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Professor Kunal Sen starts as the director of UNU-WIDER – ‘Economic transformation needs to be accompanied by political and social transformations if we are to see drastic increases in human wellbeing’

Helsinki, Finland

‘For meaningful economic transformation to take place, there needs to be political and social transformation as well’, says Kunal Sen, the new director of UNU-WIDER. Sen starts as the director of UNU-WIDER in January 2019. At the same time the institute launches its new five-year work programme titled Transforming economies, states and societies.

‘To foster development it is essential that states are accountable and responsive to the needs of the citizens’, Sen explains. ‘Furthermore, economic and political transformation needs to be accompanied by social transformation as high inequality hinders economic development and leads to the destabilization of political systems. All three dimensions of transformation are required if we are to see drastic increases in human wellbeing.’

With these dynamics in mind under the leadership of Sen, UNU-WIDER will focus on six flagship research projects on the topics of (1) informality; (2) women’s work; (3) social mobility, (4) building capable states; (5) structural transformation; and (6) extractives. ‘This will be the most ambitious work programme that UNU-WIDER has undertaken so far’, Sen informs.

At the same time a key aim for UNU-WIDER moving forward will be to ensure continuity from the previous (2014-18) and the fresh (2019-23) work programme. Outputs from the country programmes will continue in line with their specific and already agreed budgets and work plans. In addition, some ongoing projects will continue within the new work programme.

For more information read Kunal Sen’s blog on the future work programme: <https://bit.ly/2TjABlt>

[Kunal Sen](#) is a professor of development economics at the University of Manchester. He has performed extensive research on international finance, the political economy determinants of inclusive growth, the dynamics of poverty, social exclusion, female labour force participation, and the informal sector in developing economies. His research has focused on India, East Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, Kunal Sen has been the Joint Research Director of the Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) research centre, and a research fellow at the Institute for Labor Economics (IZA) in Bonn. He has also served in advisory roles with national governments and bilateral and

multilateral development agencies, including the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Sen has been awarded Sanjaya Lall Prize and Dudley Seers Prize for his work.

[UNU-WIDER](#) is a Helsinki-based think tank, research institute, and UN agency promoting sustainable and equitable development for all.

Photos are available upon request.

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