



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 January 2021

Original: English

Commission on Population and Development

Fifty-fourth session

19–23 April 2021

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**General debate: actions for the further implementation of the
Programme of Action of the International Conference on
Population and Development at the global, regional and
national levels**

Flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The Programme of Action agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development included costed components. Consistent with recommendations contained in the previous report of the Secretary-General on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development ([E/CN.9/2020/4](#)), the present report is focused on sexual and reproductive health care – comprising reproductive health, family planning and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV – and population data and policy analysis. It covers the most recent trends in official development assistance (ODA) aligned with those components, as well as an analysis of ODA pertinent to the thematic focus of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session. For 2021, the thematic focus of the Commission is the linkages among population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development.

ODA data analysed in the present report and previous ones are based solely on the aid statistics compiled by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The data pertain to the year 2019 at the aggregate level and 2018 at the project level. However, it is suggested in initial research that, in 2020, the distribution of ODA changed significantly owing to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and its fallout and that there is a risk that ODA will decline overall in 2021 and beyond.

* [E/CN.9/2021/1](#).



In 2018, gross ODA disbursements for the costed components of the Programme of Action amounted to \$10.1 billion. Converted into United States dollars per woman of reproductive age in the developing world, that amounted to \$6.07, slightly less than in 2017.

With regard to ODA for food security, nutrition and the development of the primary sector, which comprises agriculture, fishing and forestry, the largest share of ODA is spent on policy and governance. A relatively small share is spent on actual support for agricultural production and efforts to boost agricultural output to ensure food security. As noted, in 2020, aid from advanced economies to agriculture in developing countries remained low, in particular when compared with estimates of total support by advanced economies to agriculture in their own countries.

I. Introduction

1. The Programme of Action agreed at the International Conference on Population and Development included costed components of sexual and reproductive health – comprising reproductive health, family planning and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV – and population data and policy analysis. Consistent with recommendations contained in [E/CN.9/2020/4](#), the present report covers the most recent trends in official development assistance (ODA) aligned with those components, as well as an analysis of ODA pertinent to the thematic focus of the Commission at its fifty-fourth session. For 2021, the thematic focus of the Commission is the linkages among population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development.

2. The challenge of ensuring food security for a large and growing world population sustainably continues to grow. Not only does environmental degradation undermine efforts to boost agricultural output, current patterns of agricultural output also contribute to environmental degradation. Sustainability in the production and consumption of food is an imperative for people and the planet. The present report, on resource flows with a focus on ODA, complements the global and programmatic reports on population, food security, nutrition and sustainable development of the Commission on Population and Development.

3. According to the OECD Global Outlook on Financing for Sustainable Development 2021, private financing has already collapsed owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. It is estimated in the report that, in 2020, private financing was down \$700 billion over 2019. The collapse is attributable to a decline in portfolio investment, foreign direct investment and other investments and personal remittances.¹ The exact impact of the crisis on ODA and other types of development aid is not yet clear. At the time of writing, aggregated data on development aid were available for only 2019; the most recent year for which sectoral aid data were available was 2018. Thus, while it is probable that the pandemic has important implications for ODA flows, the data on those implications will not be available until 2021 for aggregate flows and 2022 for disaggregated flows.

4. Notwithstanding the above-mentioned uncertainties, a negative impact of the crisis on ODA is as likely as it would be detrimental. Given that ODA is often allocated as a share of the gross national income of donor countries, the steep contraction of gross national income because of the current crisis can be expected to result in a steep contraction of ODA allocations overall. Furthermore, the allocation of ODA that is assessed in the present report might provide an indication of the ability of countries to cope with challenges caused by COVID-19. For example, relatively low levels of aid allocation for the development of the health sector, including for personnel, can result in the health sector having limited capacity to cope with a sudden rise in the number of patients, so that people may not receive the services that they need. Low levels of support for agricultural business in the form of seeds, fertilizer and financing might further constrain the ability of the business to plant for the next season, so that more people might be exposed to food insecurity now and next year. Low levels of support for countries' social protection systems might result in a limited capacity of countries to ensure necessary social transfers to a growing number of people who no longer have work and income, thereby causing more people to fall into poverty.

5. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, gross domestic product has contracted in most countries. Unemployment has risen, personal remittance receipts have decreased and income has fallen. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic will push an additional 88 million to 115 million persons into extreme poverty, the first increase in poverty incidence since the 1990s. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that the pandemic will cause an increase in the number of people suffering from hunger by an additional 83 million to 132 million persons as a consequence of not

¹ See Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Global Outlook on Financing for Sustainable Development 2021: A New Way to Invest for People and Planet* (Paris, 2020).

only greater poverty but also disruptions in supply chains and both local and global markets. Those developments pose major challenges for the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals to eradicate both poverty and hunger in the next 10 years.²

6. In section II of the present report, an overview of overall trends in ODA is provided. ODA for the costed components of the Programme of Action is reviewed in section III. ODA for food security, nutrition and sustainable development is covered in section IV, and section V contains conclusions and recommendations. Whereas, to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Programme of Action of the International Conference, the previous report contained an examination of ODA flows for the period from 1994 to 2019, the present report is focused on the period since 2010. For a review of aggregate ODA flows, the most recent year included in the analysis is 2019, whereas, for an analysis of ODA flows by sectors and projects, the most recent year included is 2018. A time series of gross ODA disbursements is used for tracking change over time.

7. OECD introduced a new methodology to measure ODA flows. It switched from a focus on disbursed or committed ODA (cash-flow methodology) to a one on the grant elements of ODA (grant-equivalent methodology) (see box 1). Accordingly, only those flows that have a sufficient grant element are considered to be ODA. While ODA measured according to the grant-element methodology is available at the aggregate level, a sectoral analysis of ODA must continue to rely on the cash-flow methodology that was used previously. For coherence, unless otherwise noted, the analysis presented in the present report largely uses the cash-flow methodology and is focused on ODA disbursements in constant United States dollars. Once the new methodology lends itself to a more disaggregated analysis, it will be used in subsequent reports. However, even then, an analysis of ODA trends over a longer period will be difficult because series data of ODA are not corrected to match the criteria of the new methodology.

Box 1

New methodology to estimate official development assistance flows

The release of ODA data in 2018 marked the adoption of a grant-equivalent methodology, to which the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development agreed in 2014. The methodology provides a more realistic comparison between grants, which made up 83 per cent of bilateral ODA in 2018, in addition to loans, which made up the remaining 17 per cent. Whereas previously the full face value of a loan was counted as ODA, and repayments were progressively subtracted, using the grant-equivalent methodology, only the grant portion, or the amount that the provider gives away by lending at below-market rates, counts as ODA. The loan parameters are set so that donors can henceforth provide loans to poor countries only on very generous terms. Because the new grant-equivalent figure is not comparable with historical ODA data, the 2018 figures begin a new grant-equivalent ODA series.

Adoption of the grant-equivalent methodology mainly affects ODA data for countries with high ratios of loans to grants in their 2018 ODA, such as Japan (whose grant-equivalent ODA rises by 41 per cent versus its ODA, as derived by using the cash-flow methodology), Portugal (up by 14 per cent), Spain (up by 11 per cent), Germany (down by 3.5 per cent) and Belgium, France and the Republic of Korea (all down by 3 per cent). The new methodology barely affects ODA data for countries that provide the bulk of their aid in grants.^a

Source: OECD, "Development aid drops in 2018, especially to neediest countries", 10 April 2019.

^a For more information on the history of the target, see

<https://developmentfinance.un.org/official-development-assistance>.

² For further details, see World Bank, *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020: Reversals of Fortune* (Washington, D.C., 2020); and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World in 2020: Transforming Food Systems for Affordable Healthy Diets* (Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2020).

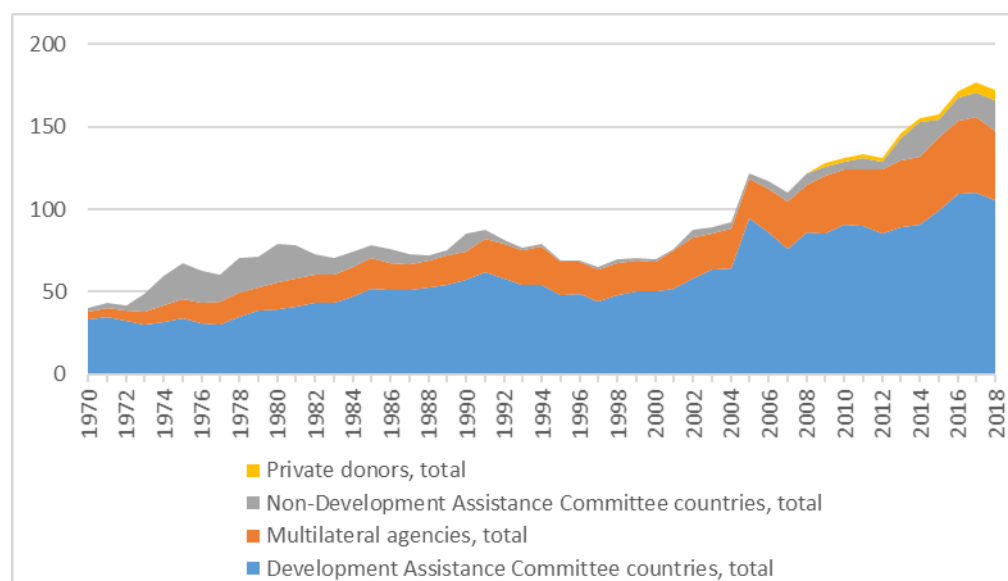
II. Overall trends in development aid

8. The countries that are members of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD remain the largest donors. However, a growing number of countries that are not members of the Committee, the so-called non-Development Assistance Committee countries, are also increasing their development assistance. Furthermore, in addition to countries and multilateral agencies providing development assistance, the number of private donors is growing. The most important donors that fall into that category are private foundations. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, for example, is by far the largest private donor with regard to population-related matters. The increase in aid by non-Committee countries and private donors were discussed in the most recent reports of the Secretary-General on resource flows, and the present report begins to more systematically include non-Committee countries and private donors in the analysis of development aid. This is limited to countries and private donors that report their development assistance to the Committee. Because of the inclusion of private donors in the analysis, the term “official development assistance”, or ODA, is largely replaced by the term “aid”, denoting official and private development assistance.

9. Figure I shows net aid disbursements by Development Assistance Committee countries, non-Committee countries, multilateral agencies and private donors to all developing countries for the period 1970–2018. While aid declined in the late 1990s, it began to increase with the inception of the Millennium Development Goals and was on an upward trend since the early 2000s. From 2009 onward, the data include additional aid provided and reported by private donors.

Figure I
Aid disbursements by official and private donors, 1970–2018

(Billions of constant United States dollars)



Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

Available at www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/idsonline.htm.

10. Net aid disbursements by official donors stood at approximately \$166 billion in 2018, compared with approximately \$171 billion in 2017, representing a decline of about \$5 billion. While Development Assistance Committee donors remain by far the largest donors, non-Committee donors and private donors are increasingly important.

Private donors increased their net aid disbursements between 2017 and 2018, representing \$6.2 billion, or 3.7 per cent of total aid in 2018.

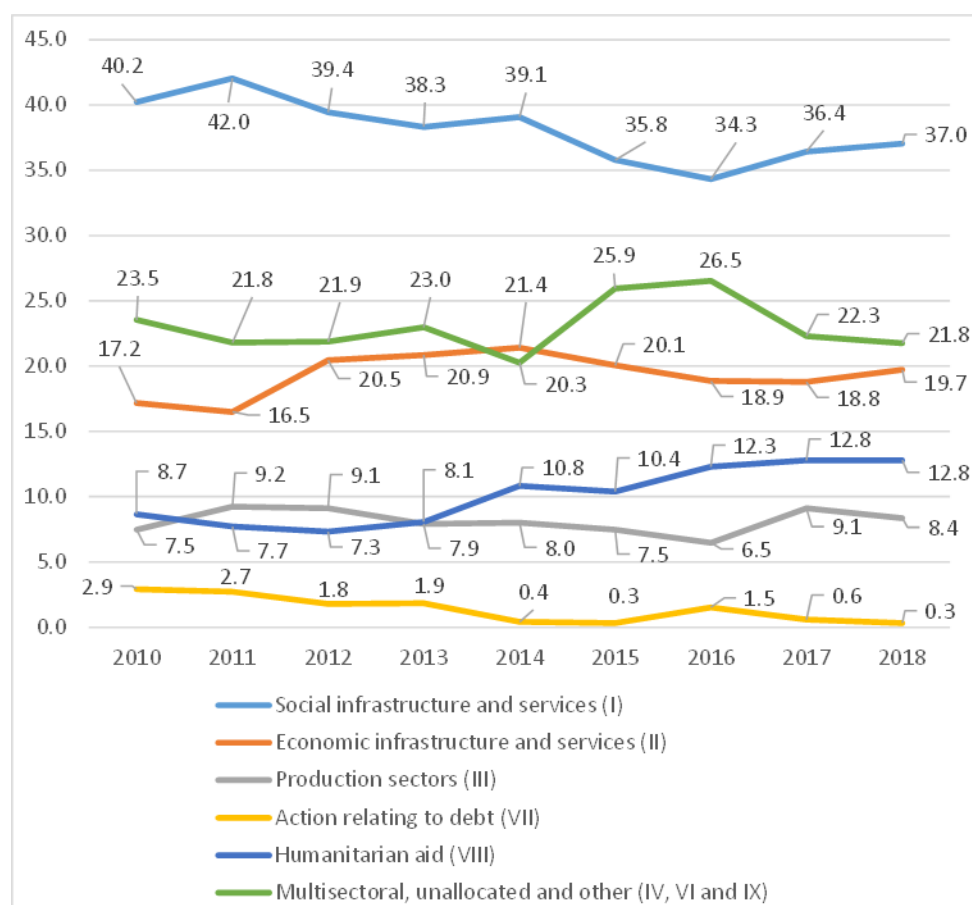
11. The distribution of aid by sector for the period 2010 to 2018 reaffirms earlier findings that aid is increasingly allocated for humanitarian purposes.

12. Figure II shows the distribution of total aid by public and private donors by sector between 2010 and 2018. Aid for social infrastructure and services, including education, health, water, sanitation and governance, decreased, but nonetheless continues to account for the largest proportion of aid. With a total share of 37.0 per cent in 2018, aid for social infrastructure and services is almost double the share of aid for economic infrastructure and services, which amounted to approximately 19.7 per cent in 2018. Aid to address humanitarian challenges has risen notably since 2013, reaching 12.8 per cent of total aid in 2018; aid in support of production has remained relatively low, standing at 8.4 per cent in 2018; and aid in the form of debt relief has fallen to very low levels, reaching 0.3 per cent in 2018.

Figure II

Aid disbursements by official and private donors by sector, 2010–2018

(Percentage of total)



Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

13. Between 2010 and 2018, humanitarian aid increased by 4.1 percentage points, from 8.7 to 12.8 per cent of total aid. Moreover, other types of aid that are allocated under other chapters in the OECD database can arguably also be classified as forms of emergency and humanitarian aid. That includes food aid (code 520, chapter VI), as well

as assistance to refugees in donor countries (code 930, chapter IX); if these items are included, the broad sector of humanitarian aid has risen even more rapidly. In the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, aid allocations for humanitarian purposes may be expected to increase still further, in absolute amounts, and as a proportion of aid. The pandemic, nonetheless, also underscores the continuing need to build the resilience of the social, economic and production sectors and is likely to raise the need for debt relief.

14. The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in deep economic contractions across the world. Mounting levels of debt risk becoming unmanageable for some borrowers, and the losses resulting from insolvencies risk placing serious pressure on financial institutions. Additional spending needs and foregone revenues place growing strains on public budgets and public debt and have forced a growing number of countries to seek added external financial assistance. The International Monetary Fund has received an unprecedented number of requests for pandemic-related assistance; as at October 2020, it had granted such assistance to 81 countries in all world regions.³

15. Owing to the economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, a larger focus of aid on social protection, employment creation and social housing might also become necessary. Official and private aid for social protection in particular have been low over the past years compared with need, and it has declined in both absolute and relative terms. In 2010, it amounted to \$2.7 billion; in 2018, it had fallen to \$1.9 billion. In 2018, social protection expenditures amounted to 1.3 per cent, support for employment creation accounted for only 0.5 per cent and support for low-cost housing accounted for less than 0.1 per cent as a share of total official and private aid to all sectors. This is woefully inadequate to meet the current needs in the world's poorest countries, where a large share of the population suffers from unemployment or underemployment, as well as poverty and food security; and it is insufficient to counteract the expected increase in poverty and food insecurity because of growing needs in these countries resulting from the pandemic.

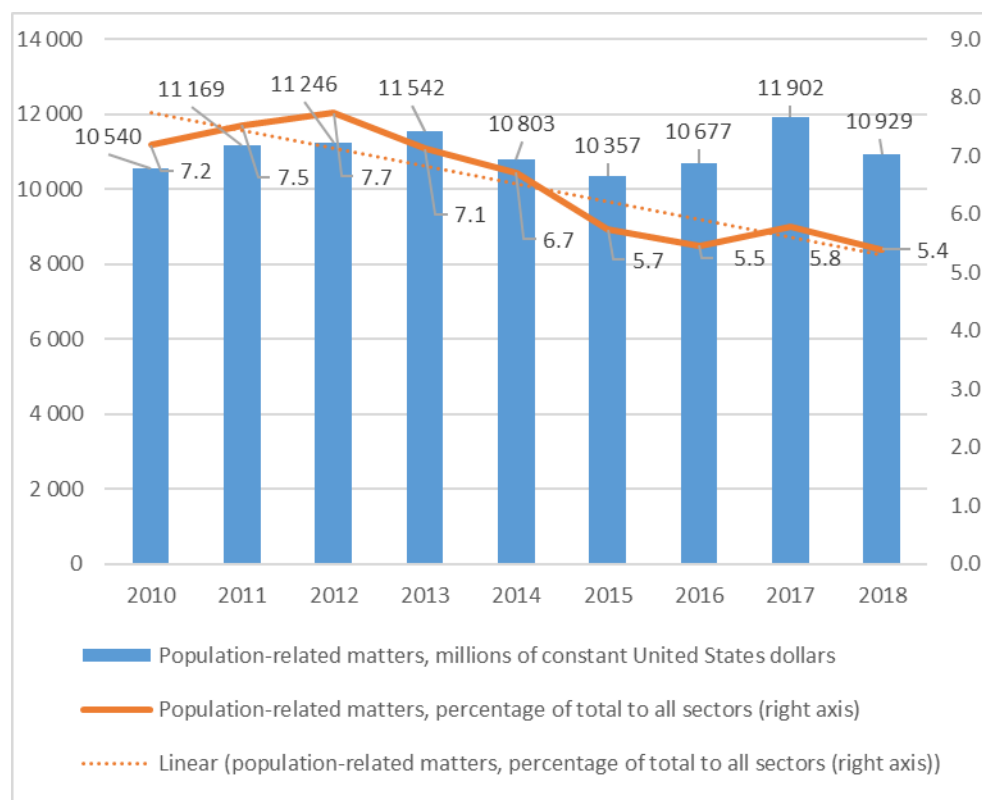
16. Like official donors, private donors play an increasingly important role. The private sector allocates 60 per cent of its resources to social infrastructure and services – mostly to health (31 per cent), as well as to sexual and reproductive health (nearly 12 per cent) – compared with 31 per cent for economic infrastructure and services, as well as production. Of the 31 per cent allocated to those sectors, 10 per cent are allocated for economic infrastructure and services and 21 per cent are allocated for production; of the 21 per cent for production, 11 per cent are supporting agriculture, and 8 per cent are supporting trade policy development and regulations. The contribution of the private sector to population-related matters, as well as food security, nutrition and primary sector development, is further discussed below.

III. Development aid for the costed components of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

17. Gross aid disbursements for population-related matters by official and private donors peaked in 2017, reaching \$11.9 billion, but fell to \$10.9 billion in 2018, the latest year for which a more granular sectoral breakdown of data was available. As a share of total aid, the number represents a decline from 5.8 to 5.4 per cent between 2017 and 2018 (see figure III).

³ For up-to-date data and details, see the International Monetary Fund COVID-19 lending tracker, available at www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/COVID-Lending-Tracker. See also the Fund's database of fiscal policy responses to COVID-19, available at www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-covid19/Fiscal-Policies-Database-in-Response-to-COVID-19.

Figure III
Aid disbursements by official and private donors for population-related matters, 2010–2018



Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

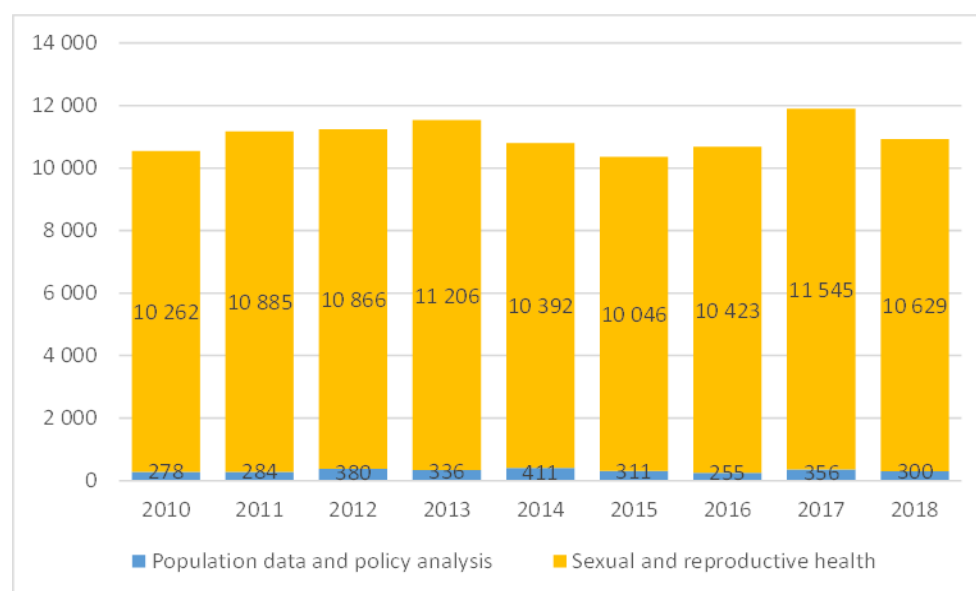
18. A breakdown of gross aid disbursements by official and private donors for population-related matters by main areas – sexual and reproductive health, as well as population data and policy analysis – shows that aid disbursements have fallen in both areas, but the decrease did not fundamentally change the distribution of aid disbursements between the areas. In 2010, aid for sexual and reproductive health accounted for 97.4 per cent of aid for both sexual and reproductive health and population data and policy analysis. As shown in figure IV, in 2018, that amount remained constant, at 97.3 per cent of the total.

19. A further breakdown of gross aid disbursements by official and private donors to subcategories of sexual and reproductive health shows that the largest share of aid continues to be allocated to efforts to combat sexually transmitted infections, in particular HIV/AIDS. That remains true, notwithstanding the decline in aid disbursements by official and private donors to that subcategory from 80.2 to 68.0 per cent between 2010 and 2018, as shown in figure V. Between 2017 and 2018, aid for this sector declined by 3.6 percentage points, a declining share of a shrinking pie. The percentage point decline was reflected in an increase of 3.6 percentage points in aid disbursements to family planning, and an increase of about 0.5 to reproductive health care. However, as noted in previous reports, such distinctions should be interpreted cautiously, given the operational integration of many sexual and reproductive interventions.⁴

⁴ The changes are to be interpreted with care owing to difficulties in delineating aid to these categories. For a discussion of these and other methodological issues, see [E/CN.9/2018/4](#).

Figure IV
Aid disbursements by official and private donors for population data and policy analysis, as well as sexual and reproductive health, 2010–2018

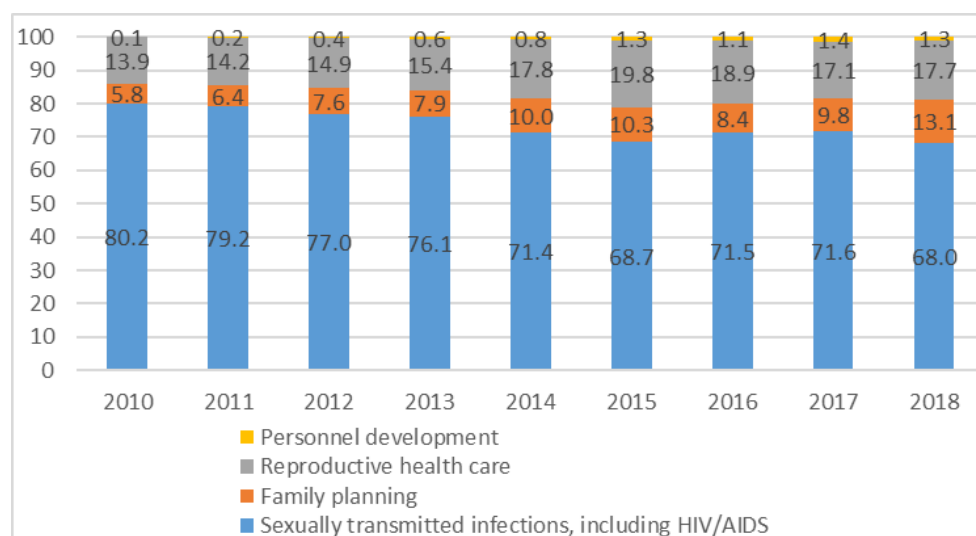
(Millions of constant United States dollars)



Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

Figure V
Aid disbursements by official and private donors, by subcategory of sexual and reproductive health

(Percentage)



Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

20. Between 2017 and 2018, Development Assistance Committee donors increased their aid to population data and policy analysis, and they continue to account for the largest share of aid for sexual and reproductive health. Aid allocation to population data and policy analysis by Committee donors increased from \$145 million to \$208 million between 2017 and 2018, and non-Committee countries increased their assistance in that area. Between 2017 and 2018, private donors also increased their

aid for that area from \$8 million to \$9 million. The increase is largely attributable to an increase in aid by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which grew from \$3 million to \$7 million and effectively compensated for a decline in aid by other private donors. A notable decrease in aid for population data and policy analysis, from \$204 million to \$82 million, is recorded for multilateral agencies.

21. With regard to aid disbursements for sexual and reproductive health, all official donors decreased their allocations between 2017 and 2018, while private donors increased aid to this area. Multilateral agencies have reduced their aid allocations to sexual and reproductive health most significantly, while the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has increased its allocations of such aid. Whereas the aid from multilateral agencies shrank, from \$2,162 million to \$1,640 million, aid from the Gates Foundation grew, from \$591 million to \$614 million. The increase in aid by the Gates Foundation, did not, however, compensate for the aggregate decrease in aid to this sector. Overall, gross aid disbursements for sexual and reproductive health fell in this period, from \$11,545 million to \$10,629 million, a decrease of nearly \$1 billion, or 8 per cent of the total. Expressed in United States dollars per woman of reproductive age in developing countries, the decline in aid disbursements is even more pronounced because the decline in absolute aid disbursements coincided with an increase in the number of women of reproductive age in developing countries (see table 1). In 2017, total official and private aid disbursements for sexual and reproductive health translated into \$7.19 per woman of reproductive age in developing countries; in 2018, official and private aid for this area had fallen to \$6.57 per woman of reproductive age in the developing world. Official donors accounted for \$6.07 of this amount in 2018. By comparison, measured in grant equivalents, official donors allocated \$5.03 in 2018.

Table 1

Aid disbursements by official and private donors for sexual and reproductive health per woman of reproductive age in the developing world, 2010, 2017 and 2018

	<i>Aid disbursements, constant United States dollars</i>			<i>Aid grant equivalents, constant United States dollars</i>		
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
<i>Sexual and reproductive health</i>						
Development Assistance Committee Countries	5.02	5.34	5.05	..	..	5.02
Non-Development Assistance Committee Countries	0.00	0.00	0.00	..	..	0.00
Multilateral agencies	1.55	1.35	1.01	..	..	0.01
Total official donors	6.57	6.69	6.07	..	..	5.03
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	0.27	0.37	0.38	..	..	..
Other private donors	0.01	0.13	0.13	..	..	..
Total private donors	0.28	0.50	0.51	..	..	..
Total official and private donors	6.85	7.19	6.57	..	..	..

Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases. Available at www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/idsonline.htm.

22. While aid from official and private donors for population-related matters is critical, it is insufficient to end unmet need for family planning and preventable maternal death, as well as gender-based violence. To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Population Fund, the world community gathered for the Nairobi

Summit from 12 to 14 November 2019. Participants in the high-level conference mobilized political will and sought to increase financial commitments to the levels needed to fully implement the Programme of Action. As part of the summit, research was presented that addressed the projected costs and funding gaps associated with achieving the following transformative and people-centred results: an end to preventable maternal deaths; an end to the unmet need for family planning; and an end to gender-based violence and all harmful practices, including female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage. It was estimated that achieving those objectives would require approximately \$264 billion between 2020 and 2030. It was expected that about \$42 billion thereof could be financed through donor assistance and that the remaining \$222 billion would be covered by a variety of external and national public and private sources, including out-of-pocket expenditures. The social and economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic has further increased needs. It has effectively been a negative shock to the baseline of this estimate and, in accordance, it necessitates an upward adjustment of resource estimates. The impact of the pandemic, including its implications for the three transformative results that were agreed at the Nairobi Summit, is discussed further in box 2.

Box 2

Implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for transformative results

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a deleterious effect on the projected achievement of the transformative results that were agreed at the Nairobi Summit in 2019: ending the unmet need for family planning, preventable maternal death and gender-based violence and all harmful practices. The pandemic has affected progress towards those goals with regard to both the supply of, and the demand for, services. Supply-related issues include declines in health-care worker availability, commodities, supply chain issues and facility closures. Demand-related issues include concerns about visiting health facilities owing to fears of COVID-19 exposure. Government-enforced movement restrictions have also affected service utilization.

From a funding point of view, many donors may be considering declines in their projected financial support owing to pandemic-related budgetary challenges while low- and middle-income countries are likely to struggle to achieve the economic growth needed to sustain the required increases in domestic funding. The dual constraints suggest that the funding gaps may be far larger than estimated in the previous report ([E/CN.9/2020/4](#)).

From an impact point of view, COVID-19 sensitivity analysis estimated that, for every three months the lockdown continues, assuming high levels of disruption, up to 2 million additional women may be unable to use modern contraceptives. The pandemic was projected to undermine efforts to end gender-based violence through a reduction in prevention and protection efforts, social services and care, as well as potentially increasing the incidence of violence. Progress towards ending female genital mutilation is projected to be less substantial, with pandemic-related disruptions in prevention programmes potentially resulting in 2 million cases of female genital mutilation, which would otherwise have been averted, over the next decade. COVID-19 will disrupt planned efforts to end child marriage and cause wide-reaching economic consequences, with an additional potential total 13 million child marriages, which otherwise would not have occurred, taking place between 2020 and 2030.

Source: United Nations Population Fund, “Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on family planning and ending gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage”, 27 April 2020.

IV. Development aid for food security, nutrition and sustainable development

23. The issue of food security and nutrition is closely linked to the challenge of catering to the needs of large and growing populations. It would be wrong, however, to draw a direct link between demand for food and population numbers, as the demand for food is also rising with income levels. Households with higher incomes often typically have a diet based more in protein than households with lower income levels. Such a diet places additional demands on scarce natural resources such as water, land, the forest and the climate, given that a calorie of meat uses more natural resources as inputs. Thus, ensuring food security today and for the generations to come involves not only making agricultural production more sustainable but also changing consumption patterns.

24. Reducing food insecurity in all its forms remains a great challenge. In 2018, about 688 million people suffered from undernutrition, and it is estimated that COVID-19 will further increase that number by an additional 83 million to 132 million. This reflects both demand-related factors – notably a loss of work and income for people, which constrains access to food – and supply-related factors. The lockdowns to curb the spread of COVID-19 have caused major problems for the supply of food and materials required for food processing and agriculture. Farmers were unable to obtain access to seeds and fertilizer and even financing, and many were also unable to recruit agricultural labourers for the planting season. There is a real danger that those disruptions might result in lower agricultural output and higher food prices in the next harvest season, further exacerbating food insecurity.

25. Progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture) is divided into eight targets and numerous indicators. One such indicator, 2.A.2, measures total official flows – including ODA, as well as other official flows – for agricultural development in developing countries. According to the Creditor Reporting System database of OECD, total official flows disbursed for agriculture in the developing countries amounted to only \$9.5 billion in 2018.⁵

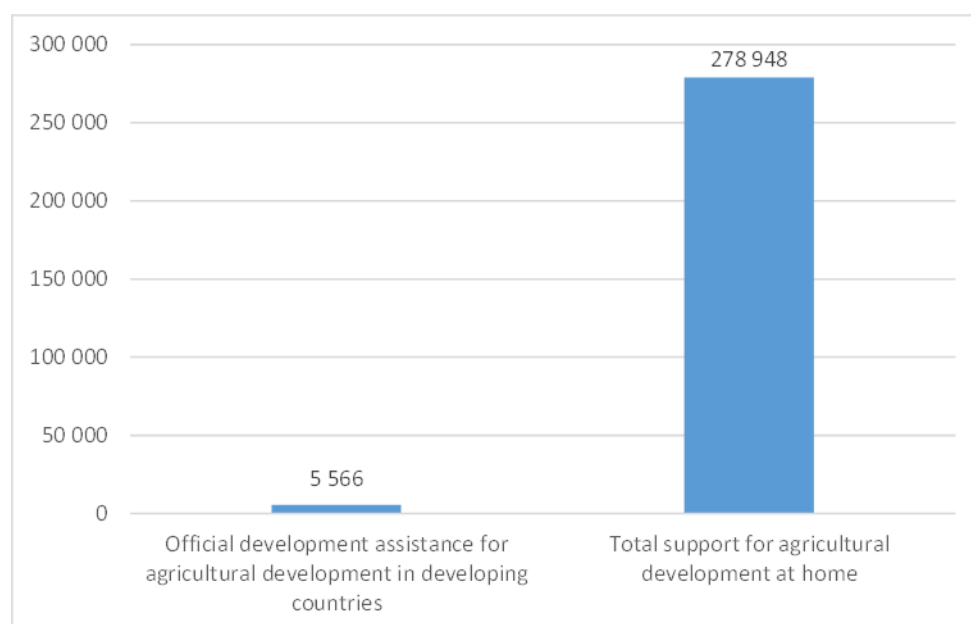
26. The largest share of official ODA for food security, nutrition and primary sector development is provided by OECD member States. However, the amount of official aid disbursements for agricultural development in developing countries is small, compared with the total support of OECD member States for the agricultural sector in their own countries. Figure VI shows that, in 2018, the total support of OECD member States for the agricultural sector in their own countries was about 50 times larger than the amount of official aid disbursements for agricultural development in developing countries.

27. Efforts to combat food insecurity are shaped by more than the development of the agricultural sector, but are intimately affected by aid for the development of aquaculture and forestry, investments in water management and ecosystem services, food fortification and household incomes. The poorest households spend the largest share of their income on food, and any shortfall in household income exposes them to acute food insecurity. Efforts to combat poverty through decent work and adequate social protection mechanisms are thus closely linked to food security.

⁵ The agriculture sector is defined in the OECD International Development Statistics databases and comprises all Creditor Reporting System sector codes in the 311 series. There is a notable difference, however, between the data presented in Creditor Reporting System database of OECD, which is the basis for the sectoral analysis presented throughout the present report, and the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicator Database of the Statistics Division of the United Nations. For further information, see <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-02-0A-02.pdf> and <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1#>.

Figure VI
Official development assistance disbursements by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries for agricultural development in developing countries versus total support of those countries for their own agricultural sectors, 2018

(Millions of current United States dollars)



Source: Estimates, based on OECD data on agricultural support. Available at <https://data.oecd.org/agrpolicy/agricultural-support.htm>; and OECD, table 5, International Development Statistics databases.

Note: Agricultural support is defined as the annual monetary value of gross transfers to agriculture from consumers and taxpayers arising from government policies that support agriculture, regardless of their objectives and economic impacts. This indicator includes the total support estimate, measured as a percentage of gross domestic product; the producer support estimate, measured as a percentage of gross farm receipts; the consumer support estimate, measured as a percentage of agricultural consumption; and the general services support estimate, measured as a percentage of total support. Agricultural support is also expressed in monetary terms (in United States dollars or euros). For further details, see <https://data.oecd.org/agrpolicy/agricultural-support.htm>.

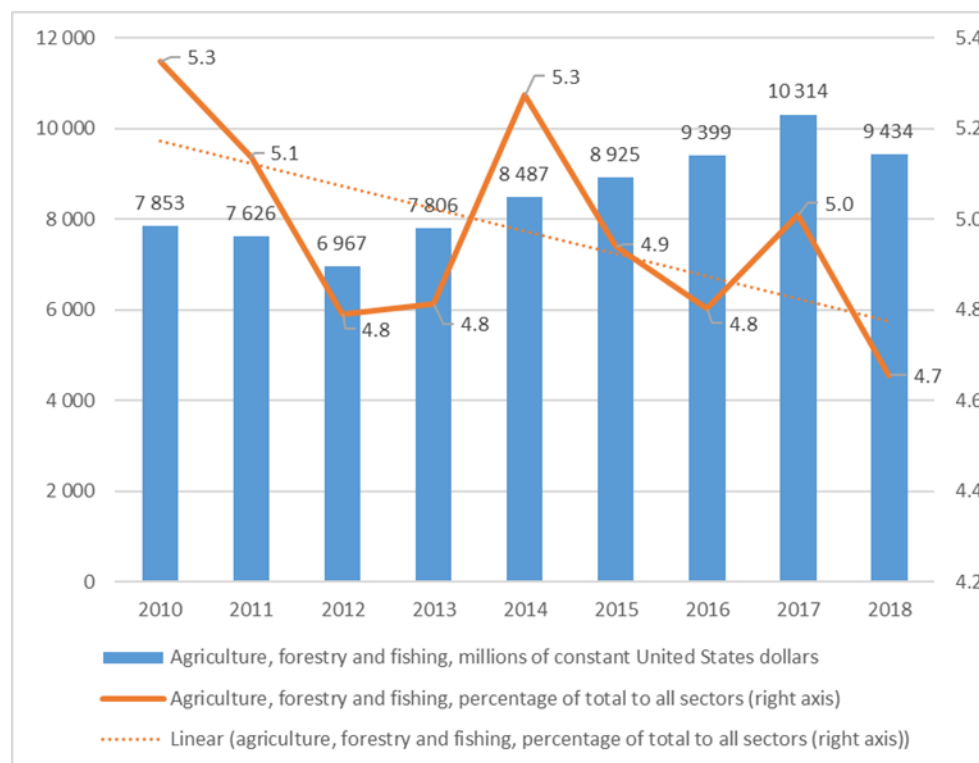
28. As was the case for overall development aid, aid for primary sector development peaked in 2017. Between 2017 and 2018, gross aid disbursements by official and private donors to agriculture decreased, from \$10.3 billion to \$9.4 billion (see figure VII). The number represents a decrease of nearly \$0.9 billion and about 9 per cent of the total in a single year. Official donors made up about 90 per cent of the aid disbursements to agriculture in 2018, although the agricultural sector is one of those with the largest private sector engagement.

29. A breakdown of aid disbursements by official and private donors for primary sector development shows that the largest share of aid disbursements is allocated to the development of the agricultural sector (see table 2). Aid disbursements for the agricultural sector increased from \$6.9 billion in 2010 to \$8.3 billion in 2018. However, as a share of total aid disbursements to all sectors, it fell, from 4.7 per cent in 2010 to 4.1 per cent in 2018. Aid disbursements for forestry and fishing also increased, but by much less, and overall aid for fishing and forestry remains low. The former accounted for only 0.4 per cent of the total in 2018; the latter amounted to 0.2 per cent of the total. By comparison, aid for food security and nutrition outside

and in particular inside emergency settings has increased rapidly. In 2018, aid for food security and nutrition surpassed aid for agricultural development, amounting to \$8.4 billion. Of that amount, \$7.1 billion, or 84 per cent, was attributable to the promotion of food security and nutrition in emergency settings and \$1.3 billion to the promotion of food security outside emergency settings. Other than in emergency settings, aid increased the most for programmes through which basic nutrition was promoted, which are subsumed under overall aid for the health sector.⁶

Figure VII

Aid disbursements by official and private donors to the primary sector, 2010–2018



Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

30. Aid for efforts to ensure food security and nutrition in emergency settings is of critical importance to lessening human suffering, but ultimately the assurance of food security and nutrition is dependent on sustainable development. In this regard, a rise in the output and productivity of the primary sector, including agriculture, fishing and forestry – as well as a shift to more sustainable methods of production – is of critical importance. Table 3 shows that official and private aid disbursements in support of the development of the primary sector – agriculture, fishing and forestry – as well the protection and management of natural resources, have not changed much if measured as a share of total aid disbursements to all sectors. The two exceptions are support for natural resource preservation and management, which has increased by 0.5 percentage points, and support for the development of policies and governance structures, which

⁶ Aid for basic nutrition includes aid to address micronutrient deficiency identification and supplementation; the promotion of infant and young child feeding, including exclusive breastfeeding; non-emergency management of acute malnutrition and other targeted feeding programmes, including complementary feeding; staple food fortification, including salt iodization; nutritional status monitoring and national nutrition surveillance; and research, capacity-building, policy development, monitoring and evaluation in support of those interventions.

has decreased by 0.6 percentage points. The decrease in support for the development of policies and governance structures is attributable to a decline in support for policy development in agriculture and trade. In value terms, support for agro-industries, fishing and forestry also declined in that period.

Table 2

Aid disbursements by official and private donors for food security and nutrition, as well as primary sector development, 2010 and 2018

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Value (millions of constant United States dollars)</i>		<i>Share (percentage of all sectors)</i>		<i>Change (percentage points)</i>
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2010–2018</i>
All sectors (1000)	146 834	202 639	100.0	100.0	0.0
Primary sector development (310)	7 853	9 434	5.3	4.7	-0.7
Agriculture (311)	6 856	8 276	4.7	4.1	-0.6
Forestry (312)	711	740	0.5	0.4	-0.1
Fishing (313)	286	418	0.2	0.2	0.0
Food security and nutrition	5 141	8 434	3.5	4.2	0.7
Non-emergency (11250, 12240, 43071, 43072, 43073)	431	1 331	0.3	0.7	0.4
School feeding (11250)	..	295	..	0.1	..
Basic nutrition (12240)	431	973	0.3	0.5	0.2
Food security policy and administrative management (43071)	..	24	..	0.0	..
Household food security programmes (43072)	..	24	..	0.0	..
Food safety and quality (43073)	..	15	..	0.0	..
Emergency (520+72040)	4 711	7 103	3.2	3.5	0.3
Food assistance (520)	1 709	1 968	1.2	1.0	-0.2
Emergency food assistance (72040)	3 002	5 135	2.0	2.5	0.5

Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

31. A comparison of the various types of support shows that support for policy and governance remains relatively high, accounting for 6.0 per cent of aid disbursements to all sectors in 2018, followed by support for natural resource preservation and management, accounting for 4.2 per cent of aid disbursements to all sectors in 2018. Direct support for the development of the primary sector has been low by comparison. In 2018, support for production and processing accounted for only 2.0 per cent; support for research, training and extension for only 0.8 per cent; and support for business for only 0.5 per cent of the total aid disbursements. The support in these critical areas appears inadequate to move food and agricultural systems towards sustainability, to boost the productivity and output of the agricultural sector and to ensure the sustainable management of essential ecological assets.

Table 3
Aid disbursements by official and private donors for the development of the primary sectors and related areas, 2010 and 2018

Sector	Value (millions of constant United States dollars)		Share (percentage of all sectors)		Change (percentage points)
	2010	2018	2010	2018	2010–2018
All sectors	146 834	202 639	100.0	100.0	0.0
Production and processing	3 299	4 140	2.2	2.0	-0.2
Agriculture (31120, 31161, 31162, 31163)	2 220	3 169	1.5	1.6	0.1
Fishing (31320)	131	194	0.1	0.1	0.0
Forestry (31220)	364	389	0.2	0.2	-0.1
Processing and agro-industry (23270, 31165, 31261, 32140, 32161, 32162, 32163, 43050)	583	389	0.4	0.2	-0.2
Business support and inputs	741	1 077	0.5	0.5	0.0
Agriculture (31191, 31195)	220	337	0.1	0.2	0.0
Fishing (31391)	43	16	0.0	0.0	0.0
Forestry (31291)	7	2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Co-ops and finance (31193, 31194)	320	518	0.2	0.3	0.0
Fertilizer and pesticides (31150, 31192, 32165, 32267)	152	205	0.1	0.1	0.0
Research, extension and training	1 353	1 618	0.9	0.8	-0.1
Agriculture (31166, 31181, 31182)	1 004	1 006	0.7	0.5	-0.2
Fishing (31381, 31382)	36	23	0.0	0.0	0.0
Forestry (31281, 31282)	23	16	0.0	0.0	0.0
Water (14081)	49	61	0.0	0.0	0.0
Energy (23181, 23182)	38	55	0.0	0.0	0.0
Environment (41081, 41082)	193	406	0.1	0.2	0.1
Transport and storage (21081)	11	51	0.0	0.0	0.0
Natural resource preservation and management	5 470	8 606	3.7	4.2	0.5
Land (31130, 41030, 41040, 43040)	2 512	3 239	1.7	1.6	-0.1
Water (14015, 14021, 14040, 311400)	1 820	3 021	1.2	1.5	0.3
Energy conservation (23183)	0	425	0.0	0.2	0.2
Waste and pollution (14022, 14032, 14050, 41020)	1 138	1 921	0.8	0.9	0.2
Policy and governance	9 791	12 246	6.7	6.0	-0.6
Agriculture (31110, 31164)	1 502	1 493	1.0	0.7	-0.3
Fishing (31310)	76	185	0.1	0.1	0.0
Forestry (31210)	316	331	0.2	0.2	-0.1
Water (14010)	848	1 452	0.6	0.7	0.1
Energy (231)	986	2 728	0.7	1.3	0.7
Environment (41010)	3 829	2 779	2.6	1.4	-1.2
Trade (331)	1 069	1 938	0.7	1.0	0.2
Transport and storage (21010)	1 164	1 340	0.8	0.7	-0.1

Source: Estimates, based on OECD International Development Statistics online databases.

V. Summary and conclusions

32. Measured in gross disbursement terms, aid fell between 2018 and 2019; measured in grant equivalents, it remained largely unchanged. Furthermore, over those years, both non-Development Assistance Committee countries – the countries that are not members of the Committee – and private donors continued to increase their role in the provision of aid.

33. Far-reaching changes in aid can be expected in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Owing to the contraction of gross national income during the current crisis, it can be expected that ODA, which is often allocated as a share of gross national income, will fall. Furthermore, given that official donors have shrinking government revenues on the one hand and increasingly competing demands for scarce resources on the other, they might reconsider and refocus their development aid. Efforts towards combating the further spread of COVID-19 and addressing the social and economic hardship caused by the pandemic are likely to result in a reshuffling of aid by sector. Because aid overall can be expected to decrease, the current crisis might actually result in an increase in aid for health, food security and social protection, at least in relative terms.

34. The sectoral distribution of gross aid disbursements between 2010 and 2018 shows that aid for humanitarian purposes increased more than aid for other sectors. The increase in aid for humanitarian purposes can also be observed in the increase in emergency food assistance. Aid for the economic sector also increased, but it decreased for the social sector. However, aid for the social sector remains by far the largest share of aid, which may increase further owing to the pandemic.

35. Within the social sector, aid disbursements by official and private donors for population-related matters declined from 2017 to 2018. The decline is even more pronounced when gross ODA disbursements in 2018 are compared with ODA grant equivalents. The relatively large downward adjustment of ODA for population-related matters, measured in grant equivalents, is also observed in ODA for food security, nutrition and primary sector development. The lower levels of ODA by multilateral donors may reflect delays in reporting, but also suggest a lower grant element in the ODA of multilateral agencies.

Development aid for population-related matters

36. The overall decline in aid disbursements for population-related matters is reflected in a decline in aid disbursements for all its subcategories. It declined for both population data and policy analysis, as well as for ODA for sexual and reproductive health. A breakdown of aid disbursements for sexual and reproductive health shows that the largest decline can be recorded in the subcategory of aid aimed at combating HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Notwithstanding those shifts, in 2018, gross aid disbursements for sexual and reproductive health continued to account for about 97 per cent of total aid for population-related matters, and aid to combat HIV and other sexually transmitted infections continued to account for 68 per cent of total aid for sexual and reproductive health.

37. Expressed in United States dollars per woman of reproductive age in the developing world, aid for sexual and reproductive health decreased further because the decrease was paralleled by an increase in the number of women of reproductive age. Between 2017 and 2018, it fell, from \$7.19 to \$6.07. However, it is estimated that, measured in grant equivalents, the amount of aid given by official donors in 2018 was \$5.03.

Development aid for food security, nutrition and sustainable development

38. Aid to ensure food security in emergencies increased notably from 2010 to 2018, as did aid for the agricultural sector overall. However, aid for agriculture in developing countries remained relatively low, compared with the total agricultural support provided by developed countries for their own agricultural activities. That support was about 50 times higher than aid for agriculture in developing countries.

39. With regard to aid for food security, nutrition and primary sector development, a large share of aid was allocated for policy and governance matters. It amounted to 6.0 per cent of total aid to all sectors in 2018. In the same year, only 2.0 per cent was allocated for production and processing; 0.8 per cent was allocated to research, training and extension; and 0.5 per cent was allocated to business support, including seeds, fertilizer and financing. To promote the sustainable development of the primary sector and combat food insecurity and malnutrition, an increase in development assistance for these areas is required. An increase in aid for food security, nutrition and primary sector development is also required owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on agricultural production and food security. In many cases, the pandemic has made it more difficult for farmers to obtain access to seeds, fertilizer and financing, with detrimental implications for the 2021 harvest season and future food security. The United Nations Food Systems Summit, scheduled to be held in September 2021, is an opportunity for all stakeholders to come together with regard to scaled-up investments and to ensure that they are oriented towards leveraging progress across the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

40. The share of sectoral aid disbursed for natural resource preservation and management reached 4.2 per cent of the total aid to all sectors in 2018. That number, which represents an increase of only 0.5 percentage points over the 2010 level, appears low, given the scale of current threats to environmental resources.

41. The increasing diversification of the donor base is consistent with the vision put forth in the 2030 Agenda, in which the need for the broad engagement of the public and private sectors in development was emphasized. It would be detrimental, however, if an increase in development aid by non-traditional donors were to come at the expense of development aid by traditional donors, in particular for the poorest countries. In 2019, the Secretary-General of OECD noted in a press release that the picture of stagnating public aid was particularly worrisome because it followed data showing that private development flows were also declining and that donor countries were not living up to their 2015 pledge to ramp up development financing. Those trends did not bode well for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁷ The subsequent economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will threaten those circumstances still further, with potentially dire consequences for global development, sexual and reproductive health, population data and the overall resilience of the planet, and most notably for the poorest developing countries. It is therefore imperative that, in particular during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, development assistance to least developed countries be safeguarded and the corresponding aid targets be achieved and upheld.

⁷ See OECD, “Development aid drops in 2018, especially to neediest countries”, press release, 10 April 2019. Available at www.oecd.org/development/development-aid-drops-in-2018-especially-to-neediest-countries.htm.