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'Don't let adults off the hook, keep raising your voices;' Kids 'take over' UN for World Children's Day

Secretary-General António Guterres and UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake with Children's Activists for UNICEF World Children's Day. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

20 November – It's official, kids have taken over... at least for today – World Children's Day – celebrated annually on 20 November, which this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and also saw young people take over roles in government, media, and even at the United Nations, to raise awareness about issues important to them.

"It's my job to meet with some of the most powerful and important people in the world," Secretary-General António Guterres said at a dedicated event at UN Headquarters in New York in a room packed to the rafters with children, teachers, government delegates and a host of others, including the Director-General of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Anthony Lake.

"Presidents and Prime Ministers... scientists... military leaders... scholars and academics... captains of industry and business. But none of these people are as important – or as inspiring – as the the children I meet," Mr. Guterres said.

He painted a picture of millions of girls and boys in danger, fleeing deadly conflicts, and going hungry, elaborating on how they are separated from their parents or making long, dangerous journeys to find safety.

“As a global community, we cannot continue failing these children,” he asserted. “So here is my commitment to you: I will spare no effort to make sure that the United Nations is working every day, every hour, every minute, for your best interests.”

“In a world that can so often seem to be a hopeless place, we need children’s hope, more than ever,” Mr. Guterres affirmed.

Keeping adults ‘on the hook’

Mr. Lake spoke with special guest Zari, the muppet who stars in *Baghch-e-Simsim*, or ‘Sesame Garden,’ the Afghanistan version of *Sesame Street*.

In a country where only about one-third of girls attend school, they discussed how she is setting an example and inspiring girls to dream big and imagine a future they may not have thought possible. “I love going to school and learning!” she exclaimed.

As children emcees Jaden Michael and Isabela Moner took over the podium, they introduced two youth from Syria, with many high-fives in the mix.

After fleeing Syria, 12-year-old Basel’s family sheltered in Jordan where his father worked two jobs from 6:00 am until midnight every day. Eleven-year-old Nance was four when she walked from Damascus to Jordan.

Now in Canada, Basel has made friends at school and “even learned to love the snow!” Nance lives in the United States where she hopes to become an optometrist, saying “If I become an eye doctor, I can travel back to Syria and other places to help people around the world.”

Emmanuel Elisha Ford took a special seat in the front, drawing attention to the challenges faced by 93 million children globally, noting how they vary from person, to place, to circumstance, to disability.

“In addition to being born blind, I face some mobilities challenges,” he began, saying that despite sometimes needing a wheelchair, he dreams of becoming a meteorologist, calling for “action to change this uneven playing field.”

Twelve-year-old actor Dafne Keen took the podium where she translated from French, what Central African Graciela-Elsie Ouakabo said, explaining that after Graciela’s mother died while Graciela was a baby, and her father killed by Seleka rebels, she was captured by anti-Balaka while fleeing her town. The two warring militias have sparked a dire humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR).

“They kept me for over two years. I was a cook. And they also trained me to fight, which I hated,” Graciela said emotionally. Now, she lives with her grandfather in Bangui, the capital of CAR, back at school and helping other children who have been abused “because I know what it’s like to be alone. To be hurt. And to lose my childhood.”

When Khyata Chauhan stepped up to the microphone, she elaborated how males in India have a higher value than females.

“A child is praised for being a boy, but suppressed for being a girl. Our religious beliefs make girls goddesses – yet we fail to recognize her as a human being...girls are considered a liability,” she asserted, sharing her wish that every child has an education.

As the event wound down, eight-year-old Cooper Megown stood next to the emcees and signed the event, including the introduction of sisters Chloe and Halle Bailey, who opened for ‘Queen Bey’ – megastar Beyoncé – in leading all the children in song that culminated in choruses of *For every child* in English, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Russian, Spanish and French.

In closing, Emcee Jaden said to all the children: “Don’t let the adults off the hook... continue raising your voices.”

A standing ovation at the UN is not an everyday occurrence... but today’s was a most auspicious one.



Children in the spotlight

In addition to the main event, children throughout the day, jumping in to adults' jobs, including as the spokesperson for the Secretary-General and action reporters.

At the same time, UN child rights experts called on all Governments to safeguard children on the move.

“For children on the move, especially when unaccompanied or separated from their families, violence infuses daily life and is often part of a continuum,” said the experts in their message for the Day.

They said that even when they are forced to flee or be uprooted in search of safety, these children are entitled to grow up in a nurturing family environment, advocating for expeditious family reunification, as called for by the convention on the Rights of the Child.

“Children on the move need to be treated first and foremost as children!” the statement stressed. “Let us respond to the imperative of the Convention to genuinely protect the rights of all children, including those on the move and place their best interests above any other concern,” concluded the experts.

David Ohana - 1 in 12 children ‘worse off’ than a generation ago

Emmanuel Ford - ‘Nothing is impossible’ for differently abled children

UN chief 'horrified' at buying and selling of African migrants in Libya

20 November – Expressing horror at news reports and videos showing African migrants in Libya allegedly being sold as slaves, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Monday called on the authorities to urgently investigate the situation and bring the perpetrators to justice.

“Slavery has no place in our world and these actions are among the most egregious abuses of human rights and may amount to crimes against humanity,” Mr. Guterres told reporters at a press stakeout at the UN Headquarters, in New York, Monday.

He added that he has asked the relevant UN actors to actively pursue the matter.

Mr. Guterres also called on all countries to adopt and apply the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocol on trafficking in persons and I urge the international community to unite in fighting this scourge.

The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the Convention, was adopted by the UN General Assembly in November 2000. It entered into force in January 2004.

It is an important legal instrument that seeks to prevent and combat the smuggling of migrants, as well as to promote cooperation among States Parties, while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants.

Further in his remarks, the UN chief urge the international community to unite in fighting the scourge.

He also called for addressing migration flows in a comprehensive and humane manner, including through the



Secretary-General António Guterres speaks to reporters at the Security Council stakeout. UN Photo/Mark Garten

development cooperation among States to address its root causes, meaningful increase of all the opportunities for legal migration, and enhanced international cooperation in cracking down on smugglers and traffickers and protecting the rights of their victims.

In Bangladesh, UN agency Goodwill Ambassador Kristin Davis urges action for Rohingya refugee children



UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Kristin Davis visits Rohingya refugee children and their families to mark United Nations Universal Children's Day. Photo: UNHCR/Andy Hall

20 November – Marking World Children's Day, actress Kristin Davis on Monday called for global attention and funding to provide more life-saving aid for Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh, as part of her advocacy work for the United Nations refugee agency.

“For me, the most shocking part of the Rohingya refugee crisis is the number of children who have had to flee their homes,” Ms. Davis, Goodwill Ambassador for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said at the end of her visit to Kutupalong Refugee camp in Bangladesh.

“Over half of the refugees in the camp are children. Some of them have lost one or both parents and they are on their own,” she added.

She said that they need everything, including the very basics of shelter, water and food.

“I can't imagine going through what these children and their families have gone through, much less having the strength, resilience and extraordinary bravery these children possess,” she said.

According to UNHCR, the Rohingya are a stateless minority in Myanmar. Since violence erupted on 25 August 2017 in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state, more than 600,000 people have fled to Bangladesh. Children make up 54 per cent of the total population.

A recent survey of more than 170,000 families, or 740,000 individuals found that 5,677, or 3.3 per cent, of the households are headed by children; more than 4,800 households, or 2.8 per cent, include separated and unaccompanied children; and as many as 14 per cent of families are composed of single mothers holding their families together with little support in harsh camp conditions.

“This is currently the fastest growing refugee crisis in the world and seeing the impact of this emergency on children is devastating,” Ms. Davis continued.

UNHCR requires \$83.7 million to respond to humanitarian needs in Bangladesh until the end of February 2018 in order to meet the acute needs of children, women and men fleeing conflict. UNHCR's response is currently less than half funded.

“The fact is that more funding, more donations, will save lives. Governments, the public, private sector, businesses, we all need to do what we can to help and donate now to support the Rohingya refugees,” Mr. Davis added.

Branding and other intangibles account for 30 per cent of product value – UN report



Customers in Rome, Italy, browsing products on sale inside an Italian gourmet food. Photo: FAO/Alessia Pierdomenico

20 November – Intangible capital, such as branding, design and technology, is increasingly determining success in the marketplace, as nearly one third of the value of manufactured products comes from such capital, a study conducted by the United Nations intellectual property agency has revealed.

“Intangible capital will increasingly determine the fate and fortune, of firms in today’s global value chains. It is behind the look, feel, functionality and general appeal of the products we buy and it determines success in the marketplace,” said Francis Gurry, Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

“Intellectual property, in turn, is the means by which companies secure the competitive advantage flowing from their intangible capital,” he added.

The WIPO’s study, ‘World Intellectual Property Report 2017: Intangible Capital in Global Value Chains,’ released on Monday, looks at how much income is credited to labor, tangible capital and intangible capital in global value chain production across all manufacturing activities.

The report finds that intangible capital accounted, on average, for 30.4 percent of the total value of manufactured goods sold throughout 2000-2014. Overall, income from intangibles increased by 75 per cent from 2000 to 2014 in real terms, amounting to \$5.9 trillion in 2014, twice as much as tangible capital, such as buildings and machinery, contributed to the total value of manufactured goods.

Smartphones: Substantial Returns Driven by Intangible Capital

In the case of high-end smartphones, crucial intangible assets include technology, the design of hardware and software, and branding. Smartphone firms and technology providers rely heavily on patents, trademarks and industrial designs, generating a high return on their intangible capital.

For every iPhone 7 that Apple sells for about \$810, about 42 per cent of the sales price derives from intangibles. Huawei and Samsung also capture significant value in their top-end smartphone models.

Indeed, in the domain of patents, up to 35 per cent of all first filings worldwide may relate to smartphones. The report finds that the 4th-generation (4G) cellular standard used today is associated with close to four times more patents than the 2nd-generation standard.

Coffee: New Consumer Preferences Driving Value

Technology plays a key role in turning a coffee bean into a cup of brew. Brand reputation and image allow companies to differentiate their offering from their rivals.’

Shifting consumer preferences have progressively transformed the global coffee value chain, moving from consumption in the home, then in coffeehouses and now to a new generation of discerning consumers who are interested in their coffee product’s back story, willing to pay premium prices.

Prices commanded in this so-called ‘third wave’ market segment can exceed those in ‘first wave’ consumption by more than four times, with coffee farmers’ incomes tripling. Information on the origin and variety of the coffee beans, how they were farmed and processed, and farmers’ compensation become integral to selling coffee.

Responding to the shifting consumer preferences, coffee growers and even countries are investing in efforts to move beyond generic coffee, adopting their own branding strategies.

Solar Panels: Technological Innovation Prompts Profound Shifts

Technological innovation is prompting profound shifts in the global manufacturing value chain for photovoltaic (PV) solar panels. Solar panels have moved from highly specialized products to low-cost commodities, putting pressure on producers.

Many companies are seeking growth in local service markets – such as the installation of solar panels in private homes. In such consumer markets, company and product branding are key intangible assets that help attract consumers and project finance.

Genuine change in Gaza could help restore confidence in peace process, UN envoy tells Security Council



Briefing by Nickolay Mladenov, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

20 November – Noting that with the signing last month of the Cairo agreement, Palestinians have set out on a path towards reconciliation, a senior United Nations official underscored on Monday the urgency to resolve the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and to return the enclave to full civilian and security control of the Palestinian Authority.

“I believe and hope that a genuine change in Gaza [...] would contribute to restoring confidence in the feasibility of a comprehensive peace agreement,” Nickolay Mladenov, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, told the Security Council Monday.

“This is a Palestinian-owned process. All Palestinian factions must seize this opportunity to open a new page for their people,” he added.

In his briefing, the UN envoy also underscored that for success to be achieved, past failures must be avoided, security for both Palestinians and Israelis must be preserved, and all sides must be willing to compromise in the interests of peace.

In the context of improving security, he welcomed the restoration of full security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (announced 8 November) noting that it the coordination is critical to the security of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

He however, expressed concern over the recent discovery of tunnel extending from Gaza into Israel, and condemning the continued construction of tunnels and statements by terrorist groups purporting violence.

“At a time when Palestinians in Gaza – who have lived with closures for a decade, survived three conflicts, and have had to struggle to merely exist – are seeing hope for the future, such actions and statements risk a dangerous escalation that could destroy the prospects for intra-Palestinian reconciliation.”

The humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to worsen with power outages now reported as much as 20 hours a day, piped water supply of 3-5 hours every five days, dwindling stocks of essential drugs and medical supplies and lack of functioning sanitation systems.

Turning to settlements, Mr. Mladenov informed the 15-member Council of Israeli planning authorities' approval of building permits for at least 418 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlements of Gilo and Ramat Shlomo as well as conditional approval of 178 housing units in the settlement of Nof Zion located in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Jabel Mukaber.

“The UN considers all settlement activities illegal under international law. They constitute a substantial obstacle to peace and should cease,” added Mr. Mladenov.

Also in his briefing, the envoy expressed concern over the implications of the latest developments related to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) representative office in the United States.

“Only through constructive dialogue can we hope to advance peace and I call on all parties to remain engaged,” he said, urging everyone, especially Palestinian leaders, Israel and the international community of their important responsibility to advance the peace efforts in the region.

At UN, sanitation chain, wastewater treatment focus of World Toilet Day event

20 November – Even in wealthier countries, where people have access to toilets and faecal material is contained, treatment and final disposal of wastewater can be far from perfect, leading to polluted rivers and coastlines, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told a World Toilet Day event on Monday.

“Where does our poo go? [...] This year’s Toilet Day observance encourages people to think about the sanitation chain,” said Ms. Mohammed in her remarks at a panel discussion on toilets and wastewater, co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Singapore, UN-Water and the International Chamber of Commerce.

World Toilet Day is observed on 19 November, and events are held around that day to raise awareness of the importance of safe sanitation.

Ms. Mohammed said that nearly 900 million people worldwide practice open defecation – not because they want to but because they have no choice.

“Regardless where we are from, we all have the right to safe and dignified toilets,” she said, noting that she stressed this point during a recent dialogue with community members in Saint-Michele de L’Atalaye in Haiti.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for ending open defecation and working towards universal access to safely managed sanitation services and safely treated wastewater, she continued.

The UN deputy chief also urged all to ask questions such as “Who is responsible for disposal?”, “What are people’s working conditions?” And “Where does menstrual hygiene waste go?”

She noted that faeces contaminate the environment, spreading dangerous diseases and undermining progress in health and child survival. Disposable menstrual products often end up in solid waste or wastewater systems not designed to handle them.

Toilets can take many forms. Some systems provide treatment and safe disposal in situ, while others are connected to a sewer. Pit latrines and septic tanks need to be regularly emptied and the waste taken to a treatment facility.

Workers providing these services are “true sanitation heroes,” she said.

Wastewater and faecal sludge must also be treated and converted into products that can be safely used or returned to the environment, she stressed, highlighting the massive potential of treated wastewater as a



The French Red Cross provides water, sanitation and toilets for 11,000 IDPs at the Centre d’Hébergement Provisoire Automica Dahaitu in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Photo: MINUSTAH

source of energy, nutrients and water.

General Assembly, Security Council fill final vacancy on 'World Court'

20 November – The General Assembly and the Security Council today elected the fifth judge to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concluding the 2017 elections to the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.

Dalveer Bhandari, of India, received the absolute majority of votes in elections – conducted independently, but concurrently – at the Security Council and the General Assembly.

He remained the sole candidate for the position after the United Kingdom withdrew the nomination of Christopher Greenwood.

Mr. Bhandari joins Ronny Abraham of France, Chaloka Beyani (Zambia), Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade (Brazil), Nawaf Salam (Lebanon), and Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf (Somalia) as the five judges who will serve along with ten other judges at the ICJ.

Their nine-year terms begin 6 February 2018.

The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected by an absolute majority in both the General Assembly and Security Council. Five seats come up for election every three years. There is no bar on consecutive terms.

Established in 1945, and based in The Hague in the Netherlands, the ICJ – informally known as the 'World Court' – settles legal disputes between States and gives advisory opinions on legal questions that have been referred to it by other authorized UN organs.

The election of the first members of the World Court took place on 6 February 1946, at the first session of the UN General Assembly and Security Council.



Sebastiano Cardi, the Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN and President of the Security Council for November, casts his country's ballot at the election for the judges to serve on the ICJ. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

UNICEF urges opportunities for 'forgotten minority' as study reveals bleak prospects for 180 million children

20 November – Despite global progress, one in 12 children live in countries with prospects more limited than those of their parents, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported Monday.

In a new report released to coincide with World Children's Day, UNICEF revealed that in 37 countries, some 180 million youth are more likely to exist in extreme poverty, be out of school or be killed by violence, than children in those same countries 20 years ago.

“While the last generation has seen vast, unprecedented gains in living standards for most of the world's children, the fact that a forgotten minority of children have been excluded from this – through no fault of their own or those of their families – is a travesty,” said Laurence Chandy, UNICEF Director of Data, Research and Policy.

In honour of World Children's Day, which marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF has coordinated a range of activities in over 130 countries that aim to give youth their own platform, helping to save their lives, fight for their rights and fulfil their potential – including children's global 'take-overs' and high-profile events.

Among a host of events and activities worldwide, at UN Headquarters in New York, UNICEF will bring together high-profile supporters, influencers and special guests alongside children who represent some of the world's most vulnerable children to speak out to the international community on issues that matter to them. Many are expected to join Secretary General António Guterres and 150 children in a 'take-over' of the UN complex.

“It is the hope of every parent, everywhere, to provide greater opportunities for their children than they themselves enjoyed when they were young. This World Children's Day, we have to take stock of how many children are instead seeing opportunities narrow and their prospects diminish,” Mr. Chandy said.

In assessing the prospect of children in escaping extreme poverty, getting a basic education and avoiding violent deaths, among other things, the UNICEF analysis shows that the share of people living on less than \$1.90 a day has increased in 14 countries mostly due to unrest, conflicts or poor governance.

It also revealed that due to financial crises, rapid population growth and the impact of conflicts, primary school enrolment has declined in 21 countries; violent deaths among children below the age of 19 have increased in seven conflict-ridden countries; and that four countries witnessed a decline across more than one of the three areas measured.

“In a time of rapid technological change leading to huge gains in living standards, it is perverse that hundreds of millions are seeing living standards actually decline, creating a sense of injustice among them and failure among those entrusted with their care,” said Chandy. “No wonder they feel their voices are unheard and their futures uncertain.”



Eleven-year-old Basel Alrashdan (light blue jacket), who is from a Syrian refugee family resettled in Canada, plays with his friends from his school, Charlottetown on Prince Edward Island.
UNICEF/Gilbertson VII Photo

UN chief stresses 'mutually supportive' nature of Africa's free trade and industrialization



Workers maintain the thermal power station at Takoradi, Ghana (file). Photo: Jonathan Ernst/World Bank

20 November – Africa's industrial development and proposed continental free trade would complement each other, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said Monday, marking the UN-proclaimed day for Africa's industrialization.

“This year's Africa Industrialization Day highlights the links between industrial development and Africa's moves towards establishing a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA),” Mr. Guterres said in his message for the Day.

“These are mutually supportive endeavours,” he added, reaffirming that the continued strong commitment of the United Nations to support Africa's industrialization, the implementation of a continental free trade agreement, and the building of inclusive, resilient, peaceful and prosperous societies for all.

Mr. Guterres stressed that industrialization is a primary driver of economic growth and job creation, and will be pivotal in efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Africa Union's 'Agenda 2063.'

He also highlighted the importance of making strategic investments in cross-border infrastructure, promoting green technologies and low-carbon solutions, fostering small and medium enterprises, and forging partnerships to spur innovation and create incentives to power sustainable growth.

“It will also be critical to unleash the capacities of Africa's young people and to strengthen African institutions,” he said, as both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 recognize these imperatives.

In 1989, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 20 November Africa Industrialization Day.

This year's theme is 'African Industrial Development: A Pre-Condition for an Effective and Sustainable Continental Free Trade Area.'

On Monday, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is holding panel discussions in Vienna and New York to increase awareness of the importance of inclusive and sustainable industrial development in Africa for the success of the CFTA and structural transformation more broadly.

Continuing support for Burundi political process only way forward, Security Council told

20 November – Despite challenges towards inclusive dialogue in Burundi, the United Nations must continue to support the political process there, the Organization's envoy to the east African country told the Security Council on Monday.

“The United Nations has the obligation, whatever difficulties persist, to continue its good offices mission, alongside regional actors, to allow Burundi to emerge from crisis,” Michel Kafando, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi said Monday, presenting his regular quarterly briefing (in French) to the 15-member Council.

Mr. Kafando informed the Security Council that in supporting regional efforts to advance negotiations on the conduct of an inclusive intra-Burundian dialogue, he had met with national authorities, opposition figures both within the country and those exiled in Brussels, as well as regional actors, including the mediator, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda.

The mediator, as well as the dialogue facilitator and the Government of Burundi, have decided to convene a discussion between the Government and all other parties, including the opposition in exile, beginning next Monday (27 November).

The UN Special Envoy also informed the Council that Burundi's ombudsman to the dialogue maintains that proposed amendments to the constitution, including a provision for seven-year presidential terms, were in line with the Arusha Accords that ended Burundi's civil war during the 1990s.

Mr. Kafando further stated that the security situation in the country remains calm except for protests against the International Criminal Court (ICC)'s decision to open investigations into crimes against humanity committed in the country since 2015.

At the same time, demonstrators had denounced reports of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, torture, forced disappearance, degrading treatment, restrictions on freedom of association, intimidation and hate speech, he added.

Also briefing the Council today, Jürg Lauber, the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN and Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration, said that since his last briefing in July, he had held a number of meetings, including with Burundi's Minister for External Relations and International Cooperation.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Burundi had participated in a meeting of the configuration on 8 November, where he had characterized the situation in Burundi as one of “chronic vulnerability”.

Mr. Lauber further reported that in discussions, national and international actors had highlighted Burundi's food security, health, education and energy challenges, while international partners were increasingly focusing on strengthening the people's resilience and immediate humanitarian needs.

According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance could reach 6 million people, while the response plan has less than half the funds it needs. The refugee response plan is also just 19 per cent funded.



Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, briefs the Security Council meeting on the situation in the country.
UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe