

UN Strategic Foresight Newsletter

February 2025



United Nations
Futures Lab
N E T W O R K



Dear Foresight Community,

February has been a month of forward-looking discussions and strategic insights across the UN system. We spotlight the newly-released [DESA Preparedness and Foresight Review](#), which brings together policymakers and experts to strengthen global resilience in climate change, digital transformation, and social inclusion. Be sure to catch up on our [latest Foresight Community webinar](#), where we explored the [challenges in foresight activities and how to overcome them!](#)

In this edition, we also highlight key reports shaping global discourse, including the World Bank's [Global Economic Prospects](#), UNHCR's [Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2025](#) and [Global Appeal 2025](#), and the UNDP [Landscape of Development](#) which uses foresight in shaping their Strategic Plan. Looking ahead, don't miss the [UNSSC Strategic Foresight for Prevention](#) course. Let's continue shaping a future that is informed, inclusive, and prepared for emerging challenges!



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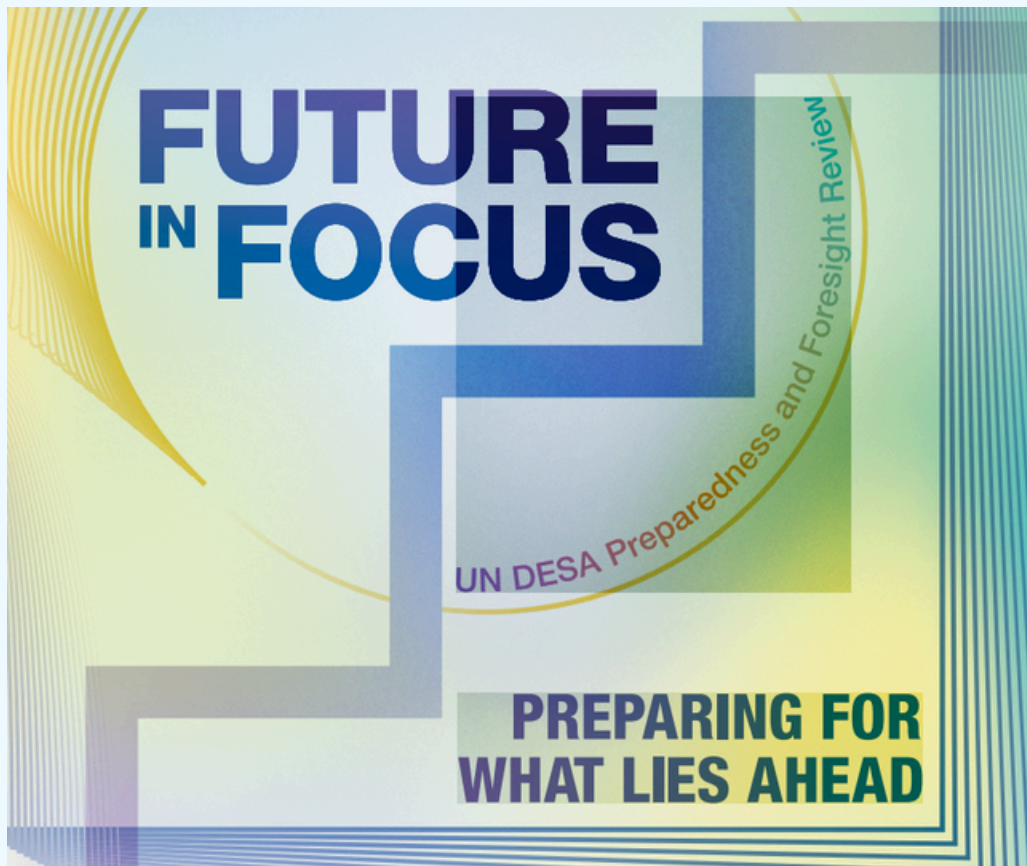
Colleagues from Agencies, Funds and Programmes may need to subscribe to be able to access all the links in this newsletter. Allow a couple of hours to be added. Should you still have access issues, please email foresight.community@un.org.

Some links in this newsletter may lead to platforms or resources that are only accessible to UN colleagues. If you are not part of the UN system, these links may not work for you.

🌟 IN THE SPOTLIGHT

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

"Future in Focus": DESA Preparedness and Foresight Review



The *DESA Preparedness and Foresight Review*, published in February 2025, brings together global policymakers, economists, and development experts to strengthen the use of foresight in addressing global challenges. Led by the [Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#) (DESA), the review explores strategies to help Governments anticipate risks and build resilience in areas like climate change, digital transformation, and social inclusion. A key takeaway is the use of economic forecasting and scenario modeling to guide least developed countries toward sustainable growth, ensuring they navigate global economic shifts effectively. Additionally, the report provides a recommendation for Governments and stakeholders to harness digitalization, technology, and data for sustainable development, as well as promoting inclusive digital transformation through initiatives like the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) and the UN E-Government Survey.

[Learn more](#)

27 February 2025 | 9AM NY, 3PM GVA

Community of Practice Webinar #23

[Recap] Foresight: What Happens When it Doesn't Work?



On 27 February 2025, the 23rd session of the UN Strategic Foresight Community of Practice webinar focused on what happens when foresight does not go as planned. In this interactive session, designed by colleagues from the [UN Futures Lab/Global Hub](#), UN system colleagues explored common obstacles and shared strategies to navigating setbacks proactively. Common challenges included limited resources and time, the complexity of methodologies and scoping foresight activities, communicating the value of foresight, building leadership support, translating exercises into actionable outcomes, and institutionalizing foresight within entities. To address these issues, participants suggested developing tailored tools, making foresight more accessible, fostering genuine participation, and strengthening internal capacity. Effective communication, strategic scoping, and leadership buy-in were also seen as essential.

[Check out the recap](#)

30-31 January 2025

UN Food Systems Coordination Hub x Foresight4Food

[Recap] Harnessing Foresight for Food Systems: A Global Strategy Workshop



A month ago in Rome, the "Power of Foresight" workshop organized by the [Foresight4Food Initiative](#) brought together 47 participants from 27 countries, including foresight experts, food systems convenors, and national representatives, to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO) headquarters to explore how foresight methodologies can drive national food systems transformation. Through poster presentations and collaborative discussions, participants co-created four actionable pitches on leveraging foresight for meaningful change. The event, co-convened with the [UN Food Systems Coordination Hub](#), emphasized aligning foresight efforts for real impact and building momentum toward the UN Food Systems StockTaking Moment (#UNFSS+4). Looking ahead, the focus remains on knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and equipping food systems with robust foresight tools to shape a sustainable future.

[Learn more](#)

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

World Bank

"The Global Economy in Five Charts: The Outlook for 2025-26"



Explore the [World Bank](#) 's recent blog "[The Global Economy in Five Charts: The Outlook for 2025–26](#)", which unpacks insights from the recently launched report "[Global Economic Prospects](#)" with interactive charts. Key findings include that global growth will stabilize at 2.7% during 2025-26, a rate insufficient to counteract the economic setbacks from recent crises, particularly in vulnerable economies. Emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs) are expected to experience subdued per capita income growth, with low-income countries potentially falling further behind advanced economies. Trade growth is anticipated to improve but remain below pre-pandemic levels, while inflation approaches target rates, allowing for cautious easing of monetary policies. The report calls on us to take on proactive measures to address the adverse consequences and build a more resilient global economy that can withstand future shocks.

[Check it out](#)

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

“Anticipating Refugee Resettlement Needs: Projections for 2025”



The [UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) issued the *[“Projected Global Resettlement Needs 2025”](#)* report, estimating that 2.9 million refugees will require resettlement in 2025. UNHCR defines resettlement as the process that enables refugees to relocate to another country with a legal status, which ensures international protection and ultimately leads to permanent residence. Key regions with rising resettlement needs include Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Americas, where forced displacement is escalating due to conflicts, economic instability, and environmental factors. The report also emphasizes the importance of international cooperation, urging states to expand resettlement programs, adopt flexible processing methods, and strengthen refugee participation in decision-making.

[Read the report](#)

UN University Centre for Policy Research

A “Guardian” for Future Generations



The UN's decision to appoint a Special Envoy for Future Generations marks a pivotal step toward embedding long-term considerations into global policymaking. This article from [United Nations University Centre for Policy Research](#) (UNU-CPR) explains how an international ombudsman would contribute to considering the interests of future generations in present governance. The role of Special Envoy, endorsed during the [2024 Summit of the Future](#) and outlined in the *[“Declaration on Future Generations”](#)*, aims to advocate for the rights of those yet to be born, ensuring that today's decisions do not compromise tomorrow's world. The article explores the Envoy's potential impact integrating future-oriented perspectives into UN policies, and facilitating policy innovation among Member States.

[Learn more](#)

👁️ RECENTLY LAUNCHED

UN Development Programme | January 2025

"The Landscape of Development"



The [UN Development Programme's](#) (UNDP) "Landscape of Development" is more than an analysis, it is the foundation for action. Concluding the first phase of UNDP's preparation for its Strategic Plan 2026-2029, the paper draws on horizon scanning, AI-driven trend analysis, expert consultations, and input from UNDP's 400+ global signal scanners. It identifies 12 key themes, such as geopolitical shifts, climate change, digital transformation, and gender and health equity, that are shaping the development landscape in the coming years. To refine these insights, UNDP consulted the International Science Council (ISC), surveying 92 experts on the impact and urgency of each theme. Their ratings, alongside UNDP's analysis, help shape a roadmap for action. As UNDP moves into Phase 2 on conceptualizing and drafting the Strategic Plan, the focus is clear: leverage these insights to drive sustainable, inclusive development in a rapidly evolving world.

[Check out the report](#)

★ PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTS

Meet **Mina Naseem Niazi**,
Youth Foresight and Design
Consultant, UNICEF Innocenti



Mina Naseem Niazi works as a Youth Foresight and Design Consultant with the Youth Engagement and Strategy Team at [UNICEF Innocenti \(Global Office of Research and Foresight\)](#). Her primary focus is on supporting the development of the [UNICEF Youth Foresight Fellowship \(UYFF\)](#), which empowers global cohorts of young fellows to lead national-level projects to spotlight youth perspectives in decision-making at all levels. Key projects in this role include UYFF Curriculum and Tools Development, the ["State of the World's Children Report 2024 - The Future of Childhood in a Changing World"](#) with an activation at Dubai Future Forum 2024, and UNICEF's ["Global Outlook Report 2025 - Prospects for Children in 2025: Building Resilient Systems for Children's Futures"](#).

[Read more about Mina](#)

Meet **Austein McLoughlin**,
Environmental Affairs Officer,
Biosafety Unit, UN Biodiversity



Austein McLoughlin is the Environmental Affairs Officer within the Biosafety Unit at the [Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (UN Biodiversity) utilizing foresight strategies as part of the programme of work on synthetic biology. Recently, he helped facilitate a process for broad and regular horizon scanning, monitoring and assessment of the most technological developments in synthetic biology. During this process, a multidisciplinary expert group explored various potential options for horizon scanning and foresight before designing their own methodology to conduct a pilot process from August 2023 to April 2024. He also participated in the [North American UNEP Regional Foresight Workshop](#), which focused on scenarios related to futures for planetary health and human well-being.

[Read more about Austein](#)

USE CASES AND RESOURCES

[UN High Commissioner for Refugees | Report](#)

Investing in Hope: UNHCR's Global Appeal for 2025



Be sure to read the [UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) "[Global Appeal 2025](#)", which makes an urgent call to address the growing number of forcibly displaced and stateless people worldwide, projected to reach 139.3 million in 2025. The report emphasizes four key impact areas: protection, humanitarian response, empowerment, and long-term solutions, with a focus on addressing internal displacement, climate action, and alternatives to dangerous migration journeys. Funding remains a critical challenge, with a projected \$6 billion shortfall, necessitating increased support from governments, private donors, and innovative financing mechanisms. The appeal highlights the importance of partnerships, refugee inclusion in national systems, and sustainable responses to displacement, while also stressing the urgent need for flexible and predictable funding to respond to unforeseen crises effectively.

[Read the appeal](#)

“Human-Proofing” Our Global Governance System

The Summit of the Future is a Chance to "Human Proof" Our Global Governance System

How do we overcome our innate tendency to prefer the present, undervalue big systemic risks, and ignore the needs of future generations?

The technical note *["The Summit of the Future is a Chance to 'Human Proof' Our Global Governance System"](#)* emphasizes the need to redesign global institutions to anticipate and address future risks. Published ahead of the [UN Summit of the Future](#), the note argues that governance systems often prioritize the present, undervalue systemic risks, and overlook the needs of future generations. To “human-proof” governance means designing policies that counteract our innate tendency to focus on short-term gains while ignoring long-term consequences. The note highlights systems thinking as a key tool, urging decision-makers to recognize how risks, such as climate change, technological disruption, and geopolitical instability, are deeply interconnected. This technical note remains highly relevant as global governance continues to evolve. It calls for a shift toward anticipatory decision-making, ensuring institutions are not just reactive to crises but resilient and forward-looking. By embedding foresight into governance, policymakers can create structures that better serve both present and future generations, addressing risks before they escalate into full-scale crises.

Check it out

"Financing a Sustainable Future"



In February 2025, the *International Commission of Experts on Financing for Development* released its final report, *"Financing a Sustainable Future: Proposals for a Renewed Global Development Finance Agenda"*. The report outlines a comprehensive strategy to realign global financial systems with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Commission's recommendations focus on nine key areas, including tax cooperation to curb illicit financial flows, strengthening multilateral and national development banks, expanding domestic bond markets, and boosting environmentally sustainable finance. The report also addresses the need for effective sovereign debt restructuring, strengthening the global financial safety net, and implementing critical institutional reforms. This blueprint aims to foster a more equitable and resilient global economy, ensuring sustainable development for all.

[Read the report](#)

FORESIGHT TRAINING

UN System Staff College

"Strategic Foresight for Prevention"



Elevate your conflict prevention strategies with the [UN System Staff College \(UNSSC\)](#)'s ["Strategic Foresight for Prevention" course](#). This four-week online programme, running from 2 April to 7 May 2025, combines self-paced modules with live weekly webinars, offering a collaborative learning environment. You'll master essential foresight tools and methodologies such as horizon scanning, futures wheel, and scenario building, empowering you to anticipate and mitigate emerging peace and security threats effectively. Designed for UN staff and partners engaged in political analysis, mediation, and conflict-sensitive programming, this course equips you to navigate uncertainty and contribute to sustained global peace. Enroll by 26 March 2025 to secure your spot!

[Sign up now](#)



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Members of the UN Strategic Foresight Community of Practice receive this newsletter. If you are a UN colleague and do not wish to receive updates on events, trainings, or jobs, you can **unsubscribe** [here](#).

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