mediterranean and Black Sea as well as the analysis carried out by the technical statutory bodies of the GFCM. While most of the stocks remain overexploited, this is the first time in decades that the GFCM has been able to report some positive trends.



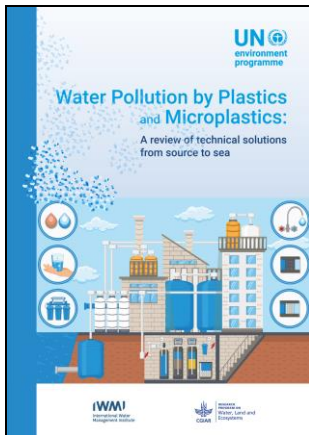
Supporting Families and Children Beyond COVID-19: Social Protection in High Income Countries (UNICEF–Innocenti)

<https://bit.ly/3mhTbb9>

Child poverty is expected to remain above pre-COVID levels for at least five years in high-income countries. Yet, only 2 per cent of government-provided financial relief across OECD and EU countries was allocated specifically to support children and families raising children during the first wave of the pandemic, according to a new UNICEF report released on 11 December 2020. It explores how the social and economic impact of the pandemic is likely to affect children; the initial government responses to the crisis; and how future public policies could be optimised to better support children.

Water pollution by plastics and microplastics: a review of technical solutions from source to sea (UNEP)

<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/water-pollution-plastics-and-microplastics-review-technical-solutions-source-sea>



From source to sea, our waters are contaminated by a plastics scourge. A new study by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), released on 17 December 2020, offers a number of technological solutions aimed at tackling one of the world's most pressing issues. Approximately 8 million metric tonnes of plastic litter flow to the ocean annually, and only 9% of plastic waste ever produced has been recycled. A large percentage of the rest ends up in landfills, dumps and the environment, often finding its way to rivers, lakes and oceans through runoff, leakage, flushing of disposable wipes and hygiene products. Another major issue relates to microplastics – those plastics that are smaller than 5 millimeters, and that pose increasing environmental, economic and health hazards. Sometimes these are intentionally added to products, for example in cosmetics,

for seed coatings, paint, washing powders and other applications. They are also generated from wear and tear, through the production of synthetic textiles and tyre usage. In addition, discarded plastics break down into these smaller particles through natural weathering processes. Microplastics can enter water bodies through different pathways, including atmospheric deposition, run-off from land, roads and through municipal wastewater.

International Peace and Security

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law: strengthening the cooperation between the Security Council and the International Court of Justice”

English, French & Spanish: <https://undocs.org/S/2020/1194>

The Security Council held on 18 December 2020 an open meeting on the theme “The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law: strengthening the cooperation between the Security Council and the International Court of Justice. South Africa, the Security Council President for December, has prepared this concept note in order to guide the discussion on the subject.

Concept note for the Security Council high-level open debate on the theme “Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts”

English, French & Spanish: <https://undocs.org/S/2020/1296>

The Security Council held on 6 January 2021 a high-level open debate on the theme “Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts. In order to guide the discussion on the subject, Tunisia, the Security Council President for January, has prepared this concept note.

Concept note for the Security Council ministerial meeting to mark the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1373 (2001) and the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, on the theme “Trends, challenges and opportunities”

English, French & Spanish: <https://undocs.org/S/2020/1315>

The Security Council will hold a ministerial meeting on 12 January 2021 to mark the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1373 (2001) and the establishment of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism, on the theme “Trends, challenges and opportunities”. In order to guide the discussion on the subject, Tunisia, the Security Council President for January, has prepared this concept note.

From Crisis to Opportunity for Sustainable Peace – A joint perspective on responding to the health, employment and peacebuilding challenges in times of COVID-19

<https://bit.ly/34ymMHk>

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis uniquely complicates peace and reconstruction efforts in conflict-affected countries, jeopardizing public health responses and threatening peacebuilding efforts. A joint report co-authored by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), Interpeace, and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office (DPPA/PBSO) calls for tailored and coordinated responses to build and sustain peace in countries affected by conflict. The publication offers ways to tackle the health crisis, create decent jobs in a conflict-sensitive manner and contribute to peacebuilding. In countries affected by armed conflict or where the risk of an outbreak of violence is high, the COVID-19 crisis or the response to it can exacerbate grievances, increase mistrust, discrimination and perceptions of injustice over access to health services, decent jobs and livelihoods, says the report.



Development of Africa

Economic Report on Africa 2020: Innovative Finance for Private Sector Development in Africa (UNECA)

<https://uneca.org/era2020>

Africa today, in the wake of COVID-19, is facing an unprecedented threat to its hard-earned growth over the last decade. The pandemic is global, but the resilience of the African region depends on the strategies and policies countries adopt now, building on recent initiatives to accelerate economic growth to meet national development aspirations in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063, and to do so in a financially and environmentally sustainable manner.



Human Rights

General comment No. 37(2020) on the right of peaceful assembly (article 21)

English, French & Spanish: <https://undocs.org/CCPR/C/GC/37>

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/peaceful-assembly.aspx>

In July 2020, the Human Rights Committee published General Comment 37 (GC 37) on the right of peaceful assembly, a right enshrined in Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 21 provides that "the right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized," and allows limited circumstances in which it can be restricted. However, organizers, protesters, governments, law enforcement and members of the public often clash over how the right is exercised, and how it can be limited.

Further information: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CCPR/Pages/GCArticle21.aspx>

Humanitarian Affairs

UNHCR at 70

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2020/12/5fd327344/>

On 14 December, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees turned 70 years old. For an organization that should have ceased to exist after three years, it is an uncomfortable birthday that we are not in the mood to celebrate.

Media page: '70 years protecting people forced to flee' (includes Multimedia content):

<https://www.unhcr.org/media-page-70-years-protecting-people-forced-to-flee>

Information Repository of Good Practices and Lessons Learned in Land-Use Planning and Industrial Safety (UNECE / EIB)

<https://unece.org/overview-and-case-studies>

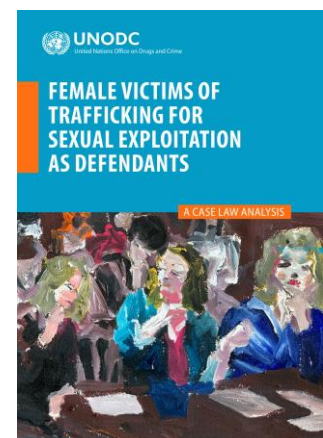
Disasters caused by natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, droughts and storms, as well as technological hazards, including industrial and chemical accidents, put human lives, ecosystems and economies at serious risk, with potentially long-term consequences. The security and stability of our societies can be wiped away in minutes as a consequence of such disasters, and the extreme weather events occurring as a result of climate change are exacerbating the risks. All countries – including the most developed – are vulnerable, especially when integrated land management, industrial safety, environmental and public participation measures are not in place. The recent [warehouse explosion in Beirut](#) (2020), the [dam break in Brazil](#) (2019) and the [explosions at a chemical plant in Texas](#) during Hurricane Harvey (2017) are devastating reminders of the consequences of major disasters and a lack of coordinated and preventative action. Disaster risk reduction is essential to enhancing the resilience of people, communities and the environment. To this end, the [European Investment Bank](#) (EIB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) recently launched this repository. This online hub consolidates the good practices and lessons learned over the past decade by UNECE countries and beyond in the fields of land-use planning, industrial safety, the siting of industrial/chemical facilities, environmental assessment, public participation, information for the public, disaster risk reduction and transboundary cooperation.

Justice and International Law

Female Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation as Defendants: A Case Law Analysis (UNODC)

<https://bit.ly/3p4pCLV>

Women and girls, who are often themselves victims of human trafficking and are sexually exploited by criminal gangs, are being prosecuted and convicted for human trafficking-related crimes, according to a new UNODC publication, released on 16 December 2020. These victims often have no alternative but to obey an order. Some hope to limit their own exploitation or escape poverty by playing a role in the criminal process. Yet at the same time, the traffickers use the women and girls as a shield to protect themselves from being punished for their crimes. These are the findings of a new UNODC study which aims to shed light on this alarming trend. The publication highlights the complexities faced by victims of human trafficking, with a view to assist the authorities and victim support services that handle such cases.



Drug Control, Crime Prevention and Counter-terrorism

Measuring Organized Crime in the Western Balkans

<https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/OC/Measuring-OC-in-WB.pdf>

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) launched a comprehensive report which sheds light on the nature, characteristics, and level of organized crime in the Western Balkans on 14 December 2020. Using qualitative and quantitative data from several sources —including administrative records and court verdicts, as well as interviews with experts, victims, and prisoners—the report offers a comprehensive overview of the structure and modus operandi of criminal groups in the region. It further provides an in-depth analysis of devices that criminals resort to in order to evade justice —such as obstruction of justice and corruption— as well as the different forms of communication they use.

