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A sign outside the General Assembly building highlights the hashtag for attendees to use to promote the 72nd session's General Debate. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

18 September – Global leaders gathering at United Nations Headquarters in New York this week for the annual round of top-level diplomatic talks known as the **General Debate** will shine a spotlight on the needs of the world's people, with discussions on vital issues such as sustainable development and climate change, and set the stage for what the President of the UN General Assembly has dubbed a "year of firsts," which will see the negotiation of the first intergovernmental compact on migration and the signing of the first agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The theme of the Debate of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly is 'Focusing on People – Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for All on a Sustainable Planet,' and in that spirit monarchs, presidents and prime ministers are also expected to launch discussions that will define international responses to many of the global

challenges of the day, including protracted conflicts, extreme poverty and hunger, and the refugee crisis.



On Tuesday, ahead of the Debate, which runs through 25 September, UN Secretary-General António Guterres will present his annual Report on the work of the Organization. This year's Assembly President, Miroslav Lajcak of Slovakia, will then deliver the keynote opening speech. This will then be followed by Brazilian President Michel Temer, whose country holds the traditional role of first national speaker. He will be followed by United States President Donald Trump, as leader of the host nation.

Mr. Guterres began this week of intense diplomatic activity Monday with a round of high-level events, among others, on UN reform, financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse .

Other highlights include a an event tomorrow on women's economic empowerment; a ministerial-level Security Council debate, set for Wednesday 20 September, on reform of UN peacekeeping operations; as well as, immediately after the debate, a special meeting of the Assembly to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and a two-day high-level meeting on the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, set for 27-28 September.

World leaders pledge to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse; UN chief outlines course of action

18 September – United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today called on the world to stand in solidarity to condemn sexual exploitation and abuse as he detailed the key initiatives at the heart of his victim-centred approach to address the scourge across the UN system.

“Sexual exploitation and abuse has no place in our world,” said in his remarks to the unprecedented High-level Meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse at UN Headquarters today.

“It is a global menace and it must end,” he added.

The high-level political event demonstrates the international community's solidarity in condemning and committing to combating the scourge – while placing victims' rights and dignity at the forefront of collective efforts.

Underscoring the need for “bold, urgent and much-needed action to root out sexual exploitation and abuse once and for all,” Mr. Guterres said: “We are here in solidarity to specifically focus on the behaviour of individuals who exploit their authority to mistreat those who look to the United Nations for protection.”

The UN chief emphasized that the unspeakable acts of a few should not be allowed to tarnish the work of thousands of men and women who uphold the UN's values “often at great personal risk and sacrifice.”

Stressing that no country or family is immune, the Secretary-General notes that the UN has a responsibility to set a global standard for preventing, responding to and eradicating the scourge – and addressing its impact.

“It pains me to say that this behaviour is perpetrated by both civilians and uniformed personnel, and in settings ranging from humanitarian crises to peace operations to refugee camps – where people are vulnerable and public safety is largely absent,” said Mr. Guterres.



Secretary-General António Guterres (2nd right) delivers his remarks at the high-level meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Measures to fight the scourge

The Secretary-General thanked the Member States that had contributed to the Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse and announced the appointment of Jane Connors as the first-ever UN Victims' Right Advocate.

“The Victims' Rights Advocate will develop system-wide mechanisms and policies to promote reliable gender- and child-sensitive processes for victims and witnesses to file complaints,” he explained.

He also recognized Member States that had signed a Voluntary Compact that encompassed specific prevention commitments – urging “all to engage and to join.”

Mr. Guterres also announced the creation of a 'Circle of Leadership' for Heads of State and Government to demonstrate resolve and commitment at the highest political level to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse.

Noting that humanitarian organizations and civil society provide frontline life-saving assistance and act as “a critical interface” between communities and the UN, he underscored, “we cannot succeed without their partnership.”

“I will establish an Advisory Board of external experts and representatives from civil society,” he added.

Acknowledging that much work is still needed, the UN chief spelled out: “We will not tolerate anyone committing or condoning sexual exploitation and abuse. We will not let anyone cover up these crimes with the UN flag.”

“Every victim deserves justice and our full support. Together, let us make good on that promise,” he concluded.

Woman at forefront of stamping out scourge

In his remarks, General Assembly President Miroslav Lajcak outlined three guiding principles to exterminate the scourge, namely conflict prevention, scaled-up UN efforts to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, and boost women's participation.

With women disproportionately affected, he said they “must be at the core of efforts to find solutions,” as he pushed for better implementation of the Women Peace and Security Agenda; women's full participation in mediation and peacebuilding; and ensuring gender mainstreaming.

“Condemnation alone is not enough, what we need now is action,” he concluded.

In her address, Ms. Connors said sexual exploitation “is rooted in gender inequality and abuse of power.”

“It crushes the dignity of those most at risk,” she said, calling her role as one of advocating for those at risk.

She presented a two-pronged task of identifying ways to prevent abuses and, should they occur, “to protect the human rights and dignity of the victims.”

For his part, Atul Khare, the UN Under Secretary-General for Field Support, said the single-focused meeting was testament to the “depth of harm” caused by UN personnel in every case, which “degrades” the Organization's duty to protect the vulnerable.



UN and partners launch initiative to reach equal pay for women at work



A woman walks speaks on the phone as she walks to work in Singapore. Photo: ILO/Giorgio Taraschi

18 September – Striving to raise up women’s pay across the world to equal men’s, a new global coalition – which includes the United Nations labour agency and Organization’s entity promotion of women’s rights – launched today on the eve of the General Assembly debate.

The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) includes the UN International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Women, and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

“One hundred years is too long to wait, and we must all work together to make equal pay for work of equal value a reality,” said Guy Ryder, the Director-General of the ILO, noting that equal pay for equal work is enshrined in the ILO Constitution of 1919.

Median monthly earnings for women in 2014 were on average 17 per cent below those of men, according to OECD. In addition, in many countries, the higher the level of earnings and skills, the larger the differences in pay between men and women.

Equal pay for women translates into lifelong benefits for them as well as their families, ILO said in a press release, boosting career prospects and lifetime earnings, greater independence, and higher investments in their children’s education and health.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, said “there is no justification for unequal pay for a woman when her job is of equal value to a man’s. This injustice has been unseen for too long, and together we are changing that.”

In addition, equal pay empowering women, impacts other key goals, such as promoting inclusive societies, reducing poverty, and creating conditions for decent work and gender equality, EPIC will “bring together a diverse set of actors at the global, regional and national levels to support governments, employers and workers and their organizations, and other stakeholders, to make equal pay between women and men for work of equal value a reality,” according to the press release.

The aims tie in to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular the target under Goal 8, which calls for equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.

Conflict keeps 27 million children out of school, with girls at high risk of abuse – UN report



A student stands in the ruins of one of his former classrooms, which was destroyed in June 2015, at the Aal Okab school in Saada, Yemen. Students now attend lessons in UNICEF tents nearby. UNICEF/Clarke for UNOCHA

18 September – Some 27 million children are out of school due to conflict, with girls facing a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, the United Nations said in a report released today, calling on States and international organizations to integrate all uprooted children into the education system where they live.

“Many of the 50 million uprooted children in the world are in desperate need of education – not despite being uprooted from their homes but because they are uprooted from their homes,” the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) stressed in the report.

“For without education, how will they gain knowledge and skills to rebuild their lives? How will they be able to chart a path to a more peaceful and prosperous future for themselves, their families, their communities and the world?” queried the agency.



“Finding ways to provide education for uprooted children will require funding, creativity and commitment. Together, we can, and must, find solutions so every child can go to school and learn. Children’s futures – and our own – depend on it,” said UNICEF.

In 2015, nearly 50 million children were uprooted, more than 28 million of them forced from their homes because of violence and insecurity, with 27 million children of primary and lower secondary school age out of school in 24 conflict-affected countries, the report noted.

According to UNICEF, refugees are five times more likely to be out of school than other children, with only 50 per cent of refugee children enrolled in primary school and less than 25 per cent in secondary school.

In countries affected by conflict, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys and are more likely to become victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Xenophobia, exclusion and stigmatization can create inhospitable, even dangerous environments for children seeking to join a new school system, while only 10 European Union Member States recognize the right of undocumented migrant children to enter the school system and five explicitly exclude them.

Integrate uprooted children in education systems where they live – UNICEF

In 2016, UNICEF reached 11.7 million children in emergencies, providing learning opportunities and materials, teacher training and offering life skills classes and is currently hosting the secretariat of Education Cannot Wait, which has mobilized over \$113 million from government donors and a pledge of \$100 million in both financial and in-kind support from the private sector.

The agency called on its partners to integrate all uprooted children into the education system where they live, invest in high-quality learning opportunities, provide psychosocial counselling and language instruction, and engage with partners including the private sector to provide technical assistance, expertise and talent that can be tailored to needs of uprooted children.

“UNICEF seeks partners willing to tackle the specific challenges of providing learning opportunities that deliver the skills and knowledge children need to rebuild their lives and prepare for the future,” the report concluded.

“The job requires resources, creativity and a commitment to high-quality education for every child, especially children who have been uprooted from their homes.”

UN chief outlines strategy to reshape global finance for sustainable development



Source: UN in collaboration with Project Everyone

18 September – As the high-level week of the United Nations General Assembly gets underway, Secretary-General António Guterres today stressed the role of the UN to help reshape “unproductive and unrewarding” finance and redirect investment to creating a better world for all.

“The choices we make on finance will be critical,” Mr. Guterres told a special event held at the UN Headquarters in New York on financing for global development goals.

Mr. Guterres noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – adopted by UN Member States in September 2015 – are a blueprint for building an inclusive, sustainable fair globalization.

“We can choose to bemoan the lack of financing for the 2030 Agenda in a world awash with so much unproductive and unrewarding finance. Or we can grasp the opportunity to reshape finance, according to our urgent, collective needs,” he said. “The choice is clear. Let us invest in the 2030 Agenda and finance a better world for all.”

However, today’s global financial system, which manages some \$300 trillion in financial assets, is simply not fit for purpose, the UN chief said, recalling that the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted in 2015 at an international conference in the Ethiopian capital on financing for development, highlights the importance of being innovative in leveraging resources and financing for development.

The UN’s three-part strategy for enhancing its support to financing the 2030 Agenda would help achieve short- and medium-term results, he said.

The Secretary-General said that he will lead UN efforts to ensure that the objectives of the 2030 Agenda are fully reflected in international economic and financial policies by working closely with key inter-governmental platforms, such as the G20.

Second, he will reform the UN development system to strengthen its country teams, and third, he will champion key international initiatives that can harness large-scale changes in financing and financial system development, such as in the fields of digitalization and climate finance and in cooperating with major investment initiatives.

Also addressing the event was Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, who said that trillions of dollars need to be mobilized a year by tapping into the savings of citizens around the world, official development assistance (ODA), domestic financing and the world’s financial system.

The UN has always been engaged in this financing agenda, with its partners, allies and of course Member States, but “our question is whether we are doing enough, and the answer, in short, is no,” she said, explaining that this event is timely as it highlights progress and opportunities from parts of the UN’s leadership team, key partners such as the World Bank, private sector actors, and Member States.

As climate change makes bad weather worse, countries must strengthen resilience, UN officials urge



Damage on 8 September 2017 from Hurricane Irma in Antigua and Barbuda. Photo: UNDAC/Silva Lauffer

18 September – Noting the ever-increasing impact of extreme weather events, top United Nations officials, including Secretary-General António Guterres and Miroslav Lajcak, the President of the General Assembly today urged efforts to boost resilience and strengthen damage mitigation measures.

“[This year’s hurricane season] fits a pattern: changes to our climate are making extreme weather events more severe and frequent, pushing communities into a vicious cycle of shock and recovery,” said Mr. Guterres at a high-level event on Hurricane Irma, recalling that the past month alone saw four major hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, causing much damage and destruction.

“Extreme weather linked to climate change has an impact all over the world, including floods in southern Asia and landslides and droughts in Africa,” he added, noting also the impact of rise in ocean surface temperature on weather patterns.

In addition to controlling the carbon emissions to help control the rising temperatures, as well as adaptation methods, he urged better preparation ahead of storms, for mitigating their effects and to recover from them.

Such efforts, he noted, are also important to protect the progress made towards agricultural and economic development as well as to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Also speaking today, Miroslav Lajcak, the President of the General Assembly also highlighted the growing impact of climate change and that the current trend of greenhouse gases emissions would increase likelihood of severe weather events.

“The impact of Irma, Maria and other recent systems reminds us of the importance of adaptation and resilience to climate change and further strengthening mitigation efforts, through the implementation of the Paris Agreement [on Climate Change], which is a milestone for collective engagements towards the planet’s sustainability,” he said, adding:

“Let us not let the lives lost be in vain. Rather, let us be inspired to take personal and collective action to support the victims and survivors rebuild their communities, homes and lives, stronger than even before.”

The high-level meeting was co-hosted by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, and saw the participation of a number of top Government officials from UN Member States, including Gaston Browne, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda; Darren Henfield, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bahamas; Bert Koenders, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands; Alistair Burt, the Minister of State for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

It was also attended by Achim Steiner, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme; Mark Lowcock, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Kristalina Georgieva, the Chief Executive Officer of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association at the World Bank.

Hurricane Irma left a wake of destruction on several islands in the Caribbean, affecting Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, St. Barthélemy, St. Martin, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and other islands in the Caribbean Sea, affecting hundreds of thousands of people and resulting in massive economic damage across the region.

UN agencies have been assisting with response and recovery efforts since the storm struck and last week, the Organization launched a \$15.1 million regional humanitarian response plan, covering the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations impacted.

The plan aims to reach an estimated 265,000 affected people until the end of this year.

UN emergency relief fund releases \$10 million to assist with Irma response

In related news, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated \$10 million to enable humanitarians to help tens of thousands of people in need of assistance following the devastating category five hurricane.

According to a news release issued by the Fund, the allocation will enable UN and other organisations support the national and regional response, including providing immediate food, critical health care, clean water and other urgently needed aid to the people most affected by Irma, in particular women and girls.

“We will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of the Caribbean to ensure maximum support is available to the commendable national and regional efforts,” Mr. Lowcock, who manages CERF on behalf of the Secretary-General, said in the release.



'Window of opportunity' closing on non-communicable diseases, warns UN health agency

18 September – Millions around the globe are dying prematurely from diseases such as cancer or heart disease, the United Nations health agency warned, urging governments to step up efforts to control non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

“Limited national progress has been made in the fight against NCDs – primarily cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, cancers and diabetes – which are the world’s biggest killers,” noted the UN World Health Organization in a news release today.

According to estimates, 15 million people aged 30-70 succumb to these diseases annually. Furthermore, the latest edition of the WHO Non-communicable Disease Progress Monitor shows that progress around the world to control such conditions been uneven and insufficient, and over three-fourth of the deaths in low- and middle-income countries.



A man smokes a cigarette in rural Nepal. Photo: Aisha Faquir/World Bank

“Bolder political action is needed to address constraints in controlling NCDs, including the mobilization of domestic and external resources and safeguarding communities from interference by powerful economic operators,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO Director-General, in his foreword to the Progress Monitor.

The findings also reveal that the world is not on track to meet one of the key health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on reducing premature mortality from NCDs by a third by 2030.

Underscoring that “the window of opportunity is closing,” on being able to save increasing number of people, particularly children and adolescents, Douglas Bettcher, the Director the Department for Prevention of NCDs at WHO urged: “If we don’t take action now to protect people from NCDs, we will condemn today’s and tomorrow’s youth to lives of ill-health and reduced economic opportunities.”

The Progress Monitor provides data on 19 indicators in all of WHO’s 194 member States, such as setting time-bound targets to reduce NCD deaths, developing comprehensive policies to address NCDs; implement key measures to reduce tobacco demand; reduce harmful use of alcohol, and promote healthy diets and physical activity; as well as strengthen health systems through primary health care and universal health coverage.

Findings contained in this year’s edition will form the basis for a WHO study later this year which will be released ahead of the third UN High-level Meeting on NCDs (to be held in 2018).

More than 128 countries back pledged reforms to shape '21st century UN'



Secretary-General António Guterres and US President Donald Trump (right) during the high-level meeting on reform of the United Nations. UN Photo/Mark Garten

18 September – Pledging to overhaul the United Nations bureaucracy to make the world body stronger and more responsive to the people it serves, Secretary-General António Guterres today launched a pledge of support for reforms that has the backing of 128 countries.

“Our shared objective is a 21st century UN focused more on people and less on process, more on delivery and less on bureaucracy,” the Secretary-General said at the event co-hosted by United States President Donald Trump.

He added that “value for money while advancing shared values – this is our common goal.”

Mr. Guterres said someone recently asked him what kept him awake at night – bureaucracy, was the simple answer. “Fragmented structures. Byzantine procedures. Endless red tape,” he added.

“To serve the people we support and the people who support us, we must be nimble and effective, flexible and efficient,” he stated.

The 10-point Declaration for support for UN reforms aims to simplify procedures and decentralize decisions, with greater transparency, efficiency and accountability, according to Mr. Guterres.

In recent months, the UN embarked on plans to achieve gender parity among the Organization's middle and senior-management positions, and is working to reorganize the peace and security sections so they are refocused on prevention and mediation.

The UN has also prioritized ending sexual exploitation and abuse. At a high-level meeting scheduled for today, the UN is due to announce a 'Circle of Leadership' which will include Heads of State and Government committed to ending impunity and strengthening measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping and political mission, among other international deployments.

In his speech today, Mr. Guterres also noted reforms to the UN's development system, to become more coordinated, focused on the people and more accountable to better assist countries along the 17 priorities in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

These aims, Mr. Guterres said, will be measured through “tangible results in the lives of the people we serve” and in “the trust of those who support our work through their hard-earned resources.”

The UN chief quoted President Trump who he said on multiple occasions noted that “the UN has tremendous potential.”

“All of us have a responsibility to make sure we live up to it,” Mr. Guterres said.

School meal funding crisis puts 1.5 million West, Central African children at risk, UN agency warns

18 September – As the 2017-2018 school year starts, more than 1.5 million children across West and Central Africa risk going to school hungry or dropping out altogether, due to lack of financing for nourishing school meals, the United Nations food relief agency said today.

“By failing to fully fund school meals, we are collectively short-changing the next generation and Africa's future,” said Abdou Dieng, West and Central Africa Regional Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) in a news release.

“School meals are one of the best investments the international community can make to ensure a head start for young children in some of the world's poorest countries.”



Two and a half million people in the Central African Republic (CAR) are facing hunger. Photo: WFP/Bruno Djoye

In many areas of the region, WFP is the sole or main provider of school meals. Over the years, however, WFP has shrunk its coverage for lack of funds.

In Burkina Faso, WFP's school meals programme for nearly 83,000 children is 0 per cent financed, while the programme in Senegal is only five per cent funded.

In conflict-torn Central African Republic, the programme for more than 200,000 youngsters is half funded, and in Niger, the programme for more than a quarter of a million pupils is 19 per cent financed.

Other particularly at-risk countries include Liberia, Mali and Mauritania, but the funding dearth stretches across the region.

Altogether, WFP's regional programme faces an \$76 million funding gap, the agency warned, as experts were meeting in Montreal, Canada, for an annual forum on child nutrition, co-sponsored and hosted by WFP's Centre of Excellence against Hunger.

The news release noted that repercussions are dramatic, since the hearty and nutritious WFP-provided lunches and snacks are the only meal many youngsters eat all day. More broadly, the funding crunch puts at risk a whole generation, with broader spill-over effects on national economies and development.

“This is a crisis for education, but also a crisis for nutrition and food security which are the fundamental pillars of development,” said Mr. Dieng,

Studies show the meals help improve attendance and performance rates. They are also a key incentive for parents to send their children – particularly girls – to school and to keep them there.

Use political weight to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse, UN official urges global leaders



United Nations work with local communities in Kavumu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to sensitize the population on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Photo: MONUSCO/Alain Likota

17 September – Ahead of a high-level United Nations meeting on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, the Organization's Special Coordinator on the issue is urging global leaders to join the “Circle of Leadership,” lend the political weight of their offices, and act – both at the national and international levels – to eradicate the scourge.

“Sexual exploitation and abuse is not an issue that is only concerning peacekeeping or military or uniformed personnel, it is a scourge that exists everywhere across our system,” Jane Holl Lute, the Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse, said in an interview with *UN News*.

“Through this initiative [we are] asking political leadership, to personally, associate with this agenda and lend the political weight of their office to its success.”

The High-level Meeting on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, to be held on Monday at UN Headquarters on the eve of the high-level segment of the General Assembly's 72nd session, will see Secretary-General António Guterres announce the *Circle of Leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in UN operations*. The Circle will comprise Heads of State and Government committed to ending impunity and strengthening measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse in international deployments.

UN chief's priority since assuming office

Combatting the scourge is one of the key priorities for Mr. Guterres, who since being elected to the position took a number of steps to stomp it out. In his first week in office, the UN chief established a special task force to look at the issue and to recommend concrete actions.

The matter was also the subject of his first report to UN Member States in March this year, in which, among other matters, he called for the High-level Meeting to make a political demonstration of solidarity with the Organization's efforts to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse.

He also called for a system-wide Victims' Rights Advocate, who will stand for the rights and dignity of victims alongside their need for assistance and attention in the wake of allegations and abuse.

The meeting will also introduce Jane Connors, the Victims' Rights Advocate, who was appointed last month.

“It will also present the state of the Secretary-General's Trust Fund for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, and make an appeal for additional contributions, and we will also update Member States on the state of the compacts between them and the UN on more specific measures to combat sexual exploitation and abuse,” added the Special Coordinator.

Indicators of progress

Speaking on progress made in combatting sexual exploitation and abuse, Ms. Lute highlighted the appointment of the Victims' Rights Advocate, as well as practical actions such as the use of a new, uniform information reporting form to consistently collect information, mandatory e-learning course, surveys and increased awareness.

But above all, the generation of a “kind of trust” has been a key marker, stressed Ms. Lute.

“On the ground we are seeing a few more cases being reported. We take that as a sign that our systems are beginning to

generate the kind of trust that we want them to generate so that people know if they bring an allegation forward, it will be handled discretely, humanely, and that we are seeking the appropriate and rapid justice for victims,” she said.

Follow-up after the High-level Meeting

On actions following tomorrow's meeting, Ms. Lute spoke of a follow-on consultation with civil society at which the UN will solicit views on what the Organization needs to do to visibly and tangibly achieve its goals, as well as what support they can provide to the UN.

The Special Coordinator also spoke of the personal commitment of the Secretary-General for the cause and his leadership at the highest level.

“I think it is impossible to find someone in the UN system who does not know about this issue, and does not know about the importance the Secretary-General places on it, we need to translate that knowledge and awareness into action,” she underscored.

UN-supported campaign to immunize 150,000 Rohingya children against deadly diseases

17 September – As thousands of Rohingya refugees – including many children – having fled violence in Myanmar continue to arrive in Bangladesh, a United Nations-supported vaccination campaign has been initiated to prevent the spread of potentially deadly diseases.

According to a news release by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the agency and the UN World Health Organization (WHO) are supporting the Bangladeshi Ministry of Health-led campaign targeting measles, rubella and polio to inoculate some 150,000 Rohingya children below the age of fifteen in 68 refugee settlements near the country's border with Myanmar.

“We are happy that we were able to initiate the immunization campaign so quickly to protect the population from a possible measles outbreak” said Navaratnasamy Paranietharan, the head of WHO in Bangladesh.

The seven-day campaign was planned by the UN health agency, which is also managing and monitoring its field implementation. UNICEF has provided vaccines, syringes and Vitamin A capsules.

“Measles is a very infectious and dangerous disease during emergencies, especially for children who are already weak and malnourished,” added Edouard Beigbeder, the head of UNICEF in Bangladesh.

“With thousands of children crossing the border every day, vaccination is crucial to prevent the spread of potentially deadly diseases.”

In addition to the vaccination campaign, the two UN agencies are also helping the Government reinforce maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health services; renovate delivery and new-born care units; improve water, sanitation and hygiene in health facilities; and strengthen disease surveillance, early warning and health-related information systems.

According to estimates, more than 410,000 Rohingya refugees have arrived in Bangladesh since August 25, with children making up about 60 per cent of that number.



Newly arrived Rohingya refugees sit at Shamlapur beach in Cox's Bazar district, Bangladesh, after traveling for five hours in a boat across the open waters of the Bay of Bengal. Photo: UNICEF/Brown

UN refugee agency 'shocked' by killings in eastern DR Congo



Burundian refugees prepare food over an open flame at a settlement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (File) Photo: UNICEF/Seck

16 September – Expressing shock and sadness over the violent death of numerous Burundian nationals – among them likely refugees and asylum seekers – in Kamanyola town, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations refugee agency called for an investigation into the incident.

According to initial reports more than 30 have been killed and over 100 injured, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a news release today.

“The precise circumstances are not yet clear [but] reports indicate that in the course of a confrontation with Burundian demonstrators, Congolese security forces opened fire on the crowd,” the UN agency added.

The town hosts some 2,005 refugees and asylum seekers from Burundi, most of whom arrived in 2015. There are a total of 43,769 Burundian refugees living in DRC.

The news release also noted that UNHCR and its partners have sent teams to Kamanyola, including medical staff, to treat the injured.

On International Day, UN highlights importance of collective action to protect ozone layer



The Earth's protective ozone layer is well on track to recovery in the next few decades. Photo: UNEP

16 September – Commemorating the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, senior United Nations officials, including Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted the contributions of the Montreal Protocol – an international environment agreement on the elimination of ozone depleting substances.

“When scientists found that everyday products were destroying the fragile ozone layer, the world responded with the Montreal Protocol,” said Mr. Guterres in his message on the International Day.

“It rallies Governments, companies, doctors, scientists and citizens to reverse the damage [and] saves millions of people from skin cancer and cataracts each year.”

Also in his message, Mr. Guterres underscored the importance of Montreal Protocol to help combat poverty, address climate change, and protect the food chain. He also noted that new business opportunities have been created by the treaty, highlighting that it will save the global economy over \$2 trillion by 2050.

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which was agreed on this day in 1987.

As part of the celebrations, the Ozone Secretariat (which supports parties to the Protocol in implementing actions to protect the ozone layer) in partnership with Marvel, the company behind some of the world's most beloved superheroes, is conducting the #OzoneHeroes campaign, highlighting the accomplishments of the Protocol and to increase public recognition of its success and impact.

In his own message marking the anniversary, Erik Solheim, the head of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP),



applauded the global effort in support of the Protocol to protect the health and wellbeing of millions.

“This collective power is effective only because of individual actions of Ozone Heroes everywhere,” he underscored, calling on all stakeholders to mark the anniversary to support the ratification of the Kigali Amendment to stop hydrofluorocarbons from harming the planet.

“But to make that happen, we all need to be Ozone Heroes.”

Iran implementing its nuclear commitments, UN atomic agency chief stresses

18 September – Iran is implementing its commitments under “the world’s most robust nuclear verification regime,” the United Nations atomic agency head said today, while at the same time voicing “grave concern” at the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s (DPRK) nuclear programme.

“The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented,” UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano told the opening of the Agency’s annual General Conference in Vienna.

Endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council in 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), between its five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), plus Germany, the European Union (EU) and Iran, set out rigorous mechanisms for monitoring limits on Iran’s nuclear programme, while paving the way for lifting UN sanctions against the country.

“Iran is now subject to the world’s most robust nuclear verification regime,” said Mr. Amano, who was appointed by acclamation today to another four-year term as Director General of the 168-member Agency.

Turning to the DPRK, he called upon it to comply fully with its obligations under all relevant Security Council and the IAEA resolutions.

“The nuclear test by the DPRK on September third, its sixth and largest to date, is extremely regrettable,” he said. “The Agency is working to maintain its readiness to return to the DPRK when political developments make this possible.”

On 11 September, the Security Council unanimously imposed tighter sanctions on the DPRK, including limits on oil exports to it, banning its textile exports and its access to gas liquids, and more closely inspecting cargo ships going in and out of its ports.

The Council has passed eight resolution over the DPRK’s nuclear programme since it withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, many involving increasingly severe sanctions.

Turning to other matters within the Agency’s remit, Mr. Amano stressed its unique role in transferring nuclear technology to developing countries, and its work in supporting countries achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals in energy, food and agriculture, industry, water management and health.

“The Agency will continue to deliver high-quality programmes and respond promptly to Member State needs,” he said, noting that the modernization of the IAEA nuclear applications laboratories near Vienna was making excellent progress and the new Insect Pest Control Laboratory would be inaugurated in a week’s time.



International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano addresses delegates at the 61st IAEA General Conference. Photo: Dean Calma/IAEA

“When completed in a few years’ time, the expanded laboratory complex will greatly increase our capabilities as a technology holder,” he added.

Inclusive and sustainable development key to prevent violent extremism – deputy UN chief



A Yazidi Kurd from Sinjar who was abducted by ISISL, pictured here in Mamilyan Camp for internally displaced persons in Akre, Iraq. Photo: Giles Clarke/ Getty Images Reportage

18 September – Noting that sustainable development and sustainable peace mutually reinforce one another, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed called for greater investments in basic services and in building equitable societies.

Speaking at the event, 'Rebuilding Shattered Lives and Communities: Chibok and Yazidi Girls and Women,' Ms. Mohammed said the atrocities against them require immediate and compassionate care, and comprehensive services.

“Chibok and Yezidi girls and women are not only survivors of violence,” she said.

“They are a testament to the failure of the international community to prevent violent extremism and to address the root causes of conflict.”

Underscoring that the best means for prevention is inclusive and sustainable development, the Deputy Secretary-General stressed that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offered the solution to do so.

Most importantly, education – especially for girls – needed to be prioritized, she said, adding that access to schooling would also be a critical component in rebuilding.

The problem is most acute in Nigeria, which has the highest illiteracy rate in the world, and two-thirds among them are women and girls. Conflict in the country displaced some 2.5 million people – over half of them children – and killed hundreds of teachers and damaged or destroyed some 1,200 schools.

“All UN agencies must join forces to address this, and all the needs and rights of women and girls,” said Ms. Mohammed, reaffirming the Organization's commitment to a system-wide approach so communities can be assisted quicker and better and with greater national ownership.

“Our efforts to magnify their voices and their stories, and ensure their health, justice and rights is an investment in our collective future,” she concluded.

The event, held on the margins of the ongoing high-level week of the General Assembly, was co-organized by Canada, Denmark, Iraq and Nigeria, the European Union and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).