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Colombia: Security Council authorizes UN mission to monitor reintegration of FARC-EP

UN Security Council establishes second mission for Colombia Peace Process. View of the Chamber during the vote. Photo: UN Photo/Manuel Elias

10 July – The Security Council today decided to establish a new United Nations political mission in Colombia that will succeed the current one and will shift from monitoring the disarmament of former combatants to verifying their political, economic and social reintegration.

According to a unanimously adopted resolution, the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia will, on 26 September 2017, replace the current mission, which is responsible for monitoring and verifying the laying down of arms by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities between the Government and the FARC-EP.

In November last year, the two sides signed a peace deal, ending a 50-year conflict.

The new political mission, to be headed by a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for an initial period of 12 months, is expected to verify implementation of several measures of the Final Agreement, including political, economic and social reincorporation of the FARC-EP; the implementation of personal and collective security guarantees; and comprehensive programmes on security and protection measures for communities and organisations in conflict-affected areas.

The resolution calls on the current UN Mission in Colombia to start “provisional work anticipated by the Verification Mission...within its current configuration and capacity” up until the time its mandate ends on 25 September, and requests

the Secretary-General to present detailed recommendations to the Security Council regarding the size and operational aspects and mandate of the Verification Mission, within 45 days of this resolution's adoption.

Jean Arnault, Head of the current [UN Mission in Colombia](#), issued a statement from Bogota welcoming the decision, including the Council's request that the Mission "begin these verification tasks as of the present date, within available resources."

He said the Mission stands ready to carry out these new tasks, and, as it has done for the ceasefire and laying down of arms, will: present an impartial balance on compliance with the commitments so far to the parties and to society; aim to propose solutions and combine forces for its implementation; seek to generate confidence and contribute to securing the support of the international community for the peace process in Colombia.

"To fulfill these commitments, the Mission is reassigning a part of its resources and personnel to local sites and regional offices, without undermining the execution of its tasks related to the ceasefire and laying down of weapons," added Mr. Arnault.

Guterres pledges UN support to Iraqi Government, people in Mosul; \$562M needed in aid



Iraqi IDP's, mainly from Gogjali on the Eastern outskirts of Mosul, arrive at the UNHCR run Hasansham camp. Photo: UNHCR/ Ivor Prickett

10 July – Following Iraqi Government's declaration that its forces have liberated the northern city of Mosul from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters, Secretary-General António Guterres today paid tribute to the country's people and Government and vowed United Nations' support to aid the displaced communities and restore rule of law in the freed areas.

"The recovery of Mosul is a significant step in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism," the Secretary-General said in a statement attributable to his spokesperson.

Mr. Guterres said the UN would stand by the Government as it creates the conditions for "voluntary, safe and dignified return" of the displaced communities, as well as to restore the rule of law, prevent a return to violence and foster accountability for all violations.

In the statement, he also lauded the "courage, determination and perseverance" of the people and Government, and added condolences for the loss of lives and wishes for those injured.

Since the military campaign to retake Mosul began on 17 October 2016, some 920,000 civilians fled their homes, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said.

"It's a relief to know that the military campaign in Mosul is ending. The fighting may be over, but the humanitarian crisis is not," said the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Lise Grande.

Close to 700,000 people are still displaced, nearly half of whom are living in 19 emergency camps, she explained. They need shelter, food, health care, water, sanitation and emergency kits.

"The levels of trauma we are seeing are some of the highest anywhere. What people have experienced is nearly unimaginable," said Ms. Grande.

She said aid workers "have been working around the clock" and that "enormous efforts" have been made by the Government and partners, but that there is "a lot to do in the weeks and months ahead."

The UN has called for \$985 million to aid humanitarian projects. So far, about 43 per cent has been received, leaving a gap of \$562 million.

UN political forum opens with focus on eradicating poverty and forming partnerships



Source: UN in collaboration with Project Everyone

10 July – Senior government representatives are at the United Nations today for the start of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to track progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), two years after they were adopted.

Opening this year's political forum, Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, the President of Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), said a successful session would “send a strong message of our collective commitment to leave no one behind as we pursue the timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda.”

This year's meeting, the second since the adoption of the new development Agenda in 2015, is on the theme of 'Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world.'

Mr. Shava noted that this year's discussions will focus on eliminating poverty and hunger, ensuring healthy lives, achieving gender equality, building resilient infrastructure, implementing partnerships, and build on progress achieved at The Ocean Conference to conserve and sustainably use the oceans.

The High-Level Political Forum will be held from 10 to 19 July at UN Headquarters in New York and will also include a three-day Ministerial Segment, at which more than 70 ministers are expected, and which will be held with the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC's annual session.

In addition, the session will include discussions on the challenges and gaps in reaching the development agenda in 44 countries that volunteered to give progress reports, and more than 120 side events related to the SDGs.

“The forum is the place to be when it comes to the global review of the SDGs,” said Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo, briefing journalists about the upcoming two weeks.

He underscored the importance of all countries and a wide variety of stakeholders taking ownership of the 2030 Agenda and working across borders to make them work for everyone, including the most vulnerable, such as people with disabilities.

“Have we been successful so far? Yes,” said Mr. Wu, pointing to the Secretary-General's progress report on the 2030 Agenda which is being launched during the Forum. “Are we satisfied? No. That is the beauty of having the high-level political Forum. It is a global, central platform on which the countries can tell you where they stand, so this is very important.”

“The important point is that we should keep everyone on point. It's [the 2030 Agenda] is not for one country or one region; it's for all of us. If you have a different point of view, that's natural. But let's keep everyone on board which is so important for mankind.”

In his opening speech earlier in the day, Mr. Wu said he was “struck” by how far countries have come towards reaching the development goals, and how far they still have to go. For example, over 767 million people worldwide lives on less than \$1.90 per day in 2013, despite nearly one billion people escaping poverty since 1999.

The maternal mortality ratio must more than double the current progress by 2030; women's political participation must climb some 75 per cent to reach equality with men, and more efforts must be put into preventing and treating non-

communicable diseases so people do not die prematurely.

“I am also struck, once again, by the deeply interconnected nature of the different elements of the 2030 Agenda: both challenges and solutions connect different goals and targets,” Mr. Wu said. “This makes it imperative that we work together across silos, sectors, disciplines and individual roles or competencies.”

To key to realizing sustainable development “by all people and for all people” is revitalizing and enhancing global partnerships, the senior UN official said, calling for all relevant people to come together and work together, and to mobilize the necessary resources to put their ideas into practice.

Low food prices foreseen in 2017-2026, but countries need to keep markets stable – UN-OECD report



Soybeans for sale. A 14 per cent expansion in soybean area, mainly in South America, is projected. Photo: FAO/ Pius Ekpei

10 July – Noting projections of low prices for food commodities over the next decade on the back of abundant stocks of cereal and other staples, the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report have underlined the need for governments continue efforts to provide stability to world food markets.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-OECD Agricultural Outlook 2017-2026 projections, per capita demand for food staples may not rise (except in least developed countries), growth in demand for meat may slow, and additional calories and protein consumption could come mainly from vegetable oil, sugar and dairy products.

Furthermore, with estimates that by 2026, the average calorie availability could reach 2,450 kilo-calorie (kcal) per person per day in least developed countries and exceed 3,000 kcal in other developing countries, food insecurity and malnutrition would still remain a persistent global problem, requiring a coordinated international approach, noted the Outlook.

“Food alone is not enough to eliminate undernourishment and other forms of malnutrition,” said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva, at the launch of the report.

“Access to the additional calories is extremely important. More challenging is the fight against malnutrition: Fighting malnutrition requires a diversified, safe and nutritious diet, ideally produced with a lower environmental footprint,” he added.

The report also points to potential higher crop yields. For instance, up to 90 per cent of the increase in maize production is expected from increased yields and just 10 per cent from expansion of area under cultivation. Similarly, yield gains are projected to account for 85 per cent of the increase in wheat production.

Additionally, growth in meat and dairy production is expected to come from both larger herds and higher output per-animal and it is foreseen that aquaculture would dominate growth in the fish sector and farmed fish production will be the fastest-growing protein source among all commodities analysed in the Outlook.

Continued vigilance needed on part of governments

The Outlook, however, also calls on all countries to remain vigilant to shocks and instability.

“As we have seen in the past, unexpected events can easily take markets away from these central trends, so it is essential that governments continue joint efforts to provide stability to world food markets,” said OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría

at the launch.

“It is equally important that we look ahead as we seek to meet the fundamental challenge facing world food and agriculture: to ensure access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food for a growing world population, while at the same time using natural resources more sustainably and making an effective contribution to mitigating climate change,” he added.

The focus of this edition of the Agricultural Outlook is the south-east Asian region.

The region has seen strong economic growth and rapid development in agriculture and fishery sectors, which the report notes, has enabled it to significantly reduce undernourishment in recent years.

However, the growth of agriculture and fisheries, in particular in the export-oriented fish and palm oil sectors, has led to rising pressure on natural resources.

Improved resource management and increased research and development will, therefore, be needed to achieve sustainable productivity growth across the sectors and, given the region’s sensitivity to climate change, investments will be required to facilitate adaption, highlighted the report.

UN-backed roadmap shows how to improve situation of separated refugee children in Europe



In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, three children look out of the window of a train, which was boarded by refugees primarily from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, at a reception centre for refugees and migrants, in Gevgelija. Photo: UNICEF/Ashley Gilbertson VII

10 July – United Nations agencies today issued a set of recommendations for action to improve the situation of refugee and migrant children arriving and staying in Europe without their parents or caregivers.

The Way Forward, put together by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), and their partner, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), highlights the need to identify children, register them through child-friendly procedures, and build a relationship of trust with them as early as possible.

“Refugee and migrant children travelling alone to Europe have taken paths marked by danger, bureaucratic backlogs and uncertainty at every step of the way – even at their destination,” said David McLoughlin, UNICEF's Deputy Director for Europe and Central Asia, in a [joint press release](#).

“This roadmap plots the way forward for these children to be given the same level of care, trust and protection as national children.”

The document provides recommendations developed in a broad consultative process led by the three organizations, with input from 100 practitioners, including guardians, psychologists, social workers and lawyers, as well as relevant authorities from several European states and the European Union, and refugee and migrant children across the continent.

The findings show that although a solid legal framework for child protection exists in many countries, complex, costly, and bureaucratic procedures have meant that all too often the best interests of unaccompanied and separated children are not taken into account, resulting in severe consequences for their well-being and their future.

Ensuring that a well-trained guardian takes immediate responsibility for the child, engaging cultural mediators, and mobilizing members of host communities are critical measures that can help build a trusting relationship and protect children from smugglers, traffickers or family pressure.

Efficient and harmonized processes would help children understand procedures and access protection and solutions in accordance with their best interests, as outlined in the roadmap.

The situation for unaccompanied and separated refugee and migrant children has worsened since the increase of arrivals to Europe back in 2015, with a broadened use of detention and large scale institutional care, limited family reunification opportunities, and rising concerns over deportations.

“They deserve better protection and care from Europe... The roadmap shows us how,” said Diane Goodman, Deputy Director of UNHCR's Europe Bureau.

In Ukraine, UN chief Guterres urges full respect for ceasefire



Secretary-General António Guterres (left), alongside Petro Poroshenko, the President of Ukraine, at a press conference in Kyiv, Ukraine. UN Photo/Andriy Krepykh

9 July – Speaking to the press in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called on all sides to fully respect the ceasefire and underscored the Organization's support to the country and its people.

“You can be sure that for us this is something that we keep in the agenda. It is not a forgotten situation,” said Mr. Guterres at a press conference, alongside Petro Poroshenko, the President of Ukraine.

“The human rights bodies of the UN are, of course, active in relation to the situation, and, as it is known, the High Commissioner [for human rights] will be providing also his report on the human rights situation in Crimea in due time,” he noted.

He added that the UN is ready to support all efforts, including those of the Normandy Four, the Trilateral Contact Group and the

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

In his remarks, the Secretary-General also highlighted the UN's support to humanitarian activities in the country and said that it would enhance its cooperation with the Government and that it will work to overcome any challenges in reaching the populations in distress.

More than 1.7 million people have been displaced in Ukraine since the start of the conflict.

Mr. Guterres also said that UN fully supported the reform process of the Government and that he has closely followed developments in that regard.

“As the President mentioned, we are ready to upscale our cooperation and our presence to support the Government in the reforms that [it] will be promoting,” he added.

Further in his remarks, the Secretary-General expressed appreciation to the cooperation between Ukraine and the UN as well as the country's contributions to the UN peacekeeping efforts and to global peace and security as a member of the Security Council.

“Ukraine has been actively engaged in all processes in relation to both peace and security, sustainable and inclusive development, and human rights, and I want to express my deep appreciation for what has been an exemplary cooperation,” he said.

Also in his remarks, Mr. Guterres recalled his link with the people of Ukraine during his tenure as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

“I started to work with them as High Commissioner for Refugees, and I want to say that I deeply feel the suffering of the people and I am deeply committed to do everything I can in order to be able to address their plight,” he stated.

Five years into South Sudan's independence, children denied childhoods – UNICEF



Children bathe in a lake formed by excavation pits in Bentiu, South Sudan. Nationwide, only 41 per cent of children have access to safe, clean water. Photo: UNICEF/Hatcher-Moore

8 July – As South Sudan enters its sixth year of independence, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is calling the situation in the country “a catastrophe for children” and cautioned that they are being denied a childhood in nearly all aspects of their lives.

“A country's independence day should be celebrated. However, today in South Sudan, there will be no celebration for the millions of children caught up in this conflict,” said Mahimbo Mdoe, UNICEF's Representative in South Sudan, on the occasion of South Sudan's Independence Day on 9 July.

He noted that children in South Sudan are suffering “unthinkable hardships and setbacks” in their education, nutrition, health and other rights.

“In nearly all aspects of their lives children are being denied a childhood in South Sudan.”

The country has been in conflict since December 2013, with at least 2,500 children killed or injured, and more than two million children displaced or seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Hundreds have also been raped and sexually assaulted.

“The numbers are staggering and yet each represents the ongoing misery of a child,” said Mr. Mdoe.

UNICEF noted that with 2.2 million children out of school, the country has the highest proportion of school children not in classrooms, with 70 per cent of children not receiving any education. In addition, one-third of all schools are believed to have been attacked by armed groups.

An estimated 1.1 million children in the country are acutely malnourished, according to UNICEF. In addition, children lack clean water, which has led to the ongoing outbreak of cholera – the longest and most widespread in the country's history – with 10,000 cases reported, the majority children.

UNICEF, along with other UN agencies and non-UN partners, are working to provide safe drinking water and food to children, as well as to reunite them with their families and to support some stability in their lives through schooling.

“While UNICEF continues to increase our emergency response to reach those most in need, we reiterate what we have said time and again: humanitarian actors need full and safe access; and the children of South Sudan need peace,” Mr. Mdoe said.

UN condemns terrorist attack in Rafah, Egypt



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. UN Photo/Jean-Marc Ferré (file)

8 July – Condemning yesterday's terrorist attack against a checkpoint in Rafah, Egypt, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and the Security Council have underscored the need to bring the perpetrators to justice.

In a statement attributable to his spokesperson, Mr. Guterres “reiterated the UN's support to the Government of Egypt in its fight against terrorism and violent extremism.”

“The Secretary-General hopes those responsible for the cowardly act will be swiftly brought to justice,” the statement added.

According to reports, at least 23 Egyptian soldiers were killed and many injured in the attack.

Also, in a press statement late last night, members of the UN Security Council condemned the terrorist attack and reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

“Any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed,” they stressed in the statement.

They also reaffirmed the need for all States to “combat by all means”, in accordance with the UN Charter and other obligations under international law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

The Security Council members also underscored the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of such acts to justice.

In the statements, Secretary-General Guterres and the members of the Security Council also expressed their condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Egypt and wished a speedy recovery to those injured.