In 2015, the United Nations continued to promote social, cultural, and human resources development, and to implement related programmes of action, including on the situation of ageing persons, persons with disabilities, youth, and the family.

The Commission for Social Development held its fifty-third regular session in February under the priority theme “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world”. It recommended several draft resolutions for adoption by the Economic and Social Council, including on the modalities for the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, which endorsed the timeline for that review and decided it would be held in 2018; and on the rights of persons with disabilities, which welcomed the appointment by the Human Rights Council of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and decided to hold a multi-stakeholder panel in 2016 to explore how UN mechanisms and entities could strengthen the mainstreaming of disability issues in the post-2015 development agenda and to consider the possibility of establishing another monitoring mechanism on disability. The Council adopted the resolutions in June.

The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing held its sixth session in July, focusing on how greater protection of the human rights of older persons could be reached through more efficient implementation of existing instruments and mechanisms, and the identification of proposals to address gaps at the international level in the implementation of those frameworks. In December, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons, which encouraged Member States to contribute to the work of the Open-ended Working Group by presenting measures, such as best practices, lessons learned and possible content for a multilateral legal instrument.

On youth, several events were held to encourage the accelerated development and implementation of youth policies and to promote structured and sustainable youth participation in the work of the United Nations. A Security Council ministerial open debate addressed the Role of Youth in Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Peace; a High-level Event of the General Assembly marked the twentieth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth; and the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security in Amman, Jordan, focused on the state of youth and peace, youth movements and the inclusion of young women in peace processes. In December, the Security Council and the General Assembly adopted resolutions on youth, urging Member States, UN entities and all relevant actors to increase youth involvement and representation in relevant decision-making processes and monitoring, including in the design and implementation of policies, programmes and peace agreements.

To promote a culture of peace, the General Assembly convened a high-level thematic debate on “Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation: Fostering Peaceful, Inclusive Societies and Countering Violent Extremism”; adopted a resolution reaffirming support for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in fostering understanding among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs, and encouraging the Alliance to continue assisting Member States in their efforts to reaffirm the value of diversity based on respect for human rights; and held a High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, which focused on the “Promotion of the Culture of Peace in the context of the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda” and the “Role of media in the promotion of the Culture of Peace”. In December, the Secretary-General submitted a report on a “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism”, and the General Assembly urged all Member States to increase their understanding of the drivers of violent extremism and unite against it in all its forms and manifestations.

On culture and development, the Assembly reaffirmed the role of culture as an enabler of sustainable development, decided to consider the contribution of culture to sustainable development in the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that UN country teams continued to integrate and mainstream culture into their programming, in consultation with national authorities, when assisting countries in pursuit of their development objectives.

On 24 July, the inaugural United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize for dedicated service to humanity was awarded to Dr. Helena Ndume (Namibia) and Mr. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio (Portugal). In the field of human resources development, the United Nations University (unu) opened the UNU Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance in Guimarães, Portugal, and the UNU Institute
in Macau, China, was reconstituted in 2015 as the UNU Institute on Computing and Society. The United Nations System Staff College established the Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development in Bonn, to respond to the learning, training and knowledge management needs of UN staff and partners in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

**Social policy**

**Social development**

**Follow-up to 1995 World Summit and General Assembly special session**

On 22 July [A/70/173], pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/143 [YUN 2014, p. 1221], the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly a report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development [YUN 1995, p. 1113] and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly [YUN 2000, p. 1012]. He reviewed discussions held by the Commission for Social Development at its fifty-third session (see p. 000), with a focus on the priority theme “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world”.

The report highlighted progress made, as well as the challenges encountered, in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, focusing on its three main objectives: the eradication of poverty; the promotion of employment and decent work for all; and social integration. It addressed the special needs of Africa and the least developed countries and progress made in the implementation of programmes related to social groups, and examined some specific areas in which social development could contribute to achieving socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development.

The Secretary-General recommended that Member States renew their commitments to advance social development through greater implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, within the context of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, and that the specific needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups and individuals be fully reflected in that agenda. Governments should address the interlinkages among the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development; and the role of the Commission for Social Development should be strengthened as a potential venue for following up the social dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On 17 December, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretariat-General on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (decision 70/530).

**Commission for Social Development**

The Commission for Social Development, at its fifty-third regular session (New York, 4–13 February) [E/2015/26-E/CN.5/2015/9 & Corr.1], discussed the priority theme “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world”, and reviewed UN programmes of action on the situation of social groups and the social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) (see p. 000). It convened two panel discussions, one on the priority theme and the other on the contributions of social development to the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Commission also convened a commemorative event for the twentieth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, which included an interactive panel discussion on the theme “Social development: from Copenhagen to the post-2015 development agenda”.

For the consideration of its priority theme, the Commission had before it a report [E/CN.5/2015/3] of the Secretary-General on rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world, submitted in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/3 [YUN 2014, p. 1227]. The report assessed progress made in fulfilling the vision of the World Summit for Social Development but also showed that, 20 years later, the core commitments to poverty eradication, full employment and social integration remained largely unfulfilled, given that progress had been unequal and fragmented. It discussed strategies to strengthen the social dimension of sustainable development and proposed avenues for action by the Commission. It concluded that the post-2015 development agenda should be guided by the principle of social justice and generate commitment to the major transformations required to strengthen the social pillar, including by promoting the inclusion of all individuals in economic, social and political life. The agenda should provide guidance on the process or means to achieve its goals and promote global commitments in a way that would open policy space at the national level for countries to determine their own approaches. The Commission should promote accountability for ensuring that implementation and monitoring processes were participatory, and no target or goal should be considered to have been met in the absence of progress among any poor or marginalized group.

For its consideration of emerging issues, the Commission had before it a note [E/CN.5/2015/6] by the Secretariat that examined key areas in which social
development could contribute to the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs. The report presented an overview of the concept of social sustainability and discussed how social policies could drive the transition to sustainable development by focusing on investment in human capacity; the transition to a green economy; and knowledge and new technology.

The Commission adopted three draft resolutions that were recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council, on the following subjects: social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, in which the Commission called upon Member States, UN organizations and relevant stakeholders to make concerted efforts to promote social development in Africa; modalities for the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, in which the Commission endorsed the timeline and modalities for carrying out the third review and appraisal of the Plan of Action and decided that the global review would be held in 2018; and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthening the mainstreaming of disability in the post-2015 development agenda, in which the Commission decided to hold a multi-stakeholder panel discussion during the fifty-fourth (2016) session of the Commission, with a view to further elaborating the ways in which existing UN mechanisms and entities could contribute to strengthening the mainstreaming of disability, to enhance awareness and cooperation at all levels on implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and to consider the possibility and modalities of another monitoring mechanism. The Commission also adopted a resolution on policies and programmes involving youth, which was brought to the attention of the Council. In that resolution, the Commission encouraged Member States to ensure a coherent and mutually reinforcing approach while implementing all relevant agreed frameworks, including the World Programme of Action for Youth and the post-2015 development agenda.

On 8 June, the Economic and Social Council took note of the report of the Commission on its fifty-third session and approved the provisional agenda and documentation for the fifty-fourth (2016) session of the Commission (Decision 2015/212).

Social integration

In response to General Assembly resolution 68/131 [YUN 2013, p. 1043], the Secretary-General submitted a report [A/70/179] on promoting social integration through social inclusion, which built on the findings of the previous reports on social integration and provided an account of national efforts and the initiatives of the UN system aimed at promoting the civic, social, economic and political participation of persons belonging to groups or in situations in which they were vulnerable or marginalized. The report gave an overview of regional approaches to social integration and presented recent national efforts aimed at promoting the civic, social, economic and political participation of persons belonging to groups or in situations in which they were vulnerable or marginalized. Specific forms of participation included economic participation through employment; participation in policy design and service provision; participation of youth, older persons and persons with disabilities; and access to services and social protection, as well as involvement in urban planning and budgeting. The report discussed national efforts aimed at reducing inequalities through non-discrimination, poverty reduction and education and institutional arrangements conducive to social inclusion and social integration. It also reviewed the activities of the UN system in support of social integration. It concluded with recommendations for Governments for advancing inclusive societies as part of the post-2015 development agenda.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 80], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Committee [A/70/481], adopted resolution 70/126 (Promoting social integration through social inclusion) without vote [agenda item 28 (6)].

Cooperatives in social development

In response to resolution 68/133 [YUN 2013, p. 1046], the Secretary-General submitted a July report [A/70/161] on cooperatives in social development. The report highlighted the potential of cooperatives to contribute to achieving the SDGs and reaffirmed the role of cooperatives as sustainable and successful business enterprises that contributed directly to employment generation, poverty eradication, equality, social inclusion and people’s empowerment. It also presented the main challenges facing cooperatives and the activities of the UN system and its partners in promoting cooperatives. It concluded with policy recommendations for the further advancement of cooperatives, which included integrating cooperative values, principles and business models into school curricula and other forms of educational programming; taking action to improve existing legislation or pass new laws to enable the growth of cooperatives; and supporting the development and harmonization of data on cooperatives and the promotion and dissemination of evidence-based research on cooperative enterprises.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 80], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/70/481], adopted resolution 70/128 (Cooperatives in social development) without vote [agenda item 28 (6)].
UN Research Institute for Social Development

In February, the Commission for Social Development had before it a note [E/CN.5/2015/7] by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Board of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on the work of the Institute during 2013 and 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 1232].

UNRISD Board membership. The Commission also had before it a note by the Secretary-General on the nomination of members of the UNRISD Board [E/CN.5/2015/8]. By decision 2015/213 of 8 June, the Commission for Social Development, on the recommendation of the Commission [E/2015/26-E/CN.5/2015/9 (dec. 53/101)], confirmed the nomination of three candidates for Board membership.

Ageing persons

Implementation of Madrid International Plan of Action

Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/7 [YUN 2014, p. 1232], the Secretary-General submitted a report [E/CN.5/2015/4] to the Commission for Social Development that provided an overview of the modalities for the first and second reviews and appraisals of the Madrid Plan of Action, as conducted by the Commission in 2007–2008 [YUN 2007, p. 1232] and 2012–2013 [YUN 2012, p. 1054]. The report summarized the views of Member States and observers on a possible theme or themes and modalities of the third review and appraisal, to be held in 2017–2018, as well as inputs from other stakeholders, including civil society and focal points on ageing in regional commissions. It also presented options for modalities and a proposed timeline for the third review and appraisal process.

The feedback received by the Secretariat for the report, as well as the experience of the first two five-year review and appraisal processes, indicated that each region had its own priorities in relation to the modalities and the focus of the review and appraisal processes, which were often based on post-Madrid regional plans of action. For the third cycle, the report proposed the option of focusing on the process of the review and appraisal, rather than agreeing on a particular theme. Such an option would serve to advance the social inclusion and participation of older persons and the original intent of the bottom-up approach for the review and appraisal process.


ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 8 June [meeting 32], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development [E/2015/26], adopted resolution 2015/5 (Modalities for the third review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002) without vote [agenda item 19 (6)].

Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

The Open-ended Working Group on Ageing, established by General Assembly resolution 65/182 [YUN 2010, p. 1194], held its sixth working session (New York, 14–16 July) [A/AC.278/2015/2], which consisted of three panel discussions on recent policy developments and initiatives concerning the human rights of older persons; recent legislative and legal developments and challenges in the human rights of older persons; and older persons and human rights in the post-2015 development agenda. The session also featured a presentation by the independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, and an interactive discussion on the topic “Follow-up to resolution 69/146: Proposals and measures, best practices and lessons learned that will contribute to promoting and protecting the rights and dignity of older persons”. The session dedicated a portion of its meetings to an interactive dialogue with civil society.

During the session, some delegations stressed that greater protection of the human rights of older persons could be reached through the better and more efficient implementation of existing instruments and mechanisms, including the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, while other delegations, organizations of civil society and several panellists emphasized that the goal of greater protection could only be reached through a specific international legal instrument encompassing all human rights of older persons. Proposals identified by the Working Group to address gaps in the implementation of existing frameworks and mechanisms included the following: incorporation of the issue of the human rights of older persons into the respective mandates of treaty bodies; consideration of issues related to the human rights of older people in the mandates of the special procedures mechanisms of the Human Rights Council; use by Member States of the universal periodic review to address issues related to ageing; systematic inclusion of targets and indicators related to older people by the funds and programmes of the UN system and specialized agencies; inclusion by Member States of language related to the rights of older persons in resolutions and documents of various intergovernmental bodies; highlighting the rights of older persons in the post-2015 development agenda; and that a comprehensive compilation of all applicable legal instruments be conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.
On 17 December (resolution 70/164), the General Assembly adopted a resolution on measures to enhance the promotion and protection of the human rights and dignity of older persons (see p. 000), which encouraged Member States to contribute to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing by presenting measures, such as best practices, lessons learned and possible content for a multilateral legal instrument, to enable it to fulfil its existing mandate.

Follow-up to Second World Assembly on Ageing (2002)

In response to General Assembly resolution 69/146 [YUN 2014, p. 1236], the Secretary-General submitted a July report [A/70/185] on the follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing. The report provided an analysis of how the existing agenda for ageing and older persons fits within the framework of the post-2015 development agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals. It focused on six issues of direct relevance to the post-2015 development agenda from an older person’s perspective: poverty, health, gender equality, employment and decent work, inclusive cities and environmental emergencies. The report also provided information on recent developments on ageing from the regional commissions and concluded with recommendations for ensuring that older persons would not be left behind in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

On 17 December, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General (decision 70/530).

Persons with disabilities

Equalization of opportunities

Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/6 [YUN 2014, p. 1240], the Secretary-General submitted to the fifty-third session of the Commission for Social Development a note [E/CN.5/2015/5] transmitting the annual report of the Commission’s Special Rapporteur on disability Shuaib Chalklen (South Africa). The report [YUN 2014, p. 1239] described the Special Rapporteur’s activities from November 2013 to October 2014, covering topics including the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities [YUN 1993, p. 977]; synergy between the Standard Rules and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [YUN 2006, p. 785]; promoting awareness-raising and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Standard Rules and other international instruments; and mainstreaming disability-inclusive commitments within the post-2015 international development agenda. With regard to the targets and indicators of the SDGs, it was of critical importance that reference be made to the measurement of the situation of persons with disabilities, so that progress made and obstacles faced in realizing development goals for persons with disabilities could be monitored effectively.

Commission action. On 13 February [E/2015/26-EN/CN.5/2015/9], the Commission recommended a draft resolution for adoption by the Economic and Social Council on promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthening the mainstreaming of disability in the post-2015 development agenda, in which the Commission welcomed the appointment by the Human Rights Council of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities [YUN 2014, p. 884]; and decided to hold a multi-stakeholder panel discussion during its fifty-fourth (2016) session, with a view to further elaborating the ways in which existing mechanisms and entities within the UN system could contribute to strengthening the mainstreaming of disability, enhancing awareness and cooperation at all levels on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and to consider the possibility and modalities of another monitoring mechanism (see below).

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 8 June (meeting 32), the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development [E/2015/26], adopted resolution 2015/4 (Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthening the mainstreaming of disability in the post-2015 development agenda) without vote [agenda item 19 (b)].

Youth

World Programme of Action for Youth

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 68/130 [YUN 2013, p. 1059], the Secretary-General submitted a July report [A/70/156] on ways to promote effective structured and sustainable youth participation, which highlighted activities in the development of policies and programmes for youth and efforts towards their monitoring and evaluation. The report covered initiatives by Member States and UN entities to enhance the situation of youth in the areas of education, employment, health, violence and conflict, discrimination and gender equality, youth participation and intergenerational relations. In Member States, there had been a particular focus on education and employment as central to the development of youth and youth-related policies, and a number of Member States had developed or were in the process of developing a specific national youth policy. Through country, regional and global offices, UN entities provided technical assistance and
support to governments in the development and revision of national youth policies, and there was greater attention on youth via the development and implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth [YUN 2013, p. 1058]. UN entities had used momentum under the Action Plan on Youth to develop or enhance entity-specific youth strategies aimed at better including youth in their processes and activities. These included the United Nations Development Programme Youth Strategy 2014–2017, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Operational Strategy on Youth 2014–2021, and the Food and Agriculture Organization Operational Strategy on Youth 2014–2021, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (fao) corporate youth strategy and the fao strategic framework on rural youth.

To address the issue of young people affected by terrorism and incitement, on 23 April 2015, Jordan, in its presidency of the Security Council, convened a Security Council ministerial open debate on the Role of Youth in Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Peace. Further to that debate, Jordan organized the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security (see below), with the support of a number of UN offices, including the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth. Initiatives conducted during the year to encourage youth policies included the High-level Event of the General Assembly marking the twentieth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth (New York, 29 May), and the Youth Now campaign, led by the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, together with the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, which aimed to increase implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary.

The Secretary-General recommended that Member States, UN entities and civil society ensure the participation of young people and their organizations in inclusive and representative decision-making processes at all levels, including national and regional youth councils; develop, implement and monitor national policies and programmes in support of the World Programme of Action for Youth and the spots that accounted for the needs of young people; and exchange experience, knowledge and expertise in youth policy and coordination between and among governments, youth-led organizations and structures, the private sector and UN entities, at the local, national and international levels.

On 17 December, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on ways to promote effective structured and sustainable youth participation (decision 70/530).

Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security. The Global Forum (Amman, Jordan, 21–22 August), attended by nearly 600 participants, including 200 young people representing 80 nationalities, discussed a range of topics focused on the state of youth and peace; youth movements; and inclusion of young women in peace processes. Main outcomes from the Global Forum included the Amman Youth Declaration, which described young people’s commitment to forging peaceful societies and presented a common vision and roadmap towards a strengthened policy framework to support youth in transforming conflict; a growing coalition of youth networks to collaborate on youth, peace and security efforts; an expanded evidence base to demonstrate young people’s effective contribution to peacebuilding and conflict prevention and transformation; and social media tools, such as #youth4peace and the “I Declare” Campaign, designed to promote and communicate the efforts of the young people in the expanded evidence base. The Amman Youth Declaration included a call for the United Nations to establish a global policy framework on youth in conflict and post-conflict scenarios, and suggested a UN Security Council resolution on Youth, Peace and Security as the preferred outcome (see below).

On 9 December, by resolution 2250(2015) (see p. 000), the Security Council urged Member States to consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth in decision-making at all levels and called on all relevant actors, including when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to take into account the participation and views of youth, recognizing that their marginalization was detrimental to building sustainable peace in all societies.

World Youth Report 2015. The 2015 World Youth Report on Youth Civic Engagement explored the participation of young people in economic, political and community life. It stated that in all three of those areas, the full engagement of young people in society relied on the active commitment of governments. It was only through meaningful involvement and partnership, inclusive policies and decision-making processes, that solutions to some of the key problems experienced by young people could be developed. To that effect, the respective roles of young people, policymakers and the institutions through which they worked should be clearly defined. While young people needed to play a central role in addressing issues that affect them, they could not tackle the multitude of challenges alone, particularly in the economic and employment area.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 80], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Third Committee [A/70/481], adopted resolution 70/127 (Policies and programmes involving youth) without vote [agenda item 28 (b)].
Family

Follow-up to the International Year of the Family and its twentieth anniversary

Report of Secretary-General. In November [A/71/61-E/2016/7], pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/144 [YUN 2014, p. 1247], the Secretary-General submitted a report to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council on the implementation of the objectives of the International Year of the Family [YUN 1994, p. 1144] and its follow-up processes. The report highlighted initiatives in that regard at the national and international levels and focused on the further development of family policy in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It recalled the objectives of the International Year of the Family, which included promoting knowledge of the economic, social and demographic processes affecting families and their members, with attention given to the rights and responsibilities of all family members; strengthening national institutions to formulate, implement and monitor policies in respect of families; and stimulating efforts to respond to problems affecting families.

The Secretary-General observed that at the national level, adopting a family policy focus had advanced efforts by Member States to reduce poverty and hunger while contributing to promoting the rights of women and children, including through better work-family balance and intergenerational solidarity. Family policies and programmes had the potential to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in terms of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for people of all ages. Policies promoting children’s health must involve families as primary caregivers responsible for their development, and such policies should promote safe and stable family environments and positive parenting. Achieving the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls started within families through the equal treatment of boys and girls, the fair sharing of care and other household responsibilities and the valuing of unpaid work, which was overwhelmingly done by women. Gender equality must also be secured in access to justice through fair family laws, including a fair recognition of shared parenting rights and responsibilities. The Secretary-General recommended that Member States implement family-oriented policies and programmes as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and revise family laws as nationally appropriate to ensure equal access to justice for women.

On 17 December (decision 70/530), the General Assembly took note of the report [A/70/61-E/2015/3] of the Secretary-General on the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 [YUN 2014, p. 1245].

Cultural development

Culture of peace

Follow-up to Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

In September [A/70/373], pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 69/139 [YUN 2014, p. 1249] and 69/140 [ibid., p. 1251], the Secretary-General submitted a report to the General Assembly on the promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, which outlined the main activities carried out by the UN system in support of peace and dialogue.

The Secretary-General highlighted the work of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (unesco), which played a twofold role: at the global level, to catalyse and coordinate initiatives and lend support to the international community; and at the national level, to establish targeted and intersectoral programming. Following the General Assembly’s endorsement of the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022) [YUN 2014, p. 1251], unesco scaled up its activities, guided by the four broad priority areas of the action plan and in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including member States, National Commissions for unesco, UN agencies, goodwill ambassadors and unesco artists for peace, unesco Chairs and associated schools, clubs and centres, academic institutions and civil society at large. The two global unesco priorities—Africa and gender equality—had underpinned its activities in supporting a culture of peace and the International Decade. Promoting a culture of peace and non-violence was identified as a flagship programme of the operational strategy for the Africa priority for 2014–2021. Regional initiatives were introduced, such as the African Initiative on Education for Peace and Development through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue, launched in Cotonou, Benin, in May 2015 (see below), and a pan-African forum on the theme “African youth and the challenge of the promotion of a culture of peace in Africa”. The forum also served to launch the “Youth and Culture of Peace” network, which was the platform for an international prize for youth organizations and for strengthening partnerships between unesco and the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative. unesco worked to boost gender equality and women’s empowerment through targeted and joint programming and inter-agency collaboration. It worked with the United Nations Population Fund (unfpa) and the United Nations Development Programme (undp) in co-leading post-2015 dialogues on culture and development, in which gender equality was one of the six sub-themes.
The Secretary-General detailed UN system activities in support of the culture of peace and dialogue in the areas of promoting inclusive societies; countering terrorism and violent extremism; protecting the environment; and promoting a rights-based approach to peace and intercultural dialogue. For example, UNESCO, UNDP and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) partnered in implementing the Peacebuilding Fund project entitled “Dialogue for the future: promoting coexistence and diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, to enhance spaces for dialogue based on trust and respect and create stronger synergies between the Government and civil society. On the occasion of the first conference of the project, in April 2015, a dialogue platform was launched, and a dialogue platform declaration was signed by the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Nations Resident Coordinator. The Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate conducted a national workshop in Kenya in January 2015, stressing the need for enhanced dialogue among religions and cultures in the context of countering violent extremism. In Darfur, the United Nations Environment Programme demonstrated that dialogue on the issue of water could act as the basis for rebuilding a relationship of trust between actors and the local government, as reflected in the report Relationships and resources: environmental governance for peacebuilding and resilient livelihoods in Sudan. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) organized several events in the Middle East and North Africa region to strengthen the implementation of the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and those events served as a springboard for civil society organizations from the region to generate their own initiatives.

The Secretary-General also reported on the increased cooperation between UN entities, faith-based organizations and religious leaders. In its capacity as the convener and Chair of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-based Organizations for the Millennium Development Goals (YUN 2000, p. 49), UNFPA continued to facilitate UN system-wide staff trainings on religion, development and humanitarian work under the auspices of the United Nations System Staff College. For example, in Morocco, UNFPA supported the Rabita Mohammadia des Ouléma in adapting a toolkit and organizing training of trainers, targeting 70 religious leaders across the country who, in turn, trained 550 local male and female religious leaders. UNFPA mobilized faith-based leaders from 13 countries in East and Southern Africa to strengthen interfaith commitments to sexual and reproductive health programming and to work with men and boys towards transforming social norms in support of gender equality and maternal health. As a result of UNFPA efforts towards the elimination of female genital mutilation, in Kenya, cultural and religious leaders made public declarations on the abandonment of female genital mutilation, and more than 5,000 girls underwent alternative rites of passage and were being encouraged to go to school. In Somalia, UNFPA trained up to 3,130 female lawyers and religious leaders as champions of abandoning all forms of female genital mutilation. UNHCR explored practical ways in which faith-based organizations could help it protect and assist refugees, asylum seekers and the internally displaced. Those efforts included launching new guidance for its staff, in a document entitled “Partnership note on faith-based organizations, local faith communities, and faith leaders”, and a survey that compiled 50 good-practice examples of activities undertaken in partnership with faith actors. In 2015, UNDP adopted guidelines on engaging with faith-based organizations and religious leaders as part of the action plan of the 2012 UNDP Strategy on Civil Society and Civil Engagement. The guidelines derived inspiration from faith teachings and were structured around the principles of seeking impartiality and transparency, building trust and mutual respect and finding common ground. UNICEF worked with the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia to mobilize religious leaders from the Christian and Muslim faiths to ensure that they had accurate information about Ebola transmission, response and recovery to impart to their communities. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS partnered with the World Health Organization to develop new, culturally sensitive practices for the burial of actual or suspected Ebola victims to eliminate risky behaviour associated with high levels of transmission of Ebola. In Zimbabwe, UN-Women worked with World Vision towards changing religious perceptions and doctrines that perpetuated violence against women, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) worked with faith leaders in raising awareness regarding human trafficking and in supporting its victims. In April 2015, the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, in cooperation with the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue and the Government of Morocco, organized the first of a series of forums with religious leaders in Fez, Morocco. It brought together 26 representatives of religions and beliefs and resulted in a plan of action for religious leaders to prevent incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. The Secretary-General concluded his report with recommendations, including increased resources and capacity-building initiatives to prevent and address conflicts; reinforced strategic communication at the UN-system level to make more visible the results of work being done to prevent violent identity-based conflict; and innovative measures to get the message across around the world and notably to young people.
**Communication.** On 4 June [A/69/927], Benin transmitted to the Secretary-General the Manifesto on Education for Peace and Development through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue, which was adopted at the Symposium for the launching of the African Initiative on Education for Peace and Development through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue (Cotonou, Benin, 26–28 May), held under the patronage of UNESCO, with the support of the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the Council of the Entente, the International Organization of La Francophonie and others.

**High-level Forum**

On 9 September, the General Assembly convened a High-level Forum on “Culture of Peace”, which focused on the “Promotion of the Culture of Peace in the context of the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda” and the “Role of media in the promotion of the Culture of Peace”. Forum participants noted the increase of acts of violence around the world, emphasized the need to promote a worldwide culture of tolerance and reconciliation, and, in that regard, highlighted the important role of community and religious leaders as well as the media. Overall, the participants underlined that peace required equitable societies, inclusive education and tangible actions on the ground.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 3 December [meeting 66], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/20 (Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace) [draft: A/70/L.24 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 16].

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 3 December [meeting 66], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/19 (Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace) [draft: A/70/L.20 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 16].

On 23 December (decision 70/554), the General Assembly decided that the item on the culture of peace would remain for consideration during its resumed seventieth (2016) session.

**A world against violence and violent extremism**

**High-level thematic debate.** On 21–22 April at UN Headquarters in New York, the General Assembly convened a high-level thematic debate on “Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation: Fostering Peaceful, Inclusive Societies and Countering Violent Extremism”. The first day focused on interfaith dialogue and featured high-level statements and interactive panel discussions with faith leaders on community engagement aimed at countering violent extremism. It also focused on the role of faith leaders in promoting tolerance for diversity, freedom of expression and human rights. The debate generated a number of recommendations and initiatives, including from the Secretary-General, who noted that he would be forwarding a comprehensive United Nations Action Plan on preventing violent extremism to the General Assembly later in the year (see below).

**Communication.** By a letter dated 16 October [A/70/440], the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted a report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/127 [YUN 2013, p. 1070], entitled “A world against violence and violent extremism”.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 10 December [meeting 72], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/109 (A world against violence and violent extremism) [draft: A/70/L.21 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 16].

**Report of the Secretary-General.** On 24 December [A/70/674], the Secretary-General submitted a report on a “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism”, which discussed the impact of violent extremism on collective efforts towards maintaining peace and security, fostering sustainable development, protecting human rights, promoting the rule of law and taking humanitarian action. More research—both qualitative and quantitative—was required on the drivers of violent extremism, but the conditions conducive to and the structural context of violent extremism pointed to the lack of socioeconomic opportunities; marginalization and discrimination; poor governance, violations of human rights and the rule of law; prolonged and unresolved conflicts; and radicalization in prisons. Although the conditions conducive to violent extremism affected entire populations, only a small number of individuals were actually radicalized and turned to violence. Factors that played a key role in the exploitation of those conditions and the transformation of ideas and grievances into violent action could include individual backgrounds and motivations; collective grievances and victimization; distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies and ethnic and cultural differences; and the existence of family and social networks or a charismatic leader or political entrepreneur.

To prevent and reduce the space for violent extremism while addressing the immediate peace and security challenges through ongoing counter-terrorism measures, the Secretary-General put forward recommendations for Member States to consider. Those included setting a policy framework for preventing violent extremism at the global, national and regional levels and mobilizing and adjusting resources to also address the drivers of violent extremism; developing national plans...
of action and regional strategies that sustain and promote dialogue between warring parties, to avoid a situation of persistent unresolved conflict; strengthening and promoting good governance, human rights norms and standards and the rule of law to create an enabling environment for civil society and reduce the appeal of violent extremism; engaging communities to deprive violent extremists of support; empowering youth to take up causes of peace, pluralism and mutual respect; empowering women’s participation, as societies for which gender equality indicators were higher were less vulnerable to violent extremism; ensuring that every child receives a quality education, skills development and employment facilitation, as part of the struggle against poverty and social marginalization; and fighting back against violent extremism through strategic communications, the Internet and social media. The Secretary-General noted his instruction to UN entities to redouble their efforts in coordinating with Member States to adapt existing programmes to target the drivers of violent extremism and introduce new initiatives to close potential gaps. That meant adopting an All-of-UN approach to supporting national, regional and global efforts to prevent violent extremism through the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination, as well as through existing UN inter-agency bodies and the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force and its entities; integrating the prevention of violent extremism into the activities of UN peacekeeping operations and special political missions in accordance with their mandates, as well as into the activities of UN country teams; strengthening early and effective action through the Human Rights Up Front initiative to prevent or respond to large-scale violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, at both the policy and the operational levels; developing a standing United Nations prevention of violent extremism platform to direct implementation of the Plan of Action; and supporting Governments seeking to develop and implement education programmes that promoted civic education, soft skills, critical thinking, digital literacy, tolerance and respect for diversity. The Secretary-General noted the rapid expansion of violent extremist ideologies in different parts of the world, facilitated by the technological revolution. The Plan of Action was the basis for a comprehensive approach to that fast evolving, multidimensional challenge. He appealed for the international community to unite, harmonize their actions and pursue inclusive approaches in the face of division, intolerance and hatred.

United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize

In March [A/69/826], pursuant to resolution 68/275 [YUN 2014, p. 1253], the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions considered the programme budget implications regarding the statute of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize. The proposed statute specified the aim of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize and set out criteria and procedures for the Prize, the nomination of candidates and the Committee charged with selecting the recipients of the Prize. In particular, the Prize would be presented once every five years as a tribute to the outstanding achievements and contributions of two individuals (one female and one male), not to be selected from the same geographic region, and it would be presented by the Secretary-General at an award ceremony that should be part of the commemoration by the General Assembly of Nelson Mandela International Day (18 July) at UN Headquarters. In April, the General Assembly adopted the statute of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize (see below).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 2 April [meeting 84], the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/269 (Statute of the United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize) [draft: A/69/L.55] without vote [agenda item 115].

On 24 July 2015, the inaugural United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize was awarded to Dr. Helena Ndume (Namibia) and Mr. Jorge Fernando Branco Sampaio (Portugal).

Alliance of Civilizations

On 6 July [A/69/PV.98], the General Assembly considered a draft resolution entitled “United Nations Alliance of Civilizations”.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 6 July [meeting 98], the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/312 (United Nations Alliance of Civilizations) [draft: A/69/L.76 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 14].

Report of High Representative. The eighth annual report [A/70/963] on the Alliance of Civilizations highlighted its activities from July 2014 to December 2015. In accordance with the strategic review document for 2013–2018, the programming of the Alliance focused on four pillars—youth, education, media and migration—with the purpose of promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue, understanding and cooperation among people and communities around the world. As at 31 December 2015, the Alliance numbered 118 Member States, the State of Palestine and 26 international organizations.

The Alliance continued to promote the use of regional and national approaches to advance its goals. During the reporting period, the Alliance led two editions of the Fellowship programme. In 2015, the activities of the fellowship programme were built around the themes of “Migration and integration” for the participants from the Middle East and North
Africa travelling to Europe and the United States and “Youth development” for their Western counterparts travelling to Egypt, Morocco and Qatar. For the first time since the launch of the Fellowship programme in 2010, the two cohorts had the opportunity to meet with one another in Sarajevo, a city at the historical crossroads between the East and the West. The goal of the meeting was to encourage immediate dialogue between the Fellows of both groups. Alliance projects also included the PLURAL+ youth video festival, which served as a platform for young people’s videos on migration, diversity and social exclusion. In 2015, 238 videos from 63 countries were received and 25 videos received awards. PLURAL+ award-winning videos were streamed over 1 million times through different Internet platforms and were shown on various other platforms across the world, including broadcasts in Latin America and Europe and screenings in Belgium, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, France, India, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, the Republic of Korea, Serbia, Spain, Turkey and the United States.

By the end of 2015, a total of 31 organizations had received the Intercultural Innovation Award, which was given to innovative and sustainable projects around the world that encouraged dialogue, promoted intercultural understanding and contributed to prosperity and peace. In addition to a monetary prize, the Alliance provided technical support to the awardees, including training and capacity-building programmes, customized support and mentoring, recognition, visibility and membership. One year after winning the Award, the number of countries impacted by the work of the awarded organizations increased by 151 per cent (from 39 to 98), and the beneficiaries increased to over a million.

On funding, the overall situation remained stable but inadequate, and the High Representative noted that the development of an effective replenishment mechanism for the Voluntary Trust Fund of the Alliance remained an important and ongoing challenge.

**Sport for development and peace**

The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP), continued to lead UN system efforts to promote sport as a tool for attaining the Sustainable Development Goals within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; encourage dialogue, collaboration and partnerships between the United Nations, Member States and other stakeholders around Sport for Development and Peace; and represent the Secretary-General and the UN system at global sporting events and other strategically important forums.

The year 2015 had witnessed significant policy changes in Sport for Development and Peace, which had assisted in the further consolidation of that field, providing policymakers and practitioners with strengthened frameworks for sustainable advancements. Policy developments included the adoption and recognition of sport’s role as an enabler of sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Olympic Truce Resolution for the 2016 Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games (see below), and the proclamation of the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace [YUN 2013, p. 1073].

At the grassroots level, the UNOSDP Youth Leadership Programme entered into its fourth year and expanded to an extra continent in 2015 (South America). A record six Youth Leadership Camps were held in 2015, and the Office continued to recruit participants from all over the world. With over 500 alumni from more than 70 countries, the Programme continued to have a multiplier effect with a wider outreach to disadvantaged communities. The Office continued efforts to promote sport as an efficient tool for peaceful dialogue and to initiate positive social change. The Special Adviser considered sporting events to be more than competitions; they were also platforms for social interaction and ideals such as respect, fair play, integrity and solidarity. The Office had been developing peace projects in the Korean Peninsula in line with events such as the Gwangu Univerisade 2015 and Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Games 2018. That cooperation had resulted in the establishment of youth-oriented programmes and provided a platform for inter-Korean and international exchange. The Table Tennis for NepALL project—an example of collaboration between the Republic of Korea and the International Table Tennis Federation—demonstrated how sport could be used to facilitate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Nepal, where people were still suffering from the earthquake of April 2015. In terms of funding and grants management, UNOSDP also supported projects in Haiti, Palestine, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Ukraine that mobilized the power of sport to achieve positive change in the fields of development and peacebuilding.

To celebrate the second International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, UNOSDP, in cooperation with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the International Olympic Committee, organized a high-level event on “United Action Towards Sustainable Development for All Through Sport” on 15 April at UN Headquarters.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 26 October [meeting 39], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/4 (Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal) [draft: A/70/L.3 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 12].
Cultural property

Return of cultural property

On 12 February, by resolution 2199(2015) (see p. 000), the Security Council acknowledged that the looting, smuggling and trafficking of cultural heritage items were among the sources of income of terrorist individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; condemned the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria; decided that Member States must take appropriate steps to prevent the trade in Iraqi and Syrian cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific and religious importance illegally removed from Iraq since 6 August 1990 and from Syria since 15 March 2011, including by prohibiting cross-border trade in such items; and called upon UNESCO, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and other international organizations to assist in the implementation of that prohibition. On 6 July 2015, UNESCO sent a report to the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team [YUN 2004, p. 331] regarding the implementation of resolution 2199(2015) at the national level. It contained an evaluation of measures already taken and included UNESCO efforts to strengthen the impact of the resolution, proposals for improving its implementation and information on seized Iraqi and Syrian artefacts.

Report of Director-General. In September [A/70/365], the Secretary-General transmitted the UNESCO Director-General’s report on the return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/80 [YUN 2012, p. 1072]. The report summarized the activities undertaken by UNESCO in combating illicit trafficking in cultural property and promoting its return to the countries of origin or restitution in the case of illicit appropriation, since the previous report was submitted in 2012 [ibid.]. The report noted that over the past several years, the escalation of violence and the destruction of cultural heritage in times of conflict, as well as the role of illicit trafficking in cultural objects in financing terrorism and violent extremism in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, in particular, had led to a significant strengthening of all existing mechanisms and to an important mobilization of the international community. The legal and practical tools developed by UNESCO and its partners to facilitate and improve the implementation of the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (1970 UNESCO Convention) had been widely promoted since 2012. Those tools included the UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws; Model Provisions on State Ownership of Undiscovered Cultural Objects; Basic measures concerning cultural items offered for sale on the Internet; and the Model export certificate for cultural objects.

In Iraq, UNESCO raised awareness among local communities of the risk of illicit trafficking in Iraqi cultural property through television broadcasts, and a video was produced in Arabic to raise awareness among young Iraqis of the importance of preserving their cultural heritage. For Africa, the Caribbean, East Asia and South-East Asia, UNESCO released video clips entitled “Heritage is identity: don’t steal it”, which targeted tourists who were likely to be confronted with proposals to buy illicit cultural property while travelling. A video clip for Syria drew attention to the situation in-country and the need to preserve its heritage for future generations; a regional campaign in the Maghreb aimed at both local communities and tourists; and campaigns to combat illicit trafficking in cultural property were rolled out at the regional level in South America and at the national level in Peru. With support from INTERPOL, UNESCO published a new cultural heritage protection handbook on the topic of securing heritage of religious interest; and since 2012, training workshops had been organized in 26 countries, with the participation of some 1,000 experts from 132 countries.

Cooperation with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations increased. On 1 April 2015, a high-level meeting was convened by the Director-General to plan the implementation of Security Council resolution 2199(2015) (see p. 000). Key UNESCO partners including INTERPOL, UNODC and the World Customs Organization agreed to step up their cooperation and information exchange to improve the protection of the cultural heritage of Iraq and the Syria. UNESCO also cooperated with the European Union, the art market and a number of internationally renowned museums, including the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, in support of cultural property protection. An agreement between UNESCO and that museum was launched in May to reduce trafficking in Iraqi and Syrian cultural property through the implementation of awareness-raising activities for the general public in art market countries, close collaboration and information exchange and cooperation on training and capacity-building. Emergency activities during the reporting period included heritage protection in Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria and Yemen, and a number of joint initiatives, coordination mechanisms and international measures—public declarations and statements, a conference, a resolution and a road map—focused on the protection of Syrian and Iraqi cultural heritage in particular (see p. 000).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly adopted resolution 70/76 (Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin) [A/70/L.18 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 10].

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Culture and sustainable development

On 22 December \[A/70/PV.81\], the General Assembly considered a draft resolution entitled “Culture and sustainable development” in the context of its deliberations on globalization and interdependence. The resolution (see below) reaffirmed the role of culture as an enabler of sustainable development; decided to consider the contribution of culture to sustainable development in the follow-up and review framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(\text{see p. 000}\); and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that UN country teams continued to integrate and mainstream culture into their programming, in consultation with national authorities, when assisting countries in pursuit of their development objectives.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 22 December \[meeting 81\], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee \[A/70/474/Add.3\], adopted resolution 70/214 (Culture and sustainable development) without vote \[agenda item 22 (c)\].

Human resources development

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/228 \[YUN 2015, p. 1079\], the Secretary-General submitted an August report \[A/70/293\] on human resources development, which addressed the role and importance of human resources development in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It discussed the integration of human resources development strategies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the measurement of progress; new avenues for advancing the objectives of human resources development in setting that agenda; and recommendations for further human resources development policies in support of a unified development agenda. Particular attention was paid to the interlinkages between human resources development and several of the SDGs, including those focused on healthy lives and well-being; education and lifelong learning; growth, employment and work; and action to combat climate change. The report emphasized the role of human resources development in national sustainable development strategies; and underscored the need for broad human resources development approaches that were sensitive to the specific needs of vulnerable populations and integrated into strategic areas such as population, health, nutrition, education and training, science and technology and employment.

The report addressed global development challenges in the areas of poverty and inequality; demographic changes; stakeholder participation in priority-setting and policymaking; and science, technology and innovation. It noted that human resources development strategies that ensured all tiers of society had access to education, health services and employment would enable people to improve their lives and, in turn, contribute to overcoming poverty and inequality. Policies that invested in youth and provided them with the training necessary to become productive members of the workforce would be required to achieve SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth). At the same time, the world was experiencing a growing ageing population and it was immediately necessary to engage in forward planning to cater for that demographic, including by strengthening and retooling health systems and human resources development to meet the needs of people throughout their lives. The report noted the importance of engaging civil society and the business community in achieving the goals of the new agenda, and that science, technology and innovation could play a vital role by creating employment, enhancing the delivery of public services, improving access to knowledge and education and empowering marginalized sections of society.

The report concluded that a skilled, educated, healthy, capable, productive and flexible workforce, equipped with knowledge of sustainable development, was the foundation for countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda. It recommended the alignment of human resources development with national sustainable development strategies. At the national level, it suggested the alignment of education and training systems with labour market needs; refined school curricula and skills training programmes to meet the requirements of the 2030 Agenda; further integration of human resources development into emerging sectors, particularly information and communications technology for development; and the introduction of measures to reduce youth unemployment, including through incentives for recruitment and retainment, employment assistance, technical and vocational training and the promotion of youth entrepreneurship. At the international level, the report suggested that donors dedicate official development assistance to human resources development and consider the ways in which sectoral aid could better support human resources development requirements; greater public-private partnerships for human resources development, particularly for employment creation for youth and women; and better efforts to integrate migrant labour, including by lowering remittance costs to maximize the benefits of migration.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 22 December \[meeting 81\], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee \[A/70/476/Add.3\], adopted resolution 70/220 (Human resources development) without vote \[agenda item 24 (d)\].
United Nations research and training institutes

In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/45 [YUN 2013, p. 1082], the Secretary-General submitted an April report [A/70/79-E/2015/70] on ongoing consultations between the UN entities dedicated to research, training and library services on ways to enhance coherence and synergies. The report noted that the emergence of a new post-2015 development agenda and a rapidly evolving global context made access to knowledge and information for key actors more essential than ever. Many entities in the UN system were involved in the production, management and dissemination of knowledge, including the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, the Library of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development and the United Nations System Staff College. Each of the entities involved in the consultations served as a crucial component of knowledge services—the research entities generated original findings; the libraries organized and disseminated information; and the learning and training entities shared knowledge and helped to build the capacity of key actors. The overall objective of the consultations between the entities was to enhance voluntary collaboration for their mutual benefit, while leaving unchanged their existing legal status, mandates and governance structures. The entities would be invited to collaborate through various voluntary arrangements tailored to the specific needs of their respective learning/training, research, and library service knowledge areas. Those arrangements included an advisory group on learning and training; voluntary research networks; and a Libraries board. The report acknowledged that effective collaboration in those three areas of knowledge and information services required facilitation and support at the highest level.

The Secretary-General concluded by stating that if the United Nations was to address the complex challenges of the twenty-first century successfully, the three important knowledge and learning areas all needed to be deployed coherently. Generating, managing and disseminating knowledge and information were distinct yet interrelated processes. He therefore proposed the establishment of an internal knowledge and learning steering committee that would build on the work of a former research and training coordination committee and provide a forum through which the complementarities and linkages of the three areas could be maximized to better meet the needs of their clients and stakeholders. The new committee would operate under the guidance of the Secretary-General and focus on concrete initiatives for enhanced results through collaboration between the members.

On 9 June (decision 2015/215), the Economic and Social Council took note of the Secretary-General’s report [A/70/79-E/2015/70] on consultations on research, training and library services.

University for Peace

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/83 [YUN 2009, p. 1111], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/70/288] on the University for Peace, which reviewed key developments of the Costa Rica-based University during the period 2012–2015 and highlighted its opportunities for growth and challenges. The report covered the commemoration of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the University; institutional changes; the Rodrigo Carazo campus; academic reform; subsidiary centres and affiliated institutions; international relations; relations with UN bodies; community relations; financial situation; and the development strategy 2015–2020. The University was in the process of reinventing and renewing its activities within the context of both its thirty-fifth anniversary and the seventieth anniversary of the United Nations.

One of the most significant changes pertained to the process of academic reform to align the University’s activities with those prioritized by the United Nations. The University was implementing nearly a dozen joint academic programmes with high-level universities in various parts of the world. More than 1,600 alumni of the University, who originated from almost every UN Member State, were working for peace in every region of the world.

The report noted that the international context demanded an expansion of training and educating for peace, especially with regard to the emergence of open and increasingly complex conflicts, interrelations between local, national, regional and global spheres and strong links between politics and criminal activity. For the University to carry out its mission and successfully transform itself in order to have a greater impact on future generations of world leaders, it was essential to have the explicit and consistent support of UN Member States. The Secretary-General recommended that the General Assembly augment the capacity of the University by providing resources through assessed budgetary contributions for a limited period of five years, until the transformation was accomplished and extrabudgetary resources became available.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 9 December (meeting 70), the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) [A/70/492], adopted resolution 70/79 (University for Peace) without vote [agenda item 50].
United Nations University

In 2015, the Council of the United Nations University (unu) convened its sixty-third (Paris, 5–6 May) and sixty-fourth (Tokyo, 30 November and 1 December) sessions, at which it considered ongoing and new institutional development initiatives; the appointment of new Council members to take office from 2016; and the 2014–2015 financial overview of the University and the academic programme and budget estimates for the 2016–2017 biennium. The Council also endorsed proposed amendments to the UNU Personnel Statute and Policy; offered recommendations on UNU inputs into the SDG process; and discussed four broad and often interlinked issues (governance, migration, urbanization and water) where UNU research had the potential to provide policymakers with practical insights based on scientific analysis.

In September, UNU celebrated 40 years of operation. The year also marked the inception of the UNU Strategic Plan 2015–2019, which rested on three pillars—strengthened management, sustainable growth and streamlined partnerships—and called for UNU expertise and resources to be focused on topics that were of particular relevance to the United Nations and its Member States, and for UNU research findings and researchers to be more visible and accessible to policymakers and other stakeholders. Moving forward, UNU emphasis on postgraduate degree programmes would be less pronounced and preference would be given to doctoral-level programmes, towards ensuring that the University’s education efforts reinforced its research activities and more effectively contributed to capacity-building in developing countries.

During the year, the UNU system worked on 205 projects, of which 106 were conducted primarily in developing countries. The system had 236 fellowship recipients, of which 78 per cent were from developing countries and 47 per cent were female. In 2015, UNU researchers published 37 books, 85 chapters in edited volumes, 255 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 102 other articles, 14 special journal issues, 34 policy briefs, 41 research and technical briefs, 280 working and discussion papers, as well as numerous proceedings and conference papers, website articles and other publications. In total, more than 4,700 publications—including 300 publications from 2015—were available via “UNU Collections”, an online repository offering open access to UNU academic publications and reports. UNU convened over 500 events during the year, including specialized workshops and conferences and public seminars, symposiums and lectures.

UNU workshops and seminars held in March, May, October and November brought together researchers from the UNU system to discuss how to maximize the impact of UNU work on the SDGs, and the challenges and opportunities of implementing the 2030 Agenda. Through several projects, UNU contributed to the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in Sendai, Japan, in March, and to the development of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015–2030, adopted at that conference. The official opening of the UNU Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance in Guimarães, Portugal, was held on 24 April, and the UNU Institute in Macau, China, was reconstituted in 2015 as the UNU Institute on Computing and Society.

UNU was financed solely by voluntary contributions—from host governments of the University institutes as well as foundations, agencies, international organizations and other sources—and by investment income derived from the UNU Endowment Fund. In the 2014–2015 biennium, UNU income totalled $139.2 million: core income of $81.6 million and special programmes contribution (SPC) income of $57.7 million. Total expenditure for the period was $99.8 million: core expenditures of $63.2 million and SPC expenditures of $36.6 million. The result was a surplus for the biennium of $18.4 million for the core budget and $21.1 million for SPC funds. Of this, $12.8 million of the core surplus was incorporated into the 2016–2017 budget to finance multi-year research projects, and the rest reinvested into the UNU Endowment Fund or held in a UN cash pool. The SPC surplus was rolled over to the next year(s) to finance ongoing programme activities.


UN Institute for Training and Research

In February, the Secretary-General submitted a report [E/2015/12] on the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), in which he stated that UNITAR had commenced a new, four-year strategic framework (2014–2017) with planned results organized under five programme areas: strengthening multilateralism; promoting economic development and social inclusion; advancing environmental sustainability and green growth; promoting sustainable peace; and improving resilience and humanitarian assistance. Results from 2014 were encouraging, with the Institute having provided learning, training and related knowledge-sharing services to some 31,000 individuals across all Member States, representing an increase of 22 per cent compared with the figures for 2013. Those outputs were achieved through the delivery of some 500 events, 60 per cent of which were designed around specific learning objectives.

The Institute launched several new initiatives, including a delegate briefing series on the post-2015 development agenda, a large open online course on
climate change, an e-course on child soldiers and a high-level seminar gathering the sitting, outgoing and incoming representatives of African States on the Security Council. The Institute also achieved results in functional areas such as programme performance monitoring, quality assurance, partnership-building and visual identity. Some 80 per cent of the Institute’s beneficiaries had participated in events organized in partnership with other entities, including other UN system agencies, which accounted for 26 per cent of partnerships; universities and other academic institutions; non-governmental organizations; and the private sector.

The financial situation of UNITAR reflected stability and modest growth. Total income for the biennium ending 31 December 2013 was $43.3 million, marking an increase of $1.2 million, or 2.9 per cent, compared with $42.1 million for the biennium ending 31 December 2011. The Institute had made progress in reversing the declining trend of non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund with support from the Government of Algeria. The Secretary-General recommended that Member States take note of the Institute’s increase in beneficiaries since 2013, and that the Institute continue its efforts to respond to learning and other capacity needs in accordance with its mandate and with its 2014–2017 strategic framework. He also recommended that UNITAR further strengthen the quality of its training services and that Member States provide full support to UNITAR, including the necessary non-earmarked funding that would allow it to meet its core requirements.

On 9 June [decision 2015/215], the Economic and Social Council took note of the Secretary-General’s report [E/2015/12] on the UN Institute for Training and Research.

**United Nations System Staff College**

On 9 June [E/2015/SR.33], the Economic and Social Council considered the report [E/2015/54] of the Secretary-General on the United Nations System Staff College covering the activities and achievements of the College during the biennium 2013–2014 [YUN 2014, p. 1259]. On the same date, the Council considered a draft resolution entitled “United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy”.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 9 June [meeting 33], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2015/9 (United Nations System Staff College in Turin, Italy) [draft: E/2015/L.10] without vote [agenda item 20].

**Report of Secretary-General.** In response to General Assembly resolution 60/214 [YUN 2005, p. 1527], the Secretary-General, in a subsequent report [E/2017/52] to the Economic and Social Council, described the achievements of the UN System Staff College in 2015. Those included establishment of the Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development in Bonn, with the support of the Government of Germany, to respond to the learning, training and knowledge management needs of UN staff and partners in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The portfolio of the new Centre built not only on existing expertise within the College, but also on the sustainable development knowledge present in the Bonn-based UN entities, academic institutions and think tanks. As the first College campus away from Turin, the Centre provided a new and cost-effective location to deliver other regular courses. The United Nations Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge was also established in 2015 to provide a set of learning interventions and advisory services designed to promote a culture of change and innovation across the UN system. Other achievements during the year were the signing of an agreement with the UN Secretariat establishing the College’s United Nations Leaders Programme as the dedicated leadership development programme for all Secretariat staff at the Director level; and the launch of a course on leadership, women and the United Nations to offer opportunities for mid- to senior-level female staff from across the system to develop leadership skills while networking and knowledge-sharing. Efforts to design new learning products and diversify the College’s offerings continued. In that respect, the Executive Master in Management of International Organizations—developed with Bocconi University in Milan, Italy, and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization—was launched in September 2015 with 22 students and became the first College programme to lead to an accredited graduate degree from a leading university.