

Voices from Africa

United Nations Development Programme



Many left behind by human development progress in sub-Saharan Africa



Despite outpacing global human development growth rates over 15 years, sub-Saharan Africa remains burdened by the world's most uneven distribution of development gains, with women, girls, people living in rural areas, migrants, refugees and those in conflict-affected areas systemically left behind. Gender inequality remains a serious challenge to human development in the region.

These are among the findings of the [Human Development Report 2016](#), titled “Human Development for Everyone” released globally

on 21 March in Stockholm, Sweden. The report finds that although average human development improved significantly across all regions from 1990 to 2015, one in three people worldwide continue to live in low levels of human development as measured by the Human Development Index (HDI). Read more [here](#).

Second International Conference on the Emergence of Africa (ICEA 2017)



At the second edition of the [International Conference on the Emergence of Africa](#) (ICEA), held in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire during 28-30 March 2017, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark [emphasized](#) that “the pursuit and promotion of emergence will accelerate human development in Africa, and is central to achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 on the continent.”

Several Heads of State and Government and more than 800 high-level participants - including 45 delegations from Africa, Asia,

and Latin America - participated in the conference, themed: *Implementation of Plans for Emergence in Africa*. Discussions took stock of Africa's achievements in building the three pillars of Emergence — (i) a developmental state, (ii) inclusive human development, and (iii) structural transformation. UNDP presented a summary of [thirteen-country case studies](#) on successes and challenges associated with emergence. Conference outcomes included that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire will house the newly-created ICEA Regional Executive Secretariat; that conferences on emergence would be held every two

years on a rotating basis; and that a strategic monitoring center would be created, bringing together actors from civil society and the regional executive secretariat.

The ICEA is organized by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and UNDP, in partnership with the World Bank and the African Development Bank Group. Read more [here](#).

Senegal shares US\$ 200 million rural Emergency Community Development Programme experience



Representatives of 21 African countries together with bilateral and multilateral partners met in Dakar, Senegal during 13-14 March for the Africa Regional Meeting to review the achievements of the two-year, US\$ 206 million Senegal Emergency Community Development Programme (PUDC). The meeting was chaired by President Macky Sall and served as a forum to share Senegal's PUDC experience with other African countries as a model of success with profound impact on community development.

The [UNDP-implemented PUDC](#) aims to improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people through providing basic social services and infrastructure. This includes building feeder roads, boreholes and water towers; rural electrification; providing agricultural and post-harvest equipment, and promoting value chains, among other activities. In his [opening address](#) UNDP Africa Director Abdoulaye Mar Dieye noted that the PUDC "is a perfect vector for promoting, accelerating and securing sustainable and inclusive development, a pledge of social peace." In 2016, Togo and UNDP also agreed on a [US\\$ 258 million PUDC initiative](#).

UNDP joins forces with IBM on tech skills development for Africa's young workforce



IBM is investing US\$70 million in building much-needed digital, cloud, and cognitive IT skills to help support a 21st century workforce in Africa.

The joint UNDP – IBM initiative, "IBM Digital - Nation Africa", provides a cloud-based learning platform designed to provide free skills development programmes for up to 25 million African youths over five years, enabling digital competence and nurturing innovation in Africa. Read more [here](#).

African Disability Forum formally registered, boosting disability rights on the continent



With the registration of the African Disability Forum, the continent now has its own legally recognized umbrella grouping of organisations of persons with disabilities to ensure that decisions concerning disabled people are taken with and by persons with disabilities, their families and their organizations at pan- African, sub-regional, national and local levels. The Forum was officially launched in 2014 and has been operating from the UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA). Read more [here](#).

Portal maps successful South-South and Triangular Cooperation practices in Africa



The UNDP RSCA and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) have developed the [South-South Cooperation Online Mapping Portal for Africa](#) which provides one-stop shop access to practical, easy-to-use expertise on the broad range of existing South-South and Triangular Cooperation mechanisms and solutions in the continent.

The portal currently highlights more than 700 exchanges in different development areas between Africa and the rest of Global South.

Africa's development actors, including international agencies, public and private sector, civil society and academia, can easily showcase their successful practices through documenting their solutions on the portal.

Renewed commitment and a sub-regional approach needed for peace and stability in Central Africa



Persistent insecurity and fragility in the Central African sub-region can only be addressed if national and regional actors, as well as international partners, prioritize peace-building and development of border areas, boost citizen's engagement and participation, and improve governance indicators and management of natural resources.

These are among the recommendations of a strategic assessment report published by UNDP Africa titled ["Central Africa: A Sub-](#)

[Region Falling Behind?"](#) that casts a comprehensive sub-regional perspective on the challenges faced, to inform a new generation of responses both by the UN and other stakeholders. Read more [here](#).

Maendeleo Policy Forum

Election management and stability in Africa's divided societies



Despite elections increasingly becoming the norm across Africa, democracy remains fragile and susceptible to the threat of instability and violent conflict. To discuss these challenges as well as good practices in election management from past elections, the Africa Policy Institute (API) and the RSCA co-hosted the sixth Maendeleo Policy Forum on 14 December in Nairobi, Kenya. Panelists included Chairperson of the Ghana Electoral Commission Charlotte Kessonmith Osei, API Nairobi President Prof. Peter Kagwanja, and Prof. Karuti Kanyinga from the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. Read more [here](#).

Ending corruption can boost sustainable development



Combating illicit financial flows, building up capacities in public administrations and encouraging partnerships with the private sector are among the initiatives that could help fight corruption as Africa begins implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These were some of the solutions offered by panellists including Transparency International's Chantal Uwimana, and UNDP Africa Chief Economist and Head of Strategy and Analysis Team Ayodele Odusola, during the seventh Maendeleo Policy Forum held in Addis Ababa on 7 February under the theme "Corruption as an impediment towards SDGs achievement: What must Africa do?". Read more [here](#)

600 Burundian youth fixing roads to help rebuild peace



Since December 2016 more than 600 Burundian youth wearing t-shirts printed with the message "I commit to peace for my country" have been busy rehabilitating roads, and cleaning and constructing drainage systems in parts of the capital city Bujumbura to help build stronger community ties to reinforce peace. The cash-for-work initiative is part of the Community Protection and Social Cohesion Support Project that is supported by UNDP and other partners, which, if scaled-up could go a long way in improving livelihoods

and contributing to peace and social cohesion in the Great Lakes region in the context of the [UN Great Lakes Regional Strategic Framework](#). Read more [here](#).

65 Muslim scholars commit to tackling the spread of violent extremism in West and Central Africa



To help address the threat of violent extremism in their regions, 65 Muslim scholars from West and Central Africa have signed up to the Abuja Declaration on Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism that includes more transparent mosque management, the participation of women and youth in decision-making processes, and training of religious leaders and institutions to deliver content more

effectively.

The Declaration was agreed after a two-day conference chaired by the Sultan of Sokoto and President-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs His Eminence Alhaji Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar in the Nigerian capital during 17-18 October 2016. The UNDP Africa-supported meeting drew participants from Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. Read more [here](#).

“I have witnessed this throughout my life: when we empower women, we empower the world,” UN Secretary-General at the African Union Summit, Addis Ababa, January 2017



In his first address to the African Union since taking office, UN Secretary-General António Guterres underscored the importance of a strategic AU-UN partnership for building sustainable development and advancing peace and security on the continent, reported [UN News](#). Full remarks to the press also [here](#).

Towards the next regional programme for Africa



Development partners and UNDP senior staff met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 8 February to participate in the third UNDP Regional Programme for Africa Advisory Board Meeting. The board members took stock of implementation of the current Regional Programme 2014-2017, emerging new initiatives and partnerships and resource mobilization. They also discussed the framing of the next four-year programme to start in 2018.

A flagship programme for UNDP, the Regional Programme for Africa seeks to address cross-border risks and opportunities, and build the

capacities of regional institutions and economic communities to manage them, while focused on long-term strategic partnerships for results.

Journalist from Burkina Faso awarded with Zimeo Award for excellent reporting on the SDGs



Journalist Nourou-Dhine Salouka from Burkina Faso won the Zimeo Award for Excellence in Reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on 8 December, in Nairobi, Kenya. Salouka's winning piece was about Samandollé, a small village in Burkina Faso that is struggling with scarce water resources and sanitation services.

The Zimeo prizes are organized by the African Media Initiative (AMI) and granted to meritorious individuals and organizations that, in their writings, productions or support for media development, demonstrate the highest standards

of professionalism, focus, and impact. Read more [here](#).

Thousands of fathers join actor Nikolaj Coster-Waldau in pledge to stand up for daughters around the world



More than 35,000 people worldwide have [signed up to a petition](#) by UNDP Goodwill Ambassador and HBO's Game of Thrones star Nikolaj Coster-Waldau calling on fathers to unite and empower women and girls by promoting literacy and education around the world.

Coster-Waldau has teamed up with UNDP to fight for gender equality and was recently in Kenya to referee the Global Goals Women's World Cup. Read more [here](#).

Our blog series



Gambians are ready to rebuild their country

by Ozonnia Ojielo, Governance-Peacebuilding Regional Cluster Director, UNDP RSCA



Tackling the crisis in the Lake Chad Basin

by Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, UNDP Africa

Following the political transition in Gambia earlier this year, a United Nations inter-agency mission was deployed to assess the main challenges to peace, development and human rights in the country and identify potential areas of UN support to the government and the people. UNDP Africa Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster Team Leader Ozonnia Ojielo was part of the team. Read his full blog [here](#).



Bringing youth together to innovate is key to development in Africa

By Marc Lepage, Innovation and Knowledge Management Specialist, UNDP RSCA

Meaningfully engaging youth in national dialogue is particularly relevant, not only to Africa but also beyond, though it needs to be approached with subtlety to avoid political 'recruiting' of young people for short-term electoral purposes.

YouthConnekt, a youth empowerment initiative, trains young people about entrepreneurship, youth development, and access to jobs and finance. Read full blog [here](#).



Climate and weather respect no borders, so investing in regional climate services is a must

By Excellent Hachileka, Programme Specialist in the Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Cluster, UNDP RSCA

No single organization is big enough to tackle the multidimensional crisis in the Lake Chad basin alone. We need a multi-stakeholder response, drawing on our collective expertise in political engagement, early recovery, socio-economic development, law enforcement and conservation. UNDP for its part stands ready to work with all actors to bring about this vision. Read the full blog [here](#).



Co-creating partnerships to achieve the Global Goals

By Juergen Nagler, Regional Partnership Advisor, UNDP RSCA

With the SDGs having significantly raised the bar regarding ambition and universality, there is agreement that we must go well beyond business as usual to meet them. Achieving breakthrough progress in these rapidly-changing times requires a new mind-set and different behavior from all of us. As a neutral broker, UNDP increasingly takes innovative approaches to coordinating, connecting and co-creating with partners, globally and locally. Read full blog [here](#).



Is there a better way to measure resource-dependence?

By Degol Hailu, Senior Advisor and Chinpihoi Kipgen, Research and Data Analyst, Extractives Industries, UNDP RSCA

The recent El Niño and La Niña phenomena have affected millions of people across several countries, and key climate-reliant sectors such as agriculture, water resources, energy and infrastructure have been impacted. Developing countries in Africa are among the most affected by climate change impacts, and yet remain among the least prepared to respond or cope when disaster strikes. Is it possible to address some of these challenges? Read full blog [here](#).

Several researchers have come up with indicators to measure resource-dependency. They look at shares of resource exports in GDP or in total exports; resource revenue as a share of total government revenue and extractive value-added in GDP. These traditional measures however do not consider the contribution of other sectors to foreign income, taxes or to domestic value addition. Dependence on resource incomes is only problematic if other sectors are relatively weaker. This is what our Extractives Dependence Index (EDI) tries to correct. Read the full blog [here](#).

Upcoming events

25 April - [World Malaria Day](#)

3 May - [World Press Freedom Day](#)

3-5 May - [World Economic Forum on Africa](#), South Africa

22-26 May - [African Development Bank - Annual Meetings](#), India

22-26 May - [Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction](#), Mexico

30 May-9 June - [Annual Session of the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP Executive Board](#)

5 June - [World Environment Day](#)

5-9 June - [United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14](#)

17 June - [World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought](#)

19 June - [Joint meeting of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS, UNICEF, UN-Women and WFP](#)

20 June - [World Refugee Day](#)

Feedback

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