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14 November – An estimated 152 million children around the world work, a practice that the international community at a United Nations co-organized conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is trying to eliminate.

“Of those, almost half are in hazardous work. We need to recognize that progress has been very uneven,” said International Labour Organization (ILO) Director-General Guy addressing the opening of the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, which started today.

The senior UN official urged governments to work together to eradicate child labour by 2025, as agreed to in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

“The goals cannot be clearer, nor can the uncomfortable reality that if we do not do more and better, we will not achieve them,” Ryder warned.

According to an ILO report released yesterday, more than half of all children – some 73 million – work in jobs that directly endanger their health, safety and moral development.

A majority of the children cited between the ages of five and 17 work in agriculture, including farming, fishing, forestry and



Children work at the food production, producing Indonesian traditional chips, in Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia. Photo: ILO/Asrian Mirza

livestock.

“Poverty is the main cause of child labour in agriculture, together with limited access to quality education, inadequate agricultural technology and access to adult labour, high hazards and risks, and traditional attitudes towards children’s participation in agricultural activities,” ILO said in the report, *Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes*.

Among other findings, the report noted a link between child labour and armed conflicts.

The incidence of child labour in countries affected by armed conflict is 77 per cent higher than the global average, while the incidence of hazardous work is 50 per cent higher, according to the report, which noted the use of Syrian refugee children in the work force throughout the world.

The authors point to the need to boost legal protection and inspections of work places, strengthening social protection and investing in free, quality education, as ways to fight against child labour.

The conference in Buenos Aires runs through Thursday.

Kosovo: Time for action overtakes time for excuses, UN envoy tells Security Council

14 November – Noting recent momentum to advance democracy and good governance in Kosovo, the head of the United Nations Mission there urged for more emphasis on rebuilding trust and reconciliation, including through engagement with women and the youth, as well as on overcoming challenges related to freedom of cultural and religious identity.

“With the end of the election cycle, the time for action now moves ahead of the time for excuse,” Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the head of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), told the Security Council Tuesday.

“It is important that the potential for embarking on a sustainable peace process not be hindered by inflexibility or simple inaction,” he added, calling all parties to play their part in the process.



Zahir Tanin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), briefs the Security Council. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

In his briefing, Mr. Tanin informed the Security Council that 40 new judges and 13 new state prosecutors from the Serb community were sworn into office in Kosovo, who would work as part of a unitary Kosovo justice system.

He, however, noted that the implementation of agreements made in 2013 and earlier, continue, at best, to be sporadic and variable.

"Within the framework of the European Union (EU)-facilitated dialogue, technical implementation needs more meaningful commitment from both sides," said the UN envoy, noting that the most obvious gap is the lack of progress towards the implementation of the agreed Community/Association of Serb-majority municipalities.

Regarding Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA), the UNMIK said that Pristina representatives attend all CEFTA meetings, and that UNMIK’s participation is limited to the requirements of the legal statutes.

“This participation continues strictly to the extent required by CEFTA members to ensure its functionality, which in turn supports economic opportunity throughout the region,” he said, noting the importance of economic and employment opportunities as well as addressing corruption, ensuring public accountability at all levels and combatting organized

criminality.

“The final objective of [UNMIK] remains clear, with your support: sustained peace, and the opportunities it brings for individuals to fulfil their aspirations and their potential,” concluded Mr. Tanin.

Libya’s detention of migrants ‘is an outrage to humanity,’ says UN human rights chief Zeid



In Libya, dozens of migrants sleep alongside one another in a cramped cell in Tripoli's Tariq al-Sikka detention facility. Photo: UNHCR/Iason Foonten

14 November – The European Union’s (EU) support for Libya’s Coast Guard which has resulted in thousands of migrants being detained in “horrific” conditions inside Libya is “inhuman,” the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said on Tuesday.

Zeid Ra’ad al Hussein sounded the alarm after a probe by UN monitors who visited migrants held in State detention centres in Libya at the start of the month.

From 1 to 6 November, UN human rights monitors visited four Department of Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) facilities in Tripoli, where they interviewed detainees who have fled conflict, persecution and extreme poverty from States across Africa and Asia, according to the High Commissioner’s Office (OHCHR).

“Monitors were shocked by what they witnessed: thousands of emaciated and traumatized men, women and children piled on top of one another, locked up in hangars with no access to the most basic necessities, and stripped of their human dignity,” OHCHR spokesperson told reporters today in Geneva.

Detainees at the centres said they are often beaten or prodded with electric sticks if they ask for food and medicine. There are no functioning toilets in the hangar-like facilities and the detainees find it ‘difficult to survive the smell of urine and feces.’ Rape and other sexual violence appear commonplace.

The European Union is providing assistance to the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept migrant boats in the Mediterranean. This includes in international waters, despite concerns raised by rights groups that this would condemn more migrants to arbitrary and indefinite detention and expose them to forced labour or extortion. According to OHCHR, those detained have no possibility to challenge the legality of their detention, and no access to legal aid.

Nearly 20,000 people are in custody now, up from about 7,000 in mid-September.

The spike in numbers came after authorities detained thousands of migrants following clashes in Sabratha, a smuggling and trafficking hub, about 80 kilometres west of Tripoli.

“We cannot be a silent witness to modern day slavery, rape and other sexual violence, and unlawful killings in the name of managing migration and preventing desperate and traumatized people from reaching Europe’s shores,” said High Commissioner Zeid.

His Office has urged the Libyan authorities to stamp out human rights violations in centres under their control, while also calling on the international community not to turn a blind eye to the “unimaginable horrors” endured by migrants in Libya.

Promote affordable, equitable access to diabetes medicines and information for women, UN urges

14 November – On World Diabetes Day, the United Nations health agency has said that women – especially those in low-income countries – are particularly vulnerable to diabetes, a condition that can be prevented or delayed with medication, regular screening and healthier lives.

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“Approximately 205 million women around the world (about 8 per cent globally) are living with diabetes, with more than half of them in the Western Pacific and south-east Asia,” said Christian Lindmeier, a spokesperson for the UN World Health Organization (WHO).



Diabetes: a blood glucose test is used to check the level of sugar in the blood of this woman. Photo: WHO/PAHO/Sebastián Oliel

Globally, diabetes is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and lower limb amputation. In 2015, diabetes had been the direct cause of 1.6 million deaths, and two million people die each year from high blood glucose.

Furthermore, with blood glucose-levels rising substantially during pregnancy, there is heightened risk the health of both mother and child as well as the threat of diabetes for the child in the future.

However, early diagnosis through relatively inexpensive testing of blood sugar and simple lifestyle measures can be effective in preventing or delaying the condition and treating its consequences.

This year, World Diabetes Day calls for promoting affordable and equitable access for all women with diabetes or at risk of diabetes to the essential medicines and technologies, self-management education and information they require to achieve optimal diabetes outcomes and strengthen their capacity to prevent Type-2 diabetes.

Type-2 diabetes results from the body's ineffective use of insulin, and comprising majority of people with diabetes around the world, and largely the result of excess body weight and physical inactivity, can be prevented with a healthy diet, avoiding sugar and saturated fats intake, not smoking and using tobacco, as well as a more physically active lifestyle with at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity activity on most days.

Until recently, this Type-2 diabetes was seen only in adults but it is now also occurring increasingly frequently in children.

Other types of diabetes are Type 1 diabetes (previously known as insulin-dependent, juvenile or childhood-onset), gestational diabetes (hyperglycaemia with blood glucose values above normal but below those diagnostic of diabetes, occurring during pregnancy), as well as impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) and impaired fasting glycaemia (IFG) (intermediate conditions in the transition between normality and diabetes).

People with IGT or IFG are at high risk of progressing to type 2 diabetes, although this is not inevitable, according to WHO.

Bonn: Initiative to increase insurance coverage for climate-related disasters launched at UN conference

14 November – On the heels of one of the worst – and most costly – Atlantic hurricane seasons on record, a global initiative was launched Wednesday at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP23), in Bonn, Germany, with the aim of providing insurance to hundreds of millions of vulnerable people by 2020 and to increase the resilience of developing countries against the impacts of climate change.

In 2017, extreme weather events are estimated to have caused more than \$200 billion worth of damage worldwide, as hurricanes, droughts and rising sea levels devastated vulnerable communities with increased frequency and intensity. In the face of skyrocketing costs, new forms of financial protection have become an increasingly urgent part of the climate change discussion.



Hurricane Irma cut a path of devastation throughout the Caribbean, including in Punta Alegre, on the north coast of Ciego de Avila, Cuba. Photo: Jose M. Correa/UNDAC

The InsuResilience Global Partnership is a major scaling-up of an initiative started by the G7 in 2015 under the German Presidency. It aims at meeting the pledge of providing cover and support to an extra 400 million vulnerable people by 2020.

The Global Partnership now brings together G20 countries in partnership with the so called ‘V20’ nations, a group of 49 of the most vulnerable countries including small islands like Fiji, which holds the Presidency of COP23.

“The Global Partnership is a practical response to the needs of those who suffer loss because of climate change,” said the COP23 President and Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama.

This announcement on climate risk insurance was made a day before the high-level segment of COP23, which Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, are expected to attend.

Thomas Silberhorn, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, announced support of 125 million dollar for the new Global Partnership as part of the launch. This follows the £30 million commitment to the initiative made by the British Government in July 2017.

“Climate risk insurance is a response to the simple fact that extreme weather events are constantly increasing in number and intensity, and also a response to our experience that the international community and the countries affected by extreme weather events tend to really act after those incidents occurred and they tend to come too late and to intervene not significantly enough,” Mr. Silberhorn told a press conference.

“So our intention is to act more preemptively, to act in time, and to act decisively in order to reduce the impact of extreme weather events. Insurance is one tool to address this challenge,” he added.

A partnership for climate and disaster risk finance and insurance solutions

The Global Partnership supports data and risk analysis, technical assistance and capacity building according to countries needs and priorities, solutions design of concrete risk finance and insurance solutions, smart support for the implementation for such schemes and monitoring and evaluation efforts.

“This new and higher ambition initiative represents one shining example of what can be delivered when progressive governments, civil society and the private sector join hands with creativity and determination to provide solutions,” said Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change secretariat (UNFCCC).

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), for example, is being supported with the help of ‘InsuResilience.’ The most recent example of support was in September 2017, when more than \$55 million was paid out to 10 Caribbean countries within 14 days of hurricanes Irma and Maria, which left an arc of destruction across the region.

The money was used in various ways, for example, to quickly buy urgently needed medicines and to build emergency shelters for the people affected by the storms.

In Zambia, InsuResilience supports the NWK Agri-Services cotton company, which offers direct weather and life insurance to small contract farmers. In 2015, some 52,000 farmers decided to buy insurance. Following a major drought in 2016, more than 23,000 farmers received payments.

Suffering deepens in Yemen as border shutdowns enter second week – UN agencies



A UNHCR staff assists displaced Yemenis outside the IDP Community Centre in Sana'a. Photo: UNHCR/Shabia Mantoo

14 November – A proposal to deliver vitally needed aid to war-ravaged Yemen via smaller ports than those under blockade will not solve the catastrophic humanitarian situation there, a senior UN official said Wednesday.

Speaking over the phone to journalists in Geneva, Jamie McGoldrick, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen, called for the reopening of the country’s major import hubs, Hodeida and Saleef, along with Sana’a airport.

Smaller ports such as Aden in southern Yemen and Jazan – which is in neighbouring Saudi Arabia – lack the capacity to handle the amount of fuel, food and medicines that’s needed, Mr McGoldrick said.

“Coming from Jazan in the north or coming from Aden in the south to serve the bulk of the population that we have identified, in the northern part of the country, it would be very difficult in many places because of for security issues, because of logistical issues” he said.

This would increase the cost of supplies by an estimated \$30 per metric tonne “and this is something that would then reduce the amount of money we have to serve the population and right now our humanitarian response plan is only 57 per cent funded,” explained Mr. McGoldrick.

He said that Yemen has just 20 days’ worth of diesel left in the north, and three months’ reserves of wheat, adding that while he has heard reports that Aden and other ports were opening, there has been no confirmation of it.

The decision to blockade Yemen was taken by the Saudi-led coalition – engaged there in a three-year war against Houthi militants, which, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has left more than seven million close to famine and 21 million needing assistance in one of the world’s poorest countries.

With humanitarian supplies “dangerously low,” Mr. McGoldrick warned that keeping famine and disease at bay risks setbacks.

Suffering worsens in Yemen

With the closure of land, sea and air borders now entering its second week, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) expressed alarm at the worsening humanitarian situation.

“Over the past week, the closures have prevented humanitarian and commercial supplies and restricted the movement of aid workers. They are also placing new economic strain on a civilian population already suffering through many months



of conflict,” said UNHCR spokesperson William Spindler at the regular press briefing in Geneva.

“As a result,” continued Mr. Spindler, “our staff and those of our partners are seeing an increase in the number of civilians seeking humanitarian help. Vulnerable populations including internally displaced people, refugees and asylum seekers are especially hard-hit.”

The spokesperson reminded reporters that since the conflict began in March 2015, it has become the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, affecting 21 million people.

“Two million internally displaced people, a million returnees and 280,000 refugees and asylum seekers are all struggling to survive through increasingly prolonged displacement,” he stressed, adding that worsening conditions have also led to child labour and early marriage.

“Together with other members of the humanitarian community in Yemen, UNHCR is advocating for the border closures to be lifted without delay. The closures are exacerbating the humanitarian crisis, posing a critical threat to the millions struggling to survive,” Mr. Spindler concluded.

UN warns of trafficking, sexual abuse in shadow of Rohingya refugee crisis



Displaced persons near Sittwe, Myanmar in December 2013.
IRIN/David Longstreath

14 November – Human trafficking and exploitation are rife among Rohingya refugees who have fled Myanmar to seek safety in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, the United Nations migration agency has found.

“Understanding the scope of human trafficking is difficult in most settings due to the hidden nature of the crime,” said Kateryna Ardanyan, a counter-trafficking expert of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in a press release issued Tuesday.

“In the chaos of a crisis like this, trafficking is usually invisible at first, as there are so many other urgent needs like food and shelter. But agencies responding to this crisis should not wait until the number of identified victims increases,” she added.

According to interviews and community focus groups conducted in the district’s makeshift settlements by IOM, desperate men, women and children are being recruited with false offers of paid work in various industries including fishing, small commerce, begging and, in the case of girls, domestic work.

With almost no alternative source of income, the refugees are willing to take whatever opportunities they are presented with, even ones that are risky, dangerous and that involve their children.

Once they start the job, they usually find that they are not paid what was promised. They are often deprived of sleep, made to work more hours than was agreed, not allowed to leave their work premises and not allowed to contact their family. Women and girls are often physically or sexually abused.

Some report being forced into jobs which they never agreed to do. In one case, a number of adolescent girls, who were promised work as domestic helpers in Cox’s Bazar and Chittagong, were forced into prostitution. Others reported being brought to locations different from the agreed destination.

In one case, a woman reportedly went to work for a family and was brought back to the settlements dead. The family of the victim received a settlement from the employers.

Many of the recruiters are Bangladeshi, while some are Rohingya, and many were established in the area prior to the most

recent influx. The number of criminals and trafficking rings operating in the district has expanded with the population.

The abuse mainly occurs in neighbourhoods surrounding the settlements, but recruiters are also taking people to places as far away as Cox's Bazar city, Chittagong and Dhaka.

IOM is also aware of cases where Rohingya have been trafficked to outside Bangladesh, and is assisting the victims. Most of the trafficking is taking place inside the country, which follows the pattern of trafficking globally.

Forced and early marriages are also taking place among the Rohingya population. For many families, it is a coping mechanism that offers protection and economic advancement for young Rohingya women and girls.

“Rohingya refugees need preventative and proactive action now to mitigate risks of human trafficking, and the survivors need help, before this spirals out of control,” Ms. Ardanyan said.

Over 617,000 Rohingya refugees have settled in Cox's Bazar since 25 August, but exploitation of the Rohingya population in the district has been occurring since well before this most recent influx of people.

Security Council maintains partial lifting of arms embargo on Somalia for one year



Wide view of the Security Council. UN Photo/JC McIlwaine (file)

14 November – The Security Council on Tuesday renewed until 15 November 2018 the partial lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia, authorization for maritime interdiction of illicit arms imports and charcoal exports, and the humanitarian exemption.

In the resolution adopted by 11 affirmative votes and four abstentions, the 15-member body requested the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) to continue its investigations related to the export to Somalia of chemicals that may be used as oxidisers in the manufacture of improvised explosive devices, such as the precursors ammonium nitrate, potassium chlorate, potassium nitrate and sodium chlorate.

Those abstained in the vote were Bolivia, China, Egypt and Russia.

Further, the Council extended until 15 December 2018 the mandate of the SEMG, and recognised that during the course of its current and three previous mandates, the SEMG has not found conclusive evidence that Eritrea supports Al-Shabaab in Somalia.

The Council expressed its intention to keep measures on Eritrea under regular review, in light of the upcoming midterm update by the SEMG due by 30 April 2018.

Recalling the three meetings between an Eritrean government representative and the SEMG, the Council reiterated its expectation that Eritrea's Government will facilitate the entry of the SEMG into Eritrea to discharge fully its mandate.

The Council urged Eritrea and Djibouti to engage on the issue of the Djiboutian combatants missing in action and to seek all available solutions to settle their border dispute peacefully.