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New UN global innovation forum to 'creatively disrupt' status quo for women and girls in tech

14 September – The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) today launched the Global Innovation Coalition for Change with partners from the private sector, the academia and non-governmental organizations to encourage innovation and technology work better for young women and girls around the world.

“Innovation and technology provide unprecedented opportunities to reach those who are the most likely to be left out of the benefits of progress. They can break women out of isolation and create a market for their innovative ideas and products,” said Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women, in a news release announcing the launch.

“Through the Global Innovation Coalition for Change and similar partnerships we can bring together the best of academic brain power and research, industry practical know-how, and civil society's drive and reach to creatively disrupt the status quo,” she added.

According to UN Women, the partnership will focus on building market awareness of the potential for innovations that meet the needs of women through research and advocacy and will also identify the key industry-specific barriers that obstruct women's and girls' advancement in innovation, technology and entrepreneurship.

It will also work collaboratively to identify key actions that can help overcome these barriers through actions including sharing of good practices, developing capacity and investing in specific innovations through targeted support.

Additionally, underscoring the importance of partnership with the private sector to advance gender equality and women's



in Jordan, adolescent girls use cellphones and tablets in a solar kiosk providing internet connectivity in the Za'atari camp for Syrian refugees, near the Syrian border. Photo: UNICEF/Christopher Herwig

empowerment through innovation and technology UN Women noted that the Global Innovation Coalition for Change is an important step to bring about transformative change in the lives of women and girls.

Put people before profits, UN urges in annual trade report

14 September – Noting that the world economy in 2017 “is picking up but not taking off,” a new United Nations trade and development report has cautioned against fiscal austerity and harnessing finance to support job creation and infrastructure investment.

Put people before profits, UN urges in annual trade report

Noting that the world economy in 2017 “is picking up but not taking off,” a new United Nations trade and development report has cautioned against fiscal austerity and harnessing finance to support job creation and infrastructure investment.

A combination of “too much debt and too little demand at the global level has hampered sustained expansion of the world economy,” said Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), launching its 2017 Trade and Development Report.



A woman prepares bread at her home in Faqua village, Jordan for sale in the local market. Since her husband passed away in 2002, she has had to take care of her family of nine children. With her small business of bread, cheese and Jabeen (dry yogurt) she earns enough to survive. Photo: IFAD/Lana Slezic

According to the report's findings, growth this year is expected to reach 2.6 per cent, slightly higher than last year, but still well below the pre-financial crisis average of 3.2 per cent.

Most regions are expected to register small gains, with Latin America exiting recession and posting the biggest turnaround, even if only at 1.2 per cent growth. The Eurozone is expected to see a 1.8 per cent growth while the United States could witness 2.1 per cent.

However, with insufficient global demand, trade remains sluggish and only minor improvement is anticipated this year, primarily due to a recover in South-South trade (led by China).

Furthermore, in the absence of a coordinated expansion led by the advanced economies, sustaining the limited global economic acceleration hinges on lasting improvements in emerging economies, noted UNCTAD.

An 'age of anxiety'

Further in the news release, UNCTAD reported that “debt explosion” and the rise of “super-elites” (loosely identified as the top 1 per cent) – two of the largest socioeconomic trends in recent times – could be linked through the deregulation of financial markets, to the widening ownership gap of financial assets and a fixation on short-term returns.

“As such, inequality and instability are hard-wired into hyperglobalization [making] for a world with insufficient levels of productive investment, precarious jobs and weakening welfare provision,” it noted, adding:

“This has become self-perpetuating, with the run-up to a crisis driven by the 'great escape' of top incomes, while their aftermath is marked by austerity and stagnating incomes at the bottom.”

The report also examined other factors leading to growing anxiety, pointing to increased automation through employment of robotics as well as gender dimensions, including discrimination based on gender in the job market, as factors causing much worry in economies.

It also warned that failure to correct the excesses of hyperglobalization could not only jeopardize social cohesion

but also diminishing trust in both markets as well as in political actors.

A global new deal for the 21st century needed

Drawing lessons from 1947, when the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the UN joined forces to rebalance the post-war global economy, the UNCTAD report called for an equally ambitious and collaborative effort to tackle the inequities of hyperglobalization to build inclusive and sustainable economies.

“The successes of the New Deal of the 1930s in the United States owed much to its emphasis on counterbalancing powers and giving a voice to weaker groups in society, including consumer groups, workers' organizations, farmers and the dispossessed poor,” said UNCTAD, stressing that the lesson still holds true today.

“In today's integrated global economy, governments will need to act together for any one country to achieve success,” it added, urging countries to seize the opportunity offered by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and put in place a “global new deal” for the twenty-first century.

UN anti-crime agency at 20; tackling terrorism, cybercrime vital for peaceful and sustainable future



UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director Yury Fedotov (centre) participated in a special event in Vienna on 14 September 2017 for UNODC's 20th anniversary. Photo: UNODC

14 September – Marking the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Secretary-General António Guterres underscored the importance of justice to prevent conflict, promote peace and security, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“I am proud of the support UNODC provides to countries to tackle the interlinked problems of drugs, organized crime, terrorism and corruption,” said Mr. Guterres in a video message at a special event to commemorate the agency's anniversary.

In his message, the UN chief also applauded the work and commitment of the agency's staff and reaffirmed his support the UN agency.

Headquartered in the Austrian capital, Vienna, UNODC is mandated with assisting UN Member States in their fight against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism. It was established in 1997 through a merger between the then UN Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention. Its work is translated to the field-level in all regions of the world through an extensive network of field presences.

In a keynote address, UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov said that the anniversary was an opportunity to reflect on the changes, acknowledge the challenges and renew UNODC's commitment to strengthen future cooperation.

“We have come a long way in these past 20 years [...] now we have conventions and instruments that have been ratified by nearly every country in the world,” he said, noting important progress in fighting heinous crimes.

In his remarks, Mr. Fedotov recounted benefits brought on by globalization but said that the world continues to grapple with persisting problems due to what he said was “asymmetric globalization,” leaving many behind, undermining trust and creating instability.

In particular, he warned of a growing nexus between transnational organized crime and terrorism that encouraged cultural property trafficking and generated funds for terrorists.

“Cybercrime has emerged as a truly borderless threat [...] use of the dark net for drug trafficking is growing by leaps and bounds [and] cryptocurrencies are providing new avenues for moving and laundering criminal proceeds, straining the knowledge and capacities of law enforcement agencies to keep up,” he added.

In his remarks, the UNODC chief also spoke of the importance of the partnership between the UN agency and the private sector and civil society in the areas of drug prevention, anti-corruption initiatives, education and promoting fair play in sports.

“So on this twentieth anniversary of UNODC, in these transformative times, I urge Member States and all of our partners to commit to working together and providing the needed resources, to advance our efforts to address crises, achieve the SDGs and build safer, more secure societies,” said Mr. Fedotov.

Back from Wau, UN South Sudan envoy says security improved, people returning home



Thousands of people who fled to a UN civilian protection site in Wau, South Sudan, following violence in April 2017, have access to water, and are putting up basic structures to shield from the hot sun.
PHOTO: Nektarios Markogiannis/UNMISS

14 September – The security situation north-western South Sudan has improved with displaced people returning home, the head of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the African country has said, holding the situation in Wau as a “model” for other parts of the country where displacement rose so far this year.

“I am pleased to see that the local authorities, the police and National Security have worked to improve the security environment,” the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to South Sudan, David Shearer, said while visiting Wau.

“This collaboration could represent a new model for the return of displaced people,” he said.

“It is important that people return to their homes voluntarily,” Mr. Shearer added, “and for that to happen they need to feel safe and

confident about their future.”

The number of displaced people living in the UNMISS Protection of Civilians (POC) site has fallen from 38,000 to 32,500 over the last two months, he noted, adding that “many of those people have returned home to cultivate their land.”

Tens of thousands of people fled violence in April amid revenge attacks between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the SPLA-In Opposition fighters.

Speaking to reporters earlier today in Juba, Mr. Shearer credited more active patrolling by National Security and the police in Wau for helping to stabilize the area.

He called for continued work on security, including through UNMISS patrols, so that humanitarian services can be strengthened closer to people's homes and not just near the POCs, but lauded the safety sites for saving lives.

“The POC sites were originally created because there was a need, and I'm convinced that we have saved thousands, if not tens of thousands of lives, by providing that sanctuary,” said Mr. Shearer.

About 213,000 of people are still sheltering at UNMISS Protection of Civilians sites across the country.

“We know that the vast majority of those people want to return home,” Mr. Shearer said, “so UNMISS and our humanitarian partners are always looking at opportunities to support their voluntary return.”

Mr. Shearer said that the number of people displaced in South Sudan rose to nearly four million during the first half of this year.

“That figure includes 1.9 million who have been internally displaced and two million who fled to neighbouring countries – one million in Uganda alone,” he told journalists, noting insecurity in Jonglei and Upper Nile, and the Equatorias.

The UN and its humanitarian partners have appealed for \$1.64 billion to provide food, health care and education to help many of the 7.6 million estimated people in need in the country. So far, some 66 per cent of the budget is funded.

UNICEF scales-up relief for Rohingya facing critical 'shortages of everything'

14 September – Amid an acute shortage of humanitarian supplies for the thousands of Rohingya arriving every day in Bangladesh, having fled violence in Myanmar, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is undertaking a “massive” scale-up of its emergency operations to ensure that those most vulnerable are not endangered further.

Up to 400,000 Rohingyas have been sheltering in Bangladesh since violence erupted across the border in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state in end-August and, according to preliminary estimates, about 60 per cent of them are children.

“There are acute shortages of everything, most critically shelter, food and clean water,” said Edouard Beigbeder, the head of UNICEF in Bangladesh.

“Conditions on the ground place children at high risk of water-borne disease. We have a monumental task ahead of us to protect these extremely vulnerable children.”

In its response, the UN agency has been dispatching trucks filled with emergency water, sanitation and hygiene supplies to Cox's Bazar (located near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border), with a steady stream of supplies in the pipeline for the coming days and weeks.

Supplies include detergent powder, soap, and pitchers and jugs for storing water, along with nappies, sanitary napkins, towels and sandals.

UNICEF is also supporting the Department of Public Health Engineering with water treatment plants and carriers, and is working with partners on the ground to install and rehabilitate tube wells.

“These items are part of a first wave of supplies that will massively scale-up our emergency response to the growing number of Rohingya children in Bangladesh,” Mr. Beigbeder added, noting that UNICEF has appealed for \$7.3 million to provide emergency support to Rohingya children over the next four months.

Yesterday, speaking at a press conference, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres reiterated his call on Myanmar authorities to suspend military action, end the violence and recognize the right of return of all those who had to leave the country.

He also underscored his call for “an effective action plan” to address the root causes of the situation, which he said had been left to fester for decades and has now escalated beyond Myanmar's borders, destabilizing the region.



Newly arrived Rohingya refugees walk ashore at Shamlapur beach in Cox's Bazar district, Chittagong Division in Bangladesh, after traveling for 5 hours in a boat across the open waters of the Bay of Bengal (7 September 2017). Photo: UNICEF/UN0120422/Brown

World's poor bearing the brunt of global crises, stresses UN rights expert

14 September – Impacts of climate change and the global economic crisis are compounding the threats faced by people living in poverty around the world, a United Nations rights expert warned, calling on the international development community to put human rights at the centre of their work.

“People in developing countries are paying a heavy price for global actions beyond their control,” said Saad Alfarargi, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development, delivering his maiden report to the Human Rights Council – the highest intergovernmental forum in the UN system on rights issues.

“We are witnessing some of the greatest challenges the world has ever seen, without the global commitment to deliver change,” he added.



A family living in an urban slum in Sonagachi, Kolkata, India. UN Photo/Kibae Park

In a news release issued by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN expert stressed that even more than 30 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development, many around the planet are still unaware of the existence of right to development, and it remains far from being universally recognized and even further from full implementation.

Mr. Alfarargi also noted increasing politicization of issues related to the right to development that has resulted in little promotion, protection and fulfillment of the right.

Adding to this, the multitude of challenges – ranging from new global pandemics, corruption, privatization of public services to austerity – on top of global financial and economic crisis, energy and climate crisis and an increasing number of natural disasters are further complicating the situation.

The worst impact is felt among the world's poor and those living in Africa, in the world's least developed countries, and in developing countries that either landlocked or small islands.

A means to remedy the plight, noted the Special Rapporteur is raising the low level of awareness, from grassroots organizations to governments, and to make sure they are all fully engaged in implementing the right.

The building blocks for change are already available, he highlighted.

“Global agreements are in place to deliver global solutions,” he said, noting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

“All UN agencies, development agencies, financial and trade institutions – in short any group working for development – should put the right to development at the centre of their work,” he stressed.

“There is an urgent need to make the right to development a reality for everyone.”

Mr. Alfarargi is the first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to development. He was appointed by the Geneva-based UN Human Rights Council at its 34th session in February-March 2017.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they



paid for their work.

Security Council approves one-year extension of UN political mission in Libya



Wide view of the Security Council Chamber as the 15-member body unanimously extends the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). UN Photo/Evan Schneider

14 September – The Security Council today extended for one year the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), focused on supporting the North African country's political process and key national institutions, as well as coordination of international assistance.

Unanimously adopting a new resolution, the Council extended UNSMIL's mandate through 15 September 2018, during which time it would exercise mediation and 'good offices' to support an inclusive political process within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement; continued implementation of the Agreement; and consolidation of the governance, security and economic arrangements of the Government of National Accord (GNA), among others.

The Council further decided that UNSMIL, within operational and security constraints, should undertake, among others, support to key Libyan institutions; human rights monitoring and reporting; support for securing uncontrolled arms and related materiel and countering their spread; and coordination of international assistance, and provision of advice and assistance to GNA-led efforts to stabilize post-conflict zones, including those liberated from Da'esh (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL).

Emphasizing the importance of continued inclusiveness, the Council also strongly encouraged the GNA to engage with all parties in support of reconciliation and to enhance political outreach throughout Libya, and urged all parties and institutions in Libya to engage constructively with the Libyan Political Agreement in good faith and with sustained political will.

Arms proliferation continues in Darfur, but area remains largely calm, Security Council told

14 September – The situation in Darfur has been largely calm in recent months, but there is continued violence fuelled by a proliferation of weapons and competition over natural resources, a senior United Nations official today told the Security Council.

“Most of the insecurity currently experienced in Darfur can be attributed to the tensions originating from the underlying causes of the conflict, exacerbated by the proliferation of arms in the hands of civilians and militia groups,” said Jeremiah Mamabolo, Special Representative and Head of the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

“Inter-communal disputes usually triggered by competition over land, water, livestock and mineral resources, have become increasingly violent due to the availability of weapons,” added Mr. Mamabolo.

The Government is carrying out an arms control campaign but reactions to the arms collection campaign “vary,” according to Mr. Mamabolo, who noted that the opposition and groups who did not sign the peace agreement are opposed to it.

Briefing the 15-member Council in New York on quarterly developments in the region of Sudan, Mr. Mamabolo noted progress on the implementation of the peace agreement is “limited.”



Members of the UNAMID contingent posted in Um Baro (North Darfur) go on patrol to Basma, village located 22 kilometers north. Photo: Albert Gonzalez Farran/UNAMID (file)

That agreement was signed in 2012 by the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), based on the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), which calls for a permanent ceasefire and comprehensive peace agreement to end the fighting.

Progress is particularly limited on issues such as “durable solutions to displacement, the administration of land, water, and other scarce resources, and the issue of armed militias,” Mr. Mamabolo said.

He also noted that efforts on an inclusive peace agreement by the AU High-level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), with support of UNAMID, remain “inconclusive” due to a stalemate between the Government and one of the parties.

“We call upon the Council and those with influence on the parties to stress the importance of a political settlement and desist from bringing more suffering to the very people that they profess to represent,” said Mr. Mamabolo.

Among other issues raised, Mr. Mamabolo said that cooperation between the UN and the Government of Sudan has “noticeably improved” with a more open humanitarian environment and faster approval of movements within Darfur and clearance of visas, except for human rights staff.