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**Antibiotic resistance is 'crisis we cannot ignore,' UN warns, calling for responsible use of these medicines**

Laboratory worker testing antibiotics on a resistant infection. Photo: PAHO/Joshua Cogan

**13 November** – As World Antibiotic Awareness Week began on Monday, the United Nations, through its Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), called for responsible use of antibiotics in humans and animals to reduce the emergence of antibiotic resistance.

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“Antibiotic resistance is a global crisis that we cannot ignore,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. “If we don’t tackle this threat with strong, coordinated action, antimicrobial resistance will take us back to a time when people feared common infections and risked their lives from minor surgery.”

Antibiotic resistance is rising to dangerously high levels in all parts of the world and threatening our ability to treat common infectious diseases. Infections affecting people – including pneumonia, tuberculosis, blood poisoning and gonorrhoea – and animals alike are becoming harder, and sometimes impossible, to treat as antibiotics become less effective.

“FAO advocates for the implementation of good practices in terrestrial and aquatic production and health systems,” said



Kundhavi Kadiresan, the UN agency's Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, as she formally opened the Week's celebrations in the region.

This year's theme is to seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional before taking antibiotics. For food and agriculture, this means that one of the best ways to tackle AMR is to diminish the need of antimicrobials at farm settings through the promotion of good practices in livestock production, aquaculture farming and crop production.

"[These] are practical steps that would promote prudent use of antimicrobials in the region," explained Ms. Kadiresan.

To tackle these problems, WHO, FAO and OIE are leveraging their expertise and working together in a 'One Health' approach to promote best practices to reduce the emergence and spread of antibiotic-resistant microbes in both humans and animals.

"The overuse of antimicrobials blunts their effectiveness, and we must reduce their misuse in food systems," said José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO. "Antimicrobial veterinary medicines are a crucial tool for animal health and welfare and safe food production, but they are by no means the only tool."

"Like in human health, veterinary medicine has tremendously progressed thanks to antibiotics. Preserving their efficacy and availability through their responsible use associated with good husbandry and prevention practices, is therefore essential to preserve animal health and welfare," highlighted Dr. Monique Eloit, Director-General of OIE.

## Largest gathering of defence ministers dedicated to UN peacekeeping to kick off in Vancouver



UN peacekeepers patrol the PK5 neighbourhood of Bangui, the capital of the Central African Republic. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

**13 November** – It is extremely critical that “major gaps” in equipment and staff needed to maintain United Nations peacekeeping operations are filled “in the shortest possible time possible” Atul Khare, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, said ahead of a major gathering of global defence ministers in Canada.

On the eve of the second UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference, taking place on Tuesday and Wednesday in Vancouver, British Columbia, Mr. Khare said: “We are trying to make do. We are trying to do the best that we can; we are trying many innovations.”

The Conference, hosted by Canada, is the largest gathering of defence ministers dedicated to UN peacekeeping. It aims to:

- measure the progress made since the 2016 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference;
- encourage new pledges from Member States, particularly in areas where the UN faces gaps, such as rapid deployment, helicopters and francophone units;
- advance peacekeeping reform through the efforts of Member States and the UN to improve the UN's capacity to better plan and perform peacekeeping operations; and
- foster pragmatic and innovative solutions to make peacekeeping operations more effective, by building on the ‘3Ps’ – pledges, planning, performance – with a new focus on partnerships.

“This meeting is critical to our work. We have now indications that about 80 countries – which is quite a large number – are likely to attend at ministerial level [...] This is a very good indication of the importance which countries attach to this meeting,” said Mr. Khare.

In an exclusive interview with *UN News*, the senior official talks more about the importance of the meeting to UN peacekeeping, and what his expectations are for the outcome.

## Road safety 'morally, economically sound investment,' UN envoy tells global forum



Road traffic in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Photo: Trinn Suwannapha/World Bank-121128-3923f

**13 November** – Calling for greater efforts to reduce road traffic deaths worldwide, the United Nations envoy for road safety on Monday stressed that a proposed UN fund, along with national investments, would turn the tide of rising fatality numbers.

“If established, a global Fund would be of huge significance in the fight to turn the tide of rising fatality numbers, but only if the catalytic funding is complemented by national investments made by governments towards road safety,” Jean Todt, UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety told a ministerial world conference in New Delhi, India.

He said that road safety receives 1,000 times less than other causes with a similar fatality rate like AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria.

The proposal for a ‘UN Road Safety Fund,’ which is now under the UN Secretary-General’s consideration, provides for the first time a clear indication of the amount of funding required to attain relevant targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Todt, also President of the International Automobile Federation, noted that 1.25 million people die on the world’s roads every year, with 50 million more left seriously injured.

India accounts for more than 10 per cent of all road related fatalities recorded globally, despite having only three per cent of the world’s vehicles, and the reforms put forward by the Government to the Motor Vehicles Act would save many thousands of lives and serious injuries on the country’s roads, he added.

South East Asia accounts for 25 per cent of global traffic deaths, an estimated 316,000 lives tragically lost.

“The outlook is startling, especially when we take into account the expected rise in urbanization as well as increase in the number of motor vehicles which sadly, is expected to increase road traffic fatalities if no changes are made,” he said. “If we are to make progress towards the global targets, a dramatic upscaling of our efforts is urgently required.”

He said that in France, where he is from, 18,000 lives were lost in the early 1970s before road safety became a national priority. That number has since be reduced to just over 3,000 today despite car numbers going up threefold.

The turnaround is a result of a focus on safer roads, drivers, and vehicles; improved post-crash care and the enforcement of strong legislation, he added.

“The truth is that road safety is morally and economically a sound investment,” he stressed, citing initiatives, such as Mexico’s ‘Vision Zero’ Campaign that aims for a 35 per cent reduction in road traffic fatalities and Malaysia’s public declaration to upgrade 75 per cent of road infrastructure by 2020.

At the conference, transport ministers adopted the Delhi Declaration, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to effectively implement the ambitious road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda and welcomed the discussion on the establishment of a UN Road Safety Fund.

## In Manila, UN chief tells South-east Asian summit cooperation is vital to address shared challenges



Secretary-General António Guterres welcomed by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and First Lady Honeylet Avancena to the 31st Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit dinner on 12 November 2017. Photo: UNIC/Maria Teresa Debuque

**13 November** – Addressing the ninth Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)-United Nations Summit in Manila, the Philippines, Secretary-General António Guterres called for collective global and regional action to combat the challenges facing the world, in particular, those related to climate change.

“Globalisation is delivering new opportunities – but increasing economic and social inequalities, heightening citizens' anxieties and putting pressure on social cohesion; climate change is exacerbating severe weather events like hurricanes and storms,” said Mr. Guterres, adding: “The international community must raise the level of its response to all these complex threats; multilateralism and regional cooperation will be critical to a peaceful and prosperous future.”

In his remarks, the UN chief, also voiced deep concern over the displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees from Myanmar to

Bangladesh and said that it is a “worrying escalation in a protracted tragedy,” a potential source of instability in the region, as well as radicalization.

“Addressing the underlying issues by implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine will also be critical to reverse this tragedy,” he stressed, highlighting that sustainable and inclusive development is the best way to prevent both conflict and violent extremism.

“That is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our blueprint for a safe and prosperous future on a healthy planet, and central to the ASEAN Community Vision 2025,” he added.

Further in his remarks, the UN chief noted the region's economic growth has lifted millions out of extreme poverty, recalled its performance on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and expressed hope that the region would continue to bring shared prosperity to millions more.

“Strengthened partnerships with regional organizations, including ASEAN, are a priority for me, and a critical pillar of my proposals to reform the UN,” he stated, adding that the UN stands ready to cooperate with the region to strengthen human rights.

### *UN chief meets with ASEAN leaders*

Also today, Secretary-General Guterres held a meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counsellor of Myanmar, where they discussed, the situation in the country's Rakhine state.

According to a read out issued by Mr. Guterres' spokesperson, the UN chief “highlighted that strengthened efforts to ensure humanitarian access, safe, dignified, voluntary and sustained returns, as well as true reconciliation between communities, would be essential.”

The Secretary-General also stressed the importance of implementing the Rakhine Advisory Commission recommendations.

Mr. Guterres also met Monday with the Prime Ministers of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, and with the President of Indonesia.

## Bonn: Financing for low-carbon, climate-resilient future takes center stage at UN climate conference

**13 November** – The urgent need to raise the finances to meet the funding goals of the Paris Agreement, especially to support action by developing countries, took center stage Monday at the UN Climate Conference (COP23) in Bonn, Germany.

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“We need all financial players – public, private, domestic, international – and including markets and regulators, to work together effectively to mobilize at least \$1.5 trillion in climate finance that is needed every year,” said Eric Usher, Head of Finance Initiative at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

As part of ‘Finance for Climate Day’ at COP23, high-level representatives from across the sector highlighted their efforts to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement of keeping the average global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius and as close as possible to 1.5 Celsius.

They stressed that every dollar invested in cutting greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change gets double the bang for the buck because it directly supports the international community’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

According to the UN Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, finance for climate is flowing at a greater pace than ever, with vibrant and growing markets for renewable energy, electric vehicles, green buildings and climate-smart agriculture seeing aggressive growth, backed by exponential advances in innovative green financial instruments, indices and markets.

Equally, the finance sector is recognizing to a much greater degree where and how climate change presents risks to its existing investments and the need to adjust their portfolios away from carbon-intensive assets to reduce that risk.

However, much more is needed to secure finance and investment at the scale required to deliver a fully de-carbonized and climate-resilient global economy by 2050.

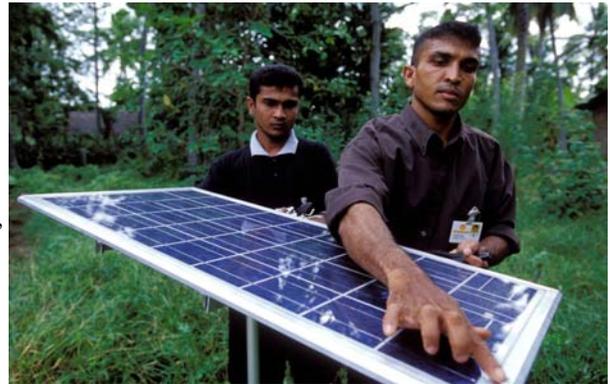
“The potential for climate friendly investment in areas such as clean energy and climate-smart agriculture is enormous,” said Laura Tuck, Vice-President Sustainable Development at the World Bank. “The key is to get the funding to flow so that everyone everywhere can benefit from low-carbon and climate resilient investments.”

Peter Damgaard Jensen, CEO of the Danish Pension provider PKA and Chair of the Institutional Investors Group on Climate Change (IIGCC) said at a press conference that “it is extremely important that there is a significant increase of investor awareness and action with regards to supporting the transition [...] to a low carbon economy.” “Strong investment signals from policy makers across carbon trading, energy, transport and buildings, are essential to unlock the necessary capital,” he added.

Members of African civil society and members of Parliament spoke today on the urgency of climate finance as a prerequisite to ambitious action in African countries.

“Africa is the continent that pollutes the least,” but “it is Africa which suffers the effect of climate change,” said at a press conference Roger Nkodo Dang, President of the Pan-African Parliament, which is the legislative body of the African Union.

In an interview with *UN News*, he added that developed countries have a duty to provide additional support



Solar panel used for lighting village homes in Sri Lanka. Photo: World Bank/Dominic Sansoni

to Africans for their green development. “If you tell us ‘do not cut the wood,’ we say, ‘you bring us electricity,’” he said. “It’s not a favor; it’s a compensation.”

## UN ready to assist response efforts following quake in Iran and Iraq, says Guterres

**13 November** – The United Nations stands ready to assist efforts to respond to the earthquake that struck Iran and Iraq on Sunday, the Organization's top official has said.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres “is deeply saddened by the loss of life and damage” following the quake that struck the border regions of the two countries, said a statement issued by his Spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric.

The statement said the Secretary-General conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families and to the Governments and people of Iran and Iraq, and wished those injured a speedy recovery. He also commended the local response efforts underway.



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

“The United Nations stands ready to assist if required,” read the statement.

## Bonn: UN climate conference set to recognize the role of women in climate action



Women and men members from a local community in Lesotho participate in consultations to develop district plans to address climate change impacts and food insecurity. (file) Photo: FAO

**12 November** – With the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23), in Bonn, Germany, entering its final week of negotiations, the Fiji Presidency today announced an agreement on a Gender Action Plan, highlighting the role of women in climate action.

At a press conference, President of COP 23 and Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama, announced that the Parties had finalized the plan, which still has to be adopted.

“This recognizes the role of women in climate action,” he said.

“It is about integration of gender into all the work around climate policy – both nationally and internationally,” added Nazhat Shameen Khan, the Chief Negotiator for the COP 23 Presidency.

Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres will be attending the high-level segment of COP 23, on 15-16 November.

### *New national and corporate climate action on forests*

Also Sunday, countries and corporations announced new initiatives to cut emissions from forest use and establish sustainable forestry management programmes.

The efforts include an Ecuadorean initiative to reduce 15 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the forest sector; a commitment to deforestation-free commodities by Walmart; Mars Inc.'s new policy to reduce their carbon footprint 27 per cent by 2025 and 67 per cent by 2050 through addressing deforestation throughout their corporate value chain; and Gabon's National Park

Service efforts to combat illegal logging.

“The forests have this incredible ability to store carbon and we have underinvested in that,” said Inger Andersen, Director-General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), at a press conference.

“Protecting and restoring the forests is absolutely key to achieving the Paris Agreement [as well as] the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”

### ***Hundreds of companies commit to climate action***

Also today in Boon, the industry sector said that it is set to deliver much of the emissions reductions needed to achieve the Paris Agreement goal but added that closer national and international policy and implementation strategy partnerships together with governments will help business take further, faster action.

“Industry is taking action on climate change like no other period in history,” said Peter Bakker, President and CEO of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, a global, business leaders-led organization of over 200 leading businesses working on sustainable development).

“The transition to the low-carbon economy is inevitable, and business will continue to implement the solutions necessary for fulfilling the Paris Agreement,” he added.

Since 2015, over 600 companies with combined revenues of more than \$15 trillion have made over 1,000 commitments to climate action through 'We Mean Business,' a global non-profit coalition. Many are going 100 percent renewable, are implementing science-based targets and are collaborating across sectors through the Low Carbon Technology Partnership initiative (LCTPi).

### ***Local, regional leaders sign Commitment for faster climate action***

Local and regional leaders from around the world signed the Bonn-Fiji Commitment Sunday, pledging action to deliver on the Paris Agreement.

Cities are responsible for as much as 70 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels used for energy and transport, and with more than half the global population living in urban centres and this figure expected to approach two-thirds by 2050, the Bonn-Fiji Commitment pushes efforts to advance sustainable urban development.

The Commitment encompasses 19 initiatives, including The European Covenant of Mayors and Compact of Mayors joining forces to create the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy – the largest coalition of over 7,400 cities from six continents and 121 countries to reduce emissions and make societies and economies resilient to climate change.

Similarly, the UN World Health Organization (WHO), in collaboration with the UN Climate Change secretariat (UNFCCC) and in partnership with the Fijian Presidency launched an initiative to protect people living in small island developing States from the health impacts of climate change.

The vision is that, by 2030, all small island developing States will have health systems that are resilient to climate change.



## Syria: UN health agency calls for immediate and unimpeded access to save lives in Ghouta



A street in Douma, Eastern Ghouta, Syria. Photo: UNICEF/Amer Al Shami

**12 November** – Amid worsening humanitarian, health and security situation in Syria's besieged eastern Ghouta, the United Nations health agency has demanded that all parties to the conflict stop attacks on civilians, facilitate immediate medical evacuations, and allow safe passage of medical supplies.

“The situation is heartbreaking,” said Elizabeth Hoff, the head of the UN World Health Organization (WHO) operations in Syria, in a news release Sunday.

“We have now reached a critical point, where the lives of hundreds of people, including many children, are at stake. If they do not immediately get the medical care they urgently need, they will most likely die.”

Severe food and medical shortages are reported in eastern Ghouta, rural Damascus, where as many as 400,000 people remain besieged and cut-off from life-saving assistance. Among them, over 240 people require urgent advanced medical care, including 29 “priority” patients – mostly children – in critical condition who need immediate medical evacuation.

According to the UN agency, plans are in place for medical evacuations from Ghouta to hospitals and medical facilities in the capital, Damascus, and elsewhere. Medicines have also been prepared for immediate dispatch.

“At this stage, however, no formal approval for evacuations has been received from the responsible national authorities,” added WHO in the release.

In addition to the medical necessities in the region, malnutrition – especially among children – is reported to be rising, leaving them at a higher risk of life-threatening infectious diseases.

Safe drinking water is also reportedly hard to find and diseases like Brucellosis, Hepatitis A and tuberculosis have reappeared.

## Bonn: new efforts announced at UN climate conference to push for further, faster climate action

**11 November** – Cities, the transport sector and ocean advocates today announced a number of new initiatives to push for further, faster climate action, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 23) in Bonn, Germany.

These announcements were made under the auspices of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, created last year to spur action by state and non-state sectors to help implement the Paris Agreement on climate change.

### *New Transport Decarbonisation Alliance*

In a major new partnership, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Costa Rica and the Paris Process on Mobility and Climate (PPMC) launched the *Transport Decarbonisation Alliance* to stimulate greater political leadership in the sector.



Participants at COP23 in Bonn, Germany. Photo: UNFCCC

Transport contributes about one quarter of all energy-related carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions and about 15-17 per cent of the entire spread of human CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

“More ambitious and coordinated action on transport is required to deliver on the Paris Agreement,” said José Mendes, Deputy Minister for Environment of Portugal.

Six new voluntary sector initiatives were also introduced in Bonn to address specific aspects of transport and climate change. These include: the 'below50' (expanding the global market for the world's most sustainable fuels); the EcoMobility Alliance (cities committed to sustainable transport); EV100 (accelerating the transition to electro-mobility); Walk 21 (valuing and delivering more walkable communities); the Global Strategy for Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles; and the Transforming Urban Mobility Initiative (accelerating implementation of sustainable urban transport development and mitigation of climate change).

### ***Cities and communities speed coordinated climate action***

Similarly, global cities and communities also announced new efforts Saturday to coordinate their climate action commitments to deliver bigger and faster results together.

“Local and regional governments are making commitments that will help national Governments close the gap between current national commitments and the emissions reductions needed to achieve the Paris Agreement targets”, said Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, a global network of more than 1,500 cities, towns and regions working together for sustainable development.

Urban areas account for around two-thirds of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from global energy use. Their overall contribution to total greenhouse gas emissions is estimated at between 37 and 49 per cent globally, depending on base assumptions of data used.

Also at a press conference at COP 23, the Mayor of city of Pittsburgh (in the United States), William Peduto, announced that 367 American mayors have agreed to be “part of the Paris Agreement no matter what our Federal Government did”.

“It's going to happen at the local level”, he said.

The new initiatives announced include efforts ICLEI and the global NDC Partnership (a coalition of countries and institutions working to mobilize support for climate goals and enhancing sustainable development) to design, implement and align climate action strategies across all levels of governments.

Similarly, the Cities Climate Finance Leadership Alliance (a group of some 40 organizations working to mobilize investment in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure in cities and urban areas internationally) is mapping available finance to match known infrastructure projects – a critical requirement to help local governments identify funding.

### ***Threat of ocean warming and ocean acidification***

Also Saturday at COP 23, a new declaration was signed to strengthen global response to climate change impacts on oceans and coastal zones.

Oceans are the planet's largest carbon sink, a major regulating force of global climate, and fundamental to the survival and well-being of humanity.

“Oceans have featured little in the UN climate negotiations to date, and yet they are not only important for planetary survival but also offer great opportunities for innovation towards a low-carbon blue economy”, said Biliana Cicin-Sain, President of the Global Ocean Forum.

Isabel Torres de Noronha, Executive Secretary of the Future Ocean Alliance, a non-governmental organization, in an interview with *UN News*, underscored that ocean acidification “might put at risk not only ecosystems but also many



economic activities and food security of coastal populations.”

Among initiatives at national level, she highlighted one from Viet Nam about strengthening the coastline by planting forests of mangroves.