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SDGs for All Newsletter - December 2021 In Retrospect

[Urban Poverty Rates in Myanmar Set to Triple, Warns New UN Survey](#)



By Caroline Mwanga

NEW YORK | YANGON (IDN) — By early 2022, nearly half of Myanmar's 55 million population—some 25 million people—will be living below the national poverty line, according to the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP). A survey leaves no doubt that the country's poverty headcount is likely to return to levels not seen since 2005, effectively erasing 15 years of pre-pandemic economic growth.

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[New UN Report Hopeful of Recovery in Yemen by 2047 Once the War Ends](#)



By Radwan Jakeem

NEW YORK (IDN) — Yemen, currently among the poorest countries in the world, continues to be mired in a conflict underway since 2015, which in addition to the loss of life is tearing apart livelihoods, social fabric, causing Yemen to teeter on the brink of famine, and resulting in widespread reversals of development progress.

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[UN Underlines Need For 'Solidarity with Migrants'](#)



By J Nastranis

NEW YORK (IDN) — Expressing solidarity with migrants on the move, “has never been more urgent”, [said](#) the United Nations Secretary-General in a message just ahead of [International Migrants Day](#), celebrated on December 25. This year, International Migrants Day falls almost exactly 70 years since the historic Brussels conference that led to the establishment of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)).

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[US, Russia Stall Attempts to Ban Killer Robots](#)



By Thalif Deen

NEW YORK (IDN) — As the US withdrew the last of its troops from Afghanistan on August 31 following a deadly 20-year-old war, one of the messages

coming out of Washington was clear: the US will curtail “boots on the ground” in all future conflicts—even though there are still more than 40,000 American troops stationed around the Middle East.

But the wave of the future may be 'killer robots'—mostly the deployment of drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)—in “shadow wars,” particularly against terrorist groups worldwide.

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[New Laos-China Rail Link Opens Up Southeast Asia for Trade and Tourism](#)



By Kalinga Seneviratne

SINGAPORE (IDN) — A new 414 kilometres high-speed rail link between China and Laos has finally opened landlocked mountainous Laos to the region and made it possible for trade and tourism to expand across Southeast Asia. This link has technically facilitated rail travel from China to Singapore, and land-based trade that could make the South China Sea less important for regional trade.

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[Africa's Land Restoration Movement Needs a Moon Shot](#)



By Ibrahim Mayaki and Wanjira Mathai

Dr Mayaki is the CEO of [AUDA-NEPAD](#), while Ms Mathai is the Vice President and Regional Director for Africa at the [World Resources](#)

[Institute](#).

JOHANNESBURG; South Africa (IDN | [Africa Renewal](#)) — Six years ago, African leaders recognized that the degradation of 65 per cent of Africa's agricultural land threatens economic and environmental ruin for millions of farmers.

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[Faith, Nature & the Climate Crisis: An Evaluation](#)



Viewpoint by Fazlun Khalid

Fazlun Khalid is the Founder of the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences and the author of

"Signs on the Earth - Islam Modernity and the Climate Crisis" published in 2019.

BIRMINGHAM, UK (IDN) — As the post-colonial world emerged in the middle of the last century it left in its wake a host of dismembered traditional societies which for millennia had faith as their anchor and embraced the natural world as the source of life.

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[The Nobel Peace Prize to Julian Assange Would Have Given Hope for Saving Global Democracy](#)



Viewpoint by Kalinga Seneviratne

SYDNEY (IDN) — In the early 1980s when I was studying mass communications in Australia, our journalism lecturer told us that as journalists we will have to hold governments to account, and to do that sometimes we may need to depend on leaks from government officials. “You should not hesitate to use that information while ensuring that you do not disclose the source,” he instructed us, adding, “if anyone asks you (for the source) tell them it fell off the back of a truck”.

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[The Taliban's Social Media Warfare Operation Toward Seizing Kabul](#)



Viewpoint by Iria Puyosa

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MICHIGAN, United States (IDN) — In their advance towards Kabul, the Taliban were anticipating their military victory through WhatsApp's voice notes, tweets, and Facebook posts. The Taliban insurgency crafted transmedia storytelling on how Afghan army soldiers were surrendering without much fighting.

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[Fiji Islands: Sunken Suva Harbour Wrecks Pose Environmental and Safety Hazard](#)



By Josefa Babitu

Suva (IDN | [Wansolwara](#)) — Instead of a safe haven for ships, the famous Suva Bay has become a graveyard for derelict vessels, which pose a major risk to shipping

and marine habitat. And there are growing concerns over the impact of derelict vessels on the environment and the safety of ships that sail in.

According to the [Clear Seas Centre](#), a research centre in marine shipping in Canada, abandoned ships can harm tourism and fisheries, damage infrastructure, interfere with navigation and pose safety risks to people.

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[Sustainable Development Observer Issue 3 Focuses on COP 26 and Climate Change](#)



By Kalinga Seneviratne

SYDNEY (IDN) — The November 2021 issue of Sustainable Development Observer focuses on Climate Change and the COP26 summit in Glasgow. We look at the debate on methane gas reduction from a farming mythology perspective. Indigenous people have called for a stop to 'war on nature' and we look at their perspective on climate change.

And, why is a Japanese Buddhist group calling for an annual UN Youth Climate Summit? Find out more about this issue. Also while Greta

Thunberg gets all the attention, we look at why youth from the Global South says their voices are ignored at COP26.

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[Food Systems Transformation Must Be Grounded in Healthy Soil](#)



Viewpoint by Leigh Ann Winowiecki, Research Theme Leader, Soil and Land Health, World Agroforestry (ICRAF)

LONDON (IDN) — A world without healthy soil is a world in which little grows. Yet, for those who live in the roughly [25 to 40](#) per cent of the Earth's surface that is degraded, this is what the future could hold.

Healthy soil stands at the centre of all our pressing global challenges and will be crucial in achieving the aims of the [UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#), launched in June this year.

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