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Yemen's Sana'a airport opens after blockade; UNICEF says vaccine delivery 'cannot be a one-off'

On 25 November 2017, a shipment of vaccines is delivered to the Sana'a International airport, bringing in 15 tonnes of BCG, Penta and PCV vaccine supplies to protect Yemeni children from diseases such as diphtheria and tetanus. UNICEF/UN0147212/Madhok

27 November – The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Monday warned that more than 11 million Yemeni children – almost every single Yemeni boy and girl – are in acute need of humanitarian assistance, despite the successful delivery of 1.9 million doses of vaccines to Sana'a airport on Sunday.

"Yesterday's success cannot be a one-off," Geert Cappalaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa said Sunday at a press briefing in Amman, Jordan, welcoming the reopening of Sana'a airport, which enabled the agency's first humanitarian delivery in three weeks.

Vaccines are urgently needed for a planned campaign to vaccinate 600,000 children across Yemen against diphtheria, meningitis, whooping cough, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

"Today, it is fair to say that Yemen is one of the worst places on earth to be a child," he said. "The reason behind this is very straightforward: decades of conflict, decades also of chronic underdevelopment."

Today it is estimated that every 10 minutes a child in Yemen is dying from preventable diseases, he added, noting that the outbreak of acute watery diarrhea and cholera this year is not a surprise, because the water and sanitation system throughout the country is almost entirely devastated and the health system is on its knees.

"The war in Yemen is sadly a war on children," he said, calling on all parties to the conflict to stop fighting.



Nearly 5,000 children have been killed or seriously injured over the last two and a half years alone, thousands of schools and health facilities have been damaged or completely destroyed, and two million children suffer acute malnutrition.

Unfortunately, the vaccines stocks, despite the 1.9 million that UNICEF delivered on Sunday, are running out, Mr. Cappalaere said, calling for more vaccines to be delivered.

He also stressed the urgent need for affordable fuel, as pumping water requires using generators in the absence of a national power grid.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that following the announcement on 22 November by the Saudi-led coalition that Sana'a airport and Al Hudaydah seaport will be reopened for humanitarian and relief efforts, the UN submitted notification of humanitarian movements and static locations to the coalition to resume the transport of aid personnel and humanitarian cargo to northern parts of Yemen.

Almost three weeks after the blockade was imposed, essential commodities like food, fuel, safe water and medical supplies have started running low in the country or have seen their prices skyrocket.

There continues to be a grave risk of further death, disease and starvation. On 20 November, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FewsNet) warned that should the blockade continue, many areas of Yemen are likely to experience famine within three to four months, said OCHA.

'No preconditions' accepted from Syrian parties, UN envoy says ahead of Geneva talks

27 November – Ahead of fresh intra-Syrian talks on Tuesday in Geneva, the United Nations mediator said Monday that the crisis now has the potential to move towards “a genuine political process.”

“International players are clearly looking for some common ground based on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), and are urging Syrians to begin to find some common ground too,” UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura told a Security Council meeting in New York via video link from Geneva.

As mandated by resolution 2254, the talks focus on governance, a schedule and process to draft a new constitution and the holding of elections as the basis for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned process to end the conflict.

Mr. de Mistura said that in preparing for the eighth round of intra-Syrian talks, he called for “real” diplomacy, with his messages focused on several points, such as that the Government and a united opposition should engage in negotiations in Geneva without any preconditions and that all other initiatives should support this UN mediation process.

He noted that some important meetings have recently taken place in Viet Nam's DaNang, Russia's Sochi, and Saudi Arabia's Riyadh that might help the Geneva process.

In DaNang, Russian President Vladimir Putin and United States President Donald Trump affirmed that the political process “must include full implementation of Council resolution 2254.

In Sochi, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad expressed, after meeting President Putin, his intention to “talk with anyone who is really interested in a political settlement.”



Staffan de Mistura, UN Special Envoy for Syria, briefs the Security Council, via video conference. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

Mr. de Mistura, however, noted the Government has not yet confirmed its participation in the new round of the UN-facilitated Geneva talks.

In Riyadh, an expanded opposition conference was convened last week, with all three groups mentioned in resolution 2254 present. The Syrian Negotiations Commission formed in Riyadh is travelling to Geneva.

United support of international community and Security Council, vital for progress

"Assuming that both parties arrive in Geneva, we will be looking to move them into beginning serious discussions and hopefully negotiations. Let me make one thing clear: we will not accept any preconditions from either party," he said.

He also stressed that more than 200 civil society actors will be engaged in the UN-led political process in Geneva over the next weeks.

He said he is invited to participate in a preparatory meeting on Tuesday that France organized to bring together representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States – in Geneva.

As for a large gathering on Syria in the near future that Russia is planning, Mr. de Mistura said it is premature for him to say anything about that initiative.

"I will continue to view this proposal and all other initiatives through the same prism: does it contribute to effective UN-led intra-Syrian negotiations in Geneva to implement resolution 2254," he said.

Syria has been at war for the last six years. Half of its population have fled their homes, and, according to the UN's relief wing, some 13 million people require humanitarian aid, including nearly three million trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Reconstruction will cost at least \$250 billion.

"We see the emergence of international consensus, and we must begin to stitch the process into concrete results, enabling Syrians to determine their own future freely," Mr. de Mistura said. "The united support of the international community, centred on this Council, will be vital if negotiations are to move forward in a concrete way."

UN strongly condemns attack that kills peacekeeper in Central African Republic



Moroccan peacekeepers serving with the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) on patrol in Bangassou. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

27 November – Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Security Council have strongly condemned Sunday's attack allegedly perpetrated by the anti-Balaka group against a convoy of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, in which one peacekeeper from Egypt was killed and three others were injured.

"The Secretary-General offers his deepest condolences and sympathy to the family of the victim and to the Government of Egypt. He wishes a swift recovery to the wounded," said a statement issued by his Deputy Spokesman Farhan Haq following the attack, which took place on the Bangassou-Kongbo axis in the country's southeast.

With this latest attack, hostile acts have claimed the lives of 13

peacekeepers in the Central African Republic since January 2017.

The statement said that the Secretary-General firmly recalls that attacks against UN peacekeepers may constitute a war crime and calls on the country's authorities to investigate the attack to swiftly bring those responsible to justice.

The Secretary-General reaffirms the determination of the UN to advance the implementation of the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), recently renewed by the Security Council, in particular to protect civilians and to help advance the political process in the country, the statement added.

In a statement issued to the press on Monday, the Security Council condemned the attack “in the strongest terms.”

Reiterating that attacks against peacekeepers may constitute war crimes and reminded all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law, the 15-member body called on the Government to swiftly investigate this attack and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Antalya: Solutions to today’s development challenges exist in the Global South, stresses UN official

27 November – Solutions to today’s critical development challenges exist in the Global South, and every country – large or small, emerging economy or least developed – has something to offer to the world, a senior United Nations official said today, as the 2017 Global South-South Cooperation Expo opened in Antalya, Turkey.

“The advantage and beauty of South-South cooperation is that this modality of international relations relies on solidarity expressed in concrete and demonstrable sharing of technical know-how, experience and resources among developing countries,” said Jorge Chediek, the Secretary-General’s Envoy on South-South Cooperation and Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), at the opening ceremony.

Hundreds of participants from over 120 countries, including government ministers, development agency directors, and international and civil society stakeholders, have gathered for the world's preeminent forum for showcasing, sharing, and scaling up innovative local solutions to global problems.

The event, hosted by the Government of Turkey and coordinated by UNOSSC, will focus on solutions “for the South, by the South” throughout the week. The theme “South-South Cooperation in the Era of Economic, Social and Environmental Transformation: The Road to the 40th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA+40),” aims to engage stakeholders to scale up concrete solutions from the South to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

“South-South cooperation has gained a new centrality with respect to the 2030 Agenda, always complementing North-South cooperation, not replacing it. And despite the challenges before us, South-South approaches provide a window of opportunity for all of us to share hard-won lessons,” Mr. Chediek said.

“Your presence here is proof that you are ready to take up the challenge; that you are ready to build bridges and partnerships; that you believe that solutions we have can be shared and can help us build a better world. Every country can contribute – emerging economy or LDC – all of us can share and can contribute to the effort.”

Since its inception in 2008, the Expo has featured documented best practices from hundreds of partner countries, UN agencies, private-sector enterprises and civil society organizations.



Envoy of the Secretary General on South South Cooperation Jorge Chediek at the opening of the Global South South Development Expo in Antalya, Turkey. Photo: DPI/Maoqi Li

“Turkey began providing development assistance to countries in the region in the 1920s,” said Mevlüt Çavusoglu, Foreign Minister of Turkey.

Today the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) operates in over 120 countries, he explained, adding that Turkey ranks second in the world for humanitarian aid as per percentage of its gross national income.

Earlier this year, Turkey signed an agreement with the UN to establish a Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries to strengthen the science, technology and innovation capacity in the world’s poorest countries toward achieving the 2030 Agenda. “Knowledge-sharing is a priority for Turkey,” the Minister said.

One of the highlights of the week is the Exhibition, which was inaugurated following the opening ceremony and boasts 58 booths and 3 photo exhibits showcasing tested development solutions from the South.

The Expo takes place in the lead up to the 40th anniversary of the historic adoption of the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA).

The Plan of Action set the agenda for the innovative concept of South-South cooperation and provided a foundation to build the institutional mechanisms and structures that have contributed to shaping the international development agenda and changing the landscape of the global South as it is seen today. Argentina will host Second High-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation, marking the 40th anniversary of the BAPA, in March 2019.

This week’s gathering will focus on a number of issues, including climate change partnerships; peacebuilding; private sector engagement; science, technology and innovation; public service innovation; big data; youth employment and skills development; and women’s empowerment.

Partnerships ‘the only way’ to tackle global challenges, says UN industrial development chief



LI Yong was re-appointed for a second term as Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) at the opening of the seventeenth session of the Organization’s General Conference. Photo: UNIDO

27 November – The Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization’s (UNIDO) was reappointed for a second term on Monday as the 17th UNIDO General Conference opened in Vienna, Austria.

In his opening speech to the General Conference, Director General LI Yong said he was humbled by the trust placed in him to lead UNIDO for another four years, adding that he felt “a sense of profound responsibility.”

“The global community is still facing a number of unresolved and urgent challenges,” added Mr. Li. “Poverty, unemployment, and hunger remain the most persistent and daunting tasks for our world. Climate change, resource-depletion and environmental degradation, as well as the potential impact of the latest technological revolution, add another dimension,” he said.

Mr. Li stressed that “the only way to solve the challenges ahead of us is in partnership...in partnership with governments, UN sister agencies, the private sector, and civil society.”

In a video message, UN Secretary-General António Guterres congratulated the Director General on his re-appointment, calling UNIDO “a key voice on technology transfer, investment flows and skills development.”

“Your efforts can help support economic transformation in Africa and in other regions, and, as we combat climate change, your work can facilitate the transition to low-carbon growth,” underscored the Secretary-General.

The UN General Assembly president also congratulated Mr. Li, saying that he looked forward to working with him.

Speaking to the General Conference, President Miroslav Lajcak said: “Industrialization of the past may have earned a bad name. It may have made us think of pollution, wastewater or labour exploitation. But when industrialization is inclusive and sustainable, the results are positive.”

He pointed out that it leads to decent jobs and improved livelihoods; fosters youth employment; and enable resource preservation and environmental protection, “these outcomes propel us towards eliminating poverty and hunger and reducing inequalities,” he asserted.

Under the theme ‘Partnering for impact – achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,’ hundreds of participants, including UN senior representatives; Heads of State, ministers and other high-level government officials; and prominent leaders from the private sector, civil society and academia gathered to showcase UNIDO’s initiatives, achievements and partnerships.

As its highest policymaking organ, the General Conference assembles UNIDO’s member States and approves the programme and budgets for the forthcoming biennium.

It will also use interactive discussions to explore issues, such as gender, circular economy, and industry 4.0 and will spotlight UNIDO’s leading role in the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

The Conference will offer a fully immersive experience for participants, including innovative formats for the events, integrated exhibitions and networking spaces.

Antalya: UN-backed fund combatting poverty and hunger across Global South launches annual report

27 November – Three countries at the forefront of South-South cooperation and some \$33 million in contributions are helping 15 of the world’s least developed countries advance towards achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

India, Brazil, and South Africa – three nations from different economies and different continents, but working together to drive the exchange of resources, technology, and ideas between countries of the Global South – launched today the [latest report of the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-buqyoV0jpSMDZsNEhNR2YxS2s/view), known as the IBSA Fund, after the three lead partners, and which is a remarkable example of cooperation among developing countries for the benefit of other southern States in partnership with the UN system.



Women wash dishes in Kraing Serey village, Kampong Speu province, Cambodia. Photo: UNDP Cambodia/Chansok La

“We have quite innovative projects in Africa in Latin America in the Middle East, and so far, the Fund has been doing quite well, and we hope that in the near future we are able to double the support that we are providing,” said Pule Isaac Malefane, Ambassador of South Africa to Turkey, on the sidelines of the Global South-South Development Expo 2017, hosted by Turkey, which opened today and will take running in Antalya through 30 November.

The IBSA Fund, which is managed by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), was established in 2004 and has since supported projects through partnerships with local governments and institutions. Its objectives range from promoting food security and addressing HIV/AIDS, to extending access to safe drinking water.

“On the 11th of December, we will announce the inauguration of the cardiological wing of the Cultural and Hospital Centre

for the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and the Atta-Habib Medical Center in the Gaza Strip. These two projects will illustrate the way we work. A little bit with money but also with technological capacity, communication and other fields of the South-South Cooperation,” said Miguel Griesbach de Pereira Franco, Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Brazil in Ankara.

The Atta-Habib Medical Center, destroyed in the 2014 Gaza conflict, serves around 30,000 people and is the only health institute at the eastern side of Gaza City. The Fund hopes that its reconstruction will help in Gaza’s recovery plans and will aid restoring a sense of normalcy among the population.

The Fund, according to its representatives, looks not only to help out financially, but to share capacities, experiences, and knowledge.

Among other examples of the Fund’s activities, in Sudan, a project piloted a labor-intensive working model to rapidly create employment opportunities for 2,000 unskilled and semi-skilled young laborers; in Fiji, the Fund is teaching women to manufacture and maintain their own rocket cookstoves so that they can switch from open fire cooking and increase their knowledge about climate change adaption and mitigation; and in Haiti, teenagers are being trained in entrepreneurial capacities so that they can start their own business and have a wider access to the labour market.

“The South-South Cooperation based on what we have, we favor a broader view, a border scope of this interpretation. We don’t look for monetary accountability, for us it is important the threshold of knowledge and the threshold of capacity in order to make the local population more independent to develop their own way to make their own region better,” concluded the Brazilian Minister Counsellor.

IBSA called for greater efforts to combat poverty and hunger across the global South during the South-South Development Expo 2017.

No man will reach full potential unless women reach theirs, UN says on Day of Eliminating Violence



A woman stands in a shelter for girls and women who have endured sexual and gender-based violence, in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. Photo: UNICEF/Kate Holt

25 November – Unless the international community tackles violence against women, the world will not eradicate poverty or reach any of the other Sustainable Development Goals, Secretary-General António Guterres said in his message today for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

“It is time to further our collective action to end violence against women and girls for good,” the Secretary-General said marking the Day, which on 25 November, highlights that around the world, more than 1 in 3 women in their lives have experienced physical violence, sexual violence, or both.

The Day also spotlights the work of women's rights activists, who are being targeted at “alarming levels”, and violence against women politicians, which hamper women's rights.

“It is time for united action from all of us, so that women and girls around the world can live free from harassment, harmful practices, and all other forms of violence,” Mr. Guterres said.

The UN Trust Fund to End Violence against women, one of the ways that the UN is helping the international community fight this scourge, is a grant system that has given away more than \$129 million to groups and individuals supporting women's rights.

The UN is also involved in the recently launched 'Spotlight Initiative' with the European Union to connect UN efforts with the work of national governments and civil society; and the UN Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces Global Initiative.

Among other efforts, the UN launched a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment and has said that it is committed to continuing the 'UNiTE to End Violence against Women' Campaign, under the new title 'UNiTE by 2030'.

The UNiTE Campaign will mark this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, from 25 November through 10 December, under the theme *Leave No One Behind: Ending Violence against Women and Girls*”.

In her message for the day, the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, focused on the #MeToo campaign, which brought "the ugly face of violence out into the light."

She urged the global community to end discrimination and to restore human rights and dignity, so that all girls and women were treated as equals.

Afghan women and girls

In Afghanistan, the top UN official in the country stressed that “life free from all forms of violence is the right of every Afghan woman and girl.”

Calling for violence against women in Afghanistan to immediately stop, Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), said that no Afghan man will achieve his full potential unless women and girls in Afghanistan reach theirs.

“For Afghan women to achieve their full potential and their immense capacity in development, in peace and in security, the violations of the rights of women and girls, particularly through violence, must cease,” he said.

“Violence against women and girls is not inevitable,” said Rebecca Tavares, Country Representative ad interim for the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). “There are many ways to prevent violence in the first place, and to stop its recurrence.”

The UN family in Afghanistan stressed that alongside the effective legal and institutional mechanisms for access to justice, stopping violence against women requires an effort from all of us, from every individual, to speak out against violence in homes, workplaces and social settings.

'Long walk to freedom' unfinished for women, girls – Deputy Secretary-General says in Mandela lecture

25 November – Reflecting on the legacy of Nelson Mandela, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed called for investment in women and girls, decrying gender inequality as perhaps the most pervasive disparity around the world.

“Sadly, the long walk to freedom for women and adolescent girls globally remains unfinished,” Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told the 15th Nelson Mandela annual lecture in Cape Town, South Africa, referring to the title of Mr. Mandela's autobiography.

Speaking on 25 November, which is marked annually as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women, the Deputy Secretary-General issued a call to action for the international community “to invest in the missing 50 per cent of our human asset base, the potential of our women and unleash their power for good.”



UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J Mohammed and Nelson Mandela Foundation Trustee Tokyo Sexwale at Robben Island on 25 November 2017. Photo: Courtesy of Obed Zilwa/Nelson Mandela Foundation

“Just as the world came together to support the end of subjugation on the basis of race in this great country, we need today



to birth a new movement that calls for true equality, everywhere,” she urged.

Ms. Mohammed noted that violence against women in homes and war zones is “a global pandemic”. Additionally, fewer than one-third of senior management positions in the private sector are held by women, and less than 25 per cent of all parliamentarians are women.

She said the new narrative must address the current context and constituency of young people left behind.

She discussed an unplanned meeting between Ekhlas Bajoo, a Yazidi woman who had been captured and held by the Islamic State (ISIL or Daesh) and Hauwa Mohammed, victimised by Boko Haram, who embraced and exchanged messages of hope.

“I left that day, knowing that there is nothing more important than giving girls like this a platform to reach the world for those left behind without an authentic voice,” Ms. Mohammed said.

“Nelson Mandela had a very long walk to freedom,” Ms. Mohammed said. “Most of us could not even fathom this journey. At the end, he said he 'discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds there are many more hills to climb'. Leadership at all levels is the key.”

She also paid tribute to other South African leaders, including the head of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-NGCuka, and Navi Pillay, former High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Ms. Mohammed, who as Deputy to Secretary-General António Guterres is the highest-ranking woman at the UN, said that Mr. Mandela's profound legacy contains the inspiration needed to address gender equality, which is putting people at the centre to reduce inequality through inclusion and sustainability.

In a speech peppered with personal anecdotes of growing up bi-racial in Nigeria at a time of apartheid in South Africa, Ms. Mohammed noted that she had never met Mr. Mandela, or Madiba as he is affectionately known, and so represents generations of people who take inspiration from his life without a personal encounter.

Before the speech, Ms. Mohammed toured the office and archives at the Nelson Mandela Foundation, reading Madiba's own writing, and had a personal tour of Robben Island, where he had been imprisoned.

Earlier, at a press briefing in Johannesburg, Ms. Mohammed said that tackling gender-based violence begins in the home and in communities.

"While progress has been made, a lot more needs to be done," she told the journalists.

She is scheduled tomorrow to visit to the nearby township of Khayelitsha, which is an historically important area where poverty remains high today.



Feature: Six months after ISIL, life is returning to Mosul despite hidden bomb threats

27 November – Mosul’s Al Qasoor Water Treatment Plant is on the eastern bank of the Tigris River which bisects the city that was, until about six months ago, one of the last strongholds of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The water treatment facility – which looks from the air like two dark-green turn tables – today holds about 12,000 cubic metres of fresh water pumping to 300,000 people in 24 neighbourhoods; but shortly after ISIL fell, no one wanted to go near the site for fear that it was riddled with explosives.

“The explosive contamination [in Iraq] is very extensive. It is on an industrial scale,” Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager for United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), told UN News by phone from Iraq. “I’ve worked in 14 countries, I’ve worked with this my whole life, but I’ve never seen the complexity or the variety.”

He described improvised explosive devices combined with the ammunition that has been fired but failed to detonate.

“All the improvised explosive devices are with homemade explosives, different types of switches, ranging from pressure plates, anti-lift devices, infrared devices and even remote-control devices,” he said, adding that there are also belts that go on for kilometres with tens of thousands of attached explosives that will set off like dominos.

The water treatment plant was, unlike the hospital in west Mosul or the University of Mosul, without explosives. Once UNMAS confirmed it was safe, the facility was rebuilt – most of the plant’s pumps, valves, switches and control panels were destroyed, as was its chlorination system and filtration pools. It opened this past August.

Despite this danger, life is returning to Mosul and services are being re-established – school classes are resuming, hospitals are starting to treat patients, people play football in open areas.

This return to life was captured through the lens of Jarvis Yar, a documentary photographer based in the Middle East and on assignment for UNMAS in Mosul.



An UNMAS contractor conduct clearance operations at the Mosul Directorate of Water in west Mosul, Iraq on August 10, 2017. Photo: Cengiz Yar for UNMAS