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How Travel & Tourism
can help meet the UN
Sustainable
Development Goals

FOCUS ON SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



พระเจ้าทรงเป็นนิรันดร์

FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

ศาสตร์ของพระราชากับการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน

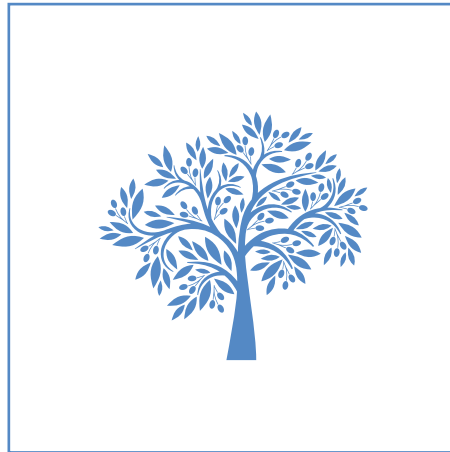
His Majesty's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for SDGs

หลักปรัชญาของเศรษฐกิจพอเพียงเป็นหลักในการคิด ตัดสินใจ และการปฏิบัติ สำหรับการดำเนินชีวิตหรือประกอบกิจการงานใดๆ ด้วยการใช้ **ความรู้** และ **คุณธรรม** เป็นฐาน ผ่านการไตร่ตรองด้วยการใช้หลักสำคัญ ๓ ประการ ได้แก่ พอประมาณ ไม่มากเกินไป ไม่น้อยเกินไป มีเหตุผล ตามหลักวิชาการ มีภูมิคุ้มกัน พร้อมรองรับการเปลี่ยนแปลงหรือวิกฤตที่อาจเกิดขึ้น ซึ่งจะนำไปสู่การพัฒนาอย่างสมดุลในทุกมิติ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นด้านเศรษฐกิจ สังคม สิ่งแวดล้อม และวัฒนธรรม อันเป็นแนวทางที่จะนำไปสู่ **ความสุขที่ยั่งยืน** ได้อย่างแท้จริง

"Sufficiency Economy Philosophy" is a mindset for decision-making. We base our decisions on our **Knowledge** using our internal value - our **virtues** - through applying the three principles of **moderation, reasonableness** and **prudence**. We aim for the outcomes of our decision to be balanced among the four dimensions of human life: **economy, society, environment** and **culture**, in order to promote sustainable happiness for all.



The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of Thailand's late monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibhol Adulyadej the Great, designed in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian economic crisis, offers one of the best models of Alternative Development globally. It is now going mainstream, primarily because it has much in common with the UN SDGs. Thailand, where the 1997 Asian economic crisis started, is certainly according it more respect than ever before. The rest of the world needs to follow if true "Sustainability" is to be realised.



LAUNCH SPONSOR



EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Imtiaz Muqbil



<https://www.travel-impact-newswire.com/>
imtiaz@travel-impact-newswire.com

THE OLIVE TREE

Design & Layout: Nusreen Ekachon

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Message from EXECUTIVE EDITOR

IMTIAZ MUQBIL

Marking the start of the third decade of the 21st century, 2020 is set to be a very important year. It will mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the 2020 Olympics, the 2020 Expo in Dubai, the 60th anniversary of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai Airways International and Visit Malaysia Year.

Most significantly, it will be the start of the final 10 years of “The Decade of Delivery” of the 2016-2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals. As the only global industry that meets all the UN SDGs, Travel and Tourism is uniquely placed to be a part of the solution.

Before looking ahead, however, it may be wise to look behind. The theme of this first issue of this decade is Health (SDG 3) which I consider the most important SDG. All forms of productivity and progress depend on good health. For humans, both physical and mental health are important. At a broader level, good health is applicable to national economies, fiscal policies, corporate bottom-lines, environmental conditions. All are also prone to bouts of ill health which can be caused by both external and internal factors.

While the “health” of Planet Earth and national economies are typically dominant topics, the lead story in this edition highlights a study which shows that promoting arts, culture, heritage and music can contribute to good health. Another story looks at how the U.N. is working with renowned sports stars such as the Harlem Globetrotters to advance the same cause.

In recent years, Travel & Tourism has strengthened linkages with the agriculture sector by promoting culinary and gastronomic tourism. But there is enormous opportunity to expand this connectivity with multiple social, economic, cultural and environmental sectors such as sports and The Arts — all aimed at achieving the UN SDGs.

However, before charting a roadmap and Action Plan for this Decade of Delivery, Travel & Tourism needs to undergo a rigorous health-check. The industry has grown remarkably since the turn of the century, but that growth seems to be more fat than muscle. The results of a comprehensive and realistic check-up may show that some “behavioural adjustments” are necessary to restore a balance, the primary prerequisite for longevity and sustainability.

As 2020 is also the Year of the Nurse and Midwives, my team and I would like to hail the role of both in facilitating health and wellness. Doctors may be medically more qualified, but without nurses and midwives, no recovery will ever be possible.

Travel & Tourism has long claimed to be an industry of peace and promoter of inclusive societies, friendship and understanding. A 10-year countdown has begun. This edition of The Olive Tree provides ample food for thought to put some wind in the sails of that effort.

SECTION 1



LEAD STORY 1:

Music, Dance and Art can be good for health, UN health agency study shows



UN Photo/JC McIlwaine An Indian dance is performed at the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

Geneva, 11 November 2019, UN News - From before birth, to the end of life, taking to the dance floor or sketching a still life, can positively affect our health and even prove more cost-effective than conventional medical treatment, the World Health Organisation ([WHO](#)) found in a new study published on Monday.

The [Health Evidence Synthesis](#) report, from [WHO's Regional Office](#) for Europe, analysed evidence from over 900 publications supporting ways in which the arts can help improve physical and mental health, in the most comprehensive review of its kind to date.

The report reviewed the health benefits (either through active or passive participation) in five broad categories of arts: performing arts (music, dance, singing, theatre, film); visual arts (crafts, design, painting, photography); literature (writing, reading, attending literary festivals); culture (going to museums, galleries, concerts, the theatre); and online arts (including animation and digital arts).

Piroska Östlin, WHO Regional Director for Europe, [said](#) in a Monday press statement that examples cited in the groundbreaking study, “consider health and well-being in a broader societal and community context, and offer solutions that common medical practice has so far been unable to address effectively.”

Different kinds of cultural and artistic engagement can trigger psychological, physiological, social and behavioural responses, linked to health outcomes, report authors explain, and art as medicine can be distinguished into two broad themes; prevention and promotion, and management and treatment.

For the former, music specifically selected to inspire attitudes of independence and self-empowerment helped HIV patients stay on course with treatment programmes, decreasing the volume of the virus in their bodies.



Art therapy sessions during cancer treatment have been shown to reduce the adverse side-effects of drowsiness, lack of appetite or energy, and depression.

Focusing on management and treatment, expecting mothers who engaged in weekly art therapy sessions helped reduce their fear of childbirth, and the general depression and anxiety sometimes associated with becoming a new parent. Singing during pregnancy can strengthen mother-infant bonding, reduce an infant's crying episodes, and help newborns get a better night's sleep.

The report indicates that some cultural activities show equivalent - or even greater - cost-effectiveness, as traditional health interventions. Because the arts can provide multiple health-promoting factors within a single activity, they may be better at preventing ailments or disease in the first place, the authors note.

Furthermore, in its various forms, artistic expression can be tailored to each individual, and thus, can help reach minority groups, which are often at higher risk of poor health.

Closing the policy gap

The report outlines policy considerations for decision-makers in the health sector and beyond, including ensuring access to health programmes, promoting public awareness of health benefits of arts engagement, and investment in further research.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, major research developments have traced the effects of art on health and well-being, however, this has not led to significant policy development across Member States within the European region, which was the focus of WHO's study.

Although since the early 2000s, England, Finland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden have implemented policies enhancing the contribution of art and culture to health and well-being.

Last year, the Secretary-General launched the [Mental Health and Well-Being Strategy](#) specifically serving UN personnel. The five-year UN workplace plan aims to create working environments that enhance mental health and well-being, in line with the Sustainable Development target for healthy lives worldwide, [SDG 3](#).

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

As Travel & Tourism is the only economic sector which actively promotes arts, culture, music and dance, this is a clear example of its multi-pronged contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and elevates its value to well beyond just job-creation and economic growth. The full Health Evidence Synthesis report makes remarkable reading and can be of great use to Travel & Tourism policy-makers, designers and planners.

LEAD STORY 2:

‘Transformational benefits’ of ending outdoor defecation: Why toilets matter



© WSSCC/Jason Florio As the population in Nigeria increases, efforts are underway to ensure that open defecation does not increase.

United Nations, 18 November 2019, UN News - Ending the practice of defecating in the open, rather than in a toilet, will have “transformational benefits” for some of the world’s most vulnerable people, says the UN’s partner sanitation body, the WSSCC (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council).

Ahead of [World Toilet Day](#), which is marked annually on 19 November, WSSCC’s acting Executive Director, Sue Coates, has been speaking to UN News about how to end open defecation.

What is open defecation and where is it mostly practiced?

Open defecation is when people defecate in the open – for example, in fields, forests, bushes, lakes and rivers – rather than using a toilet. Globally, the practice is decreasing steadily, however its elimination by 2030, one of the targets of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) requires a substantial acceleration in toilet use particularly in Central and Southern Asia, Eastern and Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

UN agencies report that of the 673 million people

practicing open defecation, 91 per cent live in rural areas. An increase in population in countries including Nigeria, Tanzania, Madagascar and Niger, but also in some Oceania states, is leading to localized growth in open defecation.

Why is open defecation such a serious problem?

Open defecation is an affront to the dignity, health and well-being, especially of girls and women. For example, hundreds of millions of girls and women around the world lack privacy when they are menstruating. Open defecation also risks exposing them to increased sexual exploitation and personal safety and is a risk to public health.

According to the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), one gram of faeces can contain 10 million viruses, one million bacteria and one thousand parasite cysts. Poor sanitation and hygiene practices (for example, not handwashing with soap after defecation and before eating) contribute to over 800,000 deaths from diarrhoea annually, according to the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)): that’s more people than who die from malaria.



Why has it been so difficult to stop it?

Open defecation has been practiced for centuries; it is an ingrained cultural norm in some societies. Stopping it requires a sustained shift in the behaviour of whole communities so that a new norm, toilet use by all, is created and accepted. Ending open defecation requires an ongoing investment in the construction, maintenance and use of latrines, and other basic services.

How are people's lives improved once they have a toilet to use?

On a day-to-day basis, the ability to use a toilet – at home and work, and in public places such as schools, health centres and markets – is a basic human right.

Sanitation has transformational benefits supporting aspects of quality of life, equity and dignity for all people.

To what extent is sanitation a central part of overall development?

A lack of at least basic sanitation and hygiene services, including a lack of informed choice about menstrual health and hygiene, is a violation of the human rights to water and sanitation, as well as the rights to health, work, adequate standard

of living, non-discrimination, human dignity, protection, information, and participation.

[WHO and UNICEF report](#) that in 2016, 21 per cent of healthcare facilities globally had no sanitation service, directly impacting more than 1.5 billion people, and over 620 million children worldwide lacked basic sanitation services at their school.

WHO estimates that every \$1 invested in water and toilets returns an average of US \$4 in saved medical costs, averted deaths and increased productivity. Hygiene promotion is also ranked as one of the most cost-effective public health interventions. Conversely, a lack of sanitation holds back economic growth.

How is the UN contributing to ending open defecation?

Member States and UN agencies are committed to ending open defecation and have urged the provision of financial resources, capacity-building and technology transfer to help developing countries, to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

Sustainable Development Goal 6 ([SDG 6](#)), on clean water and sanitation, requires access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and an end to open defecation, with special attention paid to the needs of women and girls, and those in vulnerable situations.



In Bangladesh, latrines provide women and girls privacy when they are menstruating. © WSSCC/Pierre Viot



Increasingly, governments and their UN agency partners have roadmaps to tackle the issue, and WSSCC has been providing grants for community-based solutions for a decade. However, the SDG target is not on track.

The UN and Sanitation

- Ensuring sanitation and water for all is one of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG6) that make up the UN's [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development
- An end to open defecation is a specific target within SDG6
- The UN's Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), is hosted by UNOPS, the UN Office for Project Services
- WSSCC advocates for improved sanitation

and hygiene for the most vulnerable and marginalized people in the world

- WSSCC and its partners have recently released a [Global Call to Action](#), urging governments, donors, development partners and every other stakeholder to reaffirm their commitment to rural sanitation and hygiene and scale up their ambitions and investments.

It's estimated that the global annual cost for providing even basic sanitation services is \$19.5 billion, but right now not enough funding is forthcoming. The UN Sustainable Development Goals Report in 2019 warns that while progress is being made in many SDG areas, the collective global response is not enough, leaving the most vulnerable people and countries to suffer the most.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Does any Travel & Tourism company or institution build proper toilets for the needy as part of its CSR activities? In fact, much more is at stake. Clean toilets are the most critical component of any Travel & Tourism establishment. No-one patronises a hotel or restaurant with dirty toilets. If cleaning toilets becomes a mandatory part of a CEO training programme, it would certainly go a long way towards enhancing respect for those who toil at this task day in and day out.

LEAD STORY 3 :

Revealed: Danger and squalor for cleaners who remove human waste by hand



WaterAid/Basile Ouedraogo A latrine emptier stands inside a pit in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

United Nations, 14 November 2019, UN News - The plight of sanitation workers in the developing world should be addressed urgently, the UN said on Thursday, warning that their rights, health and dignity are at risk.

Highlighting the dangers for the millions of people who clean toilets, sewers and septic tanks, ahead of [World Toilet Day](#) next Tuesday, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) insisted that while the workforce performs an essential public service, their own health is compromised and they are often shunned.

“Workers often come into direct contact with human waste, working with no equipment or protection to remove it by hand, which expose them to a long list of health hazards and diseases”, WHO said in a statement accompanying a new report.

“It is only when those critical services fail, when society is confronted with faecal waste in ditches, streets, rivers, and beaches or occasional media reports of sanitation worker deaths, that the daily practice and plight of sanitation workers come to light,” it maintains.

Sanitation workers stigmatized

The publication - “[Health, Safety and Dignity of Sanitation Workers](#)” - produced jointly with the [International Labour Organization](#) (ILO), [The World Bank](#) and [WaterAid](#) - examines nine case studies of sanitation workers in low and middle-income countries, who empty pits and tanks, transport faecal sludge and perform sewer maintenance.

It describes the workforce as “invisible, unquantified, and ostracized” and insists that many of the challenges that sanitation workers face stem from a lack of acknowledgment for what they do.



*WaterAid/CS
Sharada Prasad A
latrine emptier is
lifted out of a pit in
Bangalore, India.*

While the workers include full-time employees with health benefits, pensions and legal protection, a significant proportion comes from some of the “most marginalized, poor and abused members of society”.

All that is on offer for these people is “low-grade, labour-intensive and dangerous work”, the report continues, highlighting the hazardous biological and chemical agents they encounter in dangerous environments.

Informal workers most at risk

Insisting that safe sanitation must go hand in hand with a safe and dignified working environment for those who run and maintain the sanitation services that protect our health, the report notes that informal workers are particularly vulnerable, compared even with the rest of the casual sector.

These casual sanitation workers receive poor pay and benefits such as access to healthcare, along with weak enforcement and oversight of laws and policies protecting them, the publication insists.

Because of poor investment and infrastructure, millions of people including children die every year from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene.

According to WHO, poor sanitation alone causes up to 432,000 diarrhoeal deaths annually, and it is also linked to the transmission of other diseases including cholera, dysentery, typhoid, hepatitis A and polio.

Few developing countries have any guidelines

One of [17 objectives](#) agreed by the international community in 2015, Sustainable Development [Goal 6](#) calls for clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene for everyone, everywhere by 2030.

In a bid to promote positive change, the UN agency is helping countries to address the problem by calling for the protection of sanitation workers to be included in national sanitation policies and risk-assessment and management.

The report also highlights where sanitation work has been officially acknowledged and formalized, citing South Africa as an example, where public and private employees follow national labour standards and have proper equipment and training.

“Many of the challenges sanitation workers face stem from their lack of visibility in society,” WHO said, noting that few countries in the developing world had any guidelines to protect sanitation workers. “Where laws do exist, Governments may lack the financial or technical means to implement them, and the informality of the roles presents further challenges.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The UN SDGs over-arching goal is to “Leave No One Behind”. Let’s start with these gutter and sewage cleaners. The actual report makes shocking reading. Why is it that in an age of drones and robotics, humans are still doing this dangerous and degrading work?

LEAD STORY 4:

Four in five adolescents failing to exercise for even 60 minutes a day



Unsplash/Paul Proshin The UN health agency, WHO, is encouraging adolescents to exercise more.

United Nations, 22 November 2019, UN News - An alarming lack of exercise among adolescents across the world risks seriously compromising their health into adulthood, the UN said on Thursday.

In the first study of its kind on global and regional trends among 11 to 17-year-olds, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) said that around 80 per cent of them do less than 60 minutes of activity per day – the minimum daily [recommendation](#).

Philippines boys and South Korean girls ‘least active’

According to the study, the Philippines had the highest inactivity levels among boys, at 93 per cent, while in South Korea, researchers found that 97 per cent of girls failed to do enough exercise.

In gender terms on average, 85 per cent of girls failed to do enough globally, only slightly worse than boys (78 per cent).

“From 2001 to 2016 we found that there’s been no improvement in patterns of activity in this age group...one hour out of their lives each day to be physically active and to get a health benefit from being physically active,” said the WHO study co-author Dr. Leanne Riley. “That can be made up of different small chunks of their time, anything that adds up to 60 minutes.”

No need to push it to get health benefits

Insisting that physical activity needn’t be overly strenuous or vigorous for it to be beneficial, Dr. Riley explained that jogging, walking, cycling or “just trying to be active” can all make a positive difference.

In the long-term, failing to do enough exercise leaves people vulnerable to a range of non-communicable and preventable illnesses, WHO has repeatedly warned.

These non-communicable diseases include heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, breast and colon cancer.

Healthier body – and mind - from exercise

An additional benefit of physical activity is improved mental health, Dr. Riley insisted, highlighting that exercise also promotes learning, delays the onset of dementia and can help maintain a healthy weight.

“If they do it...they’re likely to be healthier adults too,” said the WHO study lead co-author Dr. Regina Guthold, insisting on the importance of establishing healthy habits early on.

According to the study of 1.6 million school-going students from 146 countries, girls were less active than boys in all but four of them: Tonga, Samoa, Afghanistan and Zambia.

The difference between the amount of exercise between boys and girls was greater than 10 per cent in almost a third of countries in 2016, and this trend became more pronounced in almost three-quarters of nations surveyed between

2001 and 2016.

Bangladesh, Singapore, Thailand - most improvements

The countries showing the most improvement in activity levels among boys were Bangladesh (from 73 per cent to 63 per cent), Singapore and Thailand (78 to 70), Benin (79 to 71) and the U.S. and Ireland (71 to 64).

In the case of the US, the study authors noted the likely positive impact of national sports promotion initiatives, although these appeared to have had more success with boys than girls, they said.

Among girls in general the changes in activity levels were small over the review period, the WHO study found, ranging from a two per cent increase in Singapore – from 85 per cent to 83 per cent – to a one per cent increase in Afghanistan (87 per cent to 88 per cent).

Under the 2030 Global Goals Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) adopted in 2015 by the international community, Governments agreed to a 15 per cent improvement in activity levels by 2030.

“We are off-track; this target will not be met if these trends continue,” Dr. Guthold insisted.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This is what is happening to the mobile-phone generation. Kids sitting around glued to the screens of their e-devices. Playgrounds of the future will probably have stationary bikes with supports for attaching the phones, pads and tablets. That may help somewhat.

LEAD STORY 5:

One third of poorer countries face both undernutrition and obesity: WHO report



Public Domain. Fries with cheese: an example of unhealthy food

United Nations, 16 December 2019, UN News - With one in three low and middle-income countries facing the two extremes of malnutrition – undernutrition and obesity – the UN’s health agency WHO is calling for a new approach to deal with rapidly changing food systems.

A new report, published in the British medical science publication *The Lancet* on Monday, suggests that, globally, almost 2.3 billion children and adults are overweight, and more than 150 million children are stunted, and warns that undernutrition and obesity can lead to effects across generations.

“We are facing a new nutrition reality,” said lead author of the report Dr Francesco Branca, Director of the Department of Nutrition for Health and Development at the WHO. “We can no longer characterize countries as low-income and undernourished, or high-income and only concerned with obesity”.

“All forms of malnutrition have a common denominator – food systems that fail to provide all people with healthy, safe, affordable, and sustainable diets. Changing this will require action across food systems – from production and processing, through trade and distribution, pricing, marketing, and labelling, to consumption and waste. All relevant policies and investments must be radically re-examined.”

Fruit, veg, and less meat

The report recommends high-quality diets to restrict both undernutrition and obesity. Elements include optimal breastfeeding practices in the first two years; fruits and vegetables, grains and seeds; cutting back on meat; and avoiding food with high levels of sugar, saturated fat, trans fat, and salt.

However, food systems in many countries are seeing increased availability of ultra-processed foods that are linked to increased weight gain; fewer fresh food markets; and the control of the food chain by supermarkets: eating unhealthy food is increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases, such as type 2 diabetes (now a global epidemic), high blood pressure, stroke, and cardiovascular disease.

Health programmes not fit for purpose

The report declares that action to address malnutrition has historically not taken account key factors, including early-life nutrition, diet quality, socioeconomic factors, and food environments.

In fact, some programmes addressing undernutrition may have unintentionally increased the risk for obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases, in low-income and middle-income countries where food environments are changing rapidly.

Examples of actions that can deal with undernutrition and obesity range from improved antenatal care and breastfeeding practices, to social welfare, and to new agricultural and food system policies which have healthy diets as their primary goal.

The authors of the report called on governments, international organizations and the private sector to invite new areas of society, such as grass-roots organizations, farmers and innovators, to join them in a fresh bid to address the double burden of malnutrition.

“Without a profound food system transformation”, said Dr. Branca, “the economic, social, and environmental costs of inaction will hinder the growth and development of individuals and societies for decades to come.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

You don't need a “futurist” to predict what's going to happen next. This report says it all: *“Food systems in many countries are seeing increased availability of ultra-processed foods that are linked to increased weight gain; fewer fresh food markets; and the control of the food chain by supermarkets: eating unhealthy food is increasing the risk of non-communicable diseases, such as type 2 diabetes (now a global epidemic), high blood pressure, stroke, and cardiovascular disease.”* Looks like the health and wellness sector will have its hands full for decades to come.

LEAD STORY 6:

UN spotlights ‘explosive’ obesity rates, hunger in Latin America and Caribbean



FAO/Ubirajara Machado. Children eat a meal at their school which is taking part in a school feeding programme in Latin America and the Caribbean.

United Nations, 12 November 2019, UN News - Since 1975, adult obesity in Latin America and the Caribbean region has tripled, while one in four are going hungry, according to figures published by the UN on Tuesday.

The [Panorama of Food and Nutritional Security 2019](#), jointly published by a group of UN health agencies, urged countries to take swift action to address the malnutrition issue across the region.

“The explosive increase in obesity, which affects 24 percent of the regional population, about 105 million people - almost double the global level of 13.2 percent - not only has huge economic costs, but also threatens the lives of hundreds of thousands”, said Julio Berdegué, Regional Representative for the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)).

Spotlighting the importance of promoting healthier food environments, the report suggested using taxation and other incentives that favor healthy food, social protection systems, school feeding programmes and the

regulation of food advertising and marketing.

Improving food labeling, ensuring safety and quality of food sold on the street and reformulating ingredients of certain products to ensure nutritional value can also aid the growing problem.

600,000 deaths due to unhealthy food

The fastest growing trend in the region’s food sector is that of ultra-processed food products, increasing the population’s exposure to excessive amounts of sugar, sodium and fat, according to the report.

Every year, 600,000 people in the region die from diet-related diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular illnesses, while inadequate diets are threatening future generations, as the rates of both childhood and adolescent obesity tripled between 1990 and 2016.

Better prices beat healthy choices

As food processing industries dominate the region's food environment, ultra-processed products are more readily available in expanding supermarket chains, and affordability is outweighing more nutritious options, with the poor the hardest hit.

At least 13 countries in the region have taken measures that seek to favor adequate food, and eight have improved advertising regulations, and four have implemented food labeling laws.

"We must act now to reverse this trend and prevent children from suffering the consequences of poor diets on their health and their future quality of life," said Carissa Etienne, Director of

the Pan American Health Organization ([PAHO](#)), which is also [WHO](#)'s Regional Office.

She added that "we need the commitment of the whole society and public policies that regulate unhealthy food products, create environments conducive to physical activity and promote healthy eating at school and at the family table." Tuesday's report stresses that need for social protection programs among other measures that promote food safety and quality essential to improve nutrition.

Today, social protection programmes supply more than 200 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean, roughly a third of the regional population, with breakfast, snacks and lunch, including 85 million schoolchildren.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Another report highlighting the dangers of ultra-processed food products containing excessive sugar, sodium and fat. More shocking stats: *"Every year, 600,000 people in the region die from diet-related diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular illnesses, while inadequate diets are threatening future generations, as the rates of both childhood and adolescent obesity tripled between 1990 and 2016."* Add to that the lack of exercise, and it becomes clear what's looming on the horizon.

LEAD STORY 7:

WHO launches new report on global tobacco use trends



Geneva, World Health Organisation, 19 December 2019 - For the first time, the World Health Organization projects that the number of males using tobacco is on the decline, indicating a powerful shift in the global tobacco epidemic. The findings, published today in a new WHO report, demonstrate how government-led action can protect communities from tobacco, save lives and prevent people suffering tobacco-related harm.

“Declines in tobacco use amongst males mark a turning point in the fight against tobacco,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “For many years now we had witnessed a steady rise in the number of males using deadly tobacco products. But now, for the first time, we are seeing a decline in male use, driven by governments being tougher on the tobacco industry. WHO will continue working closely with countries to maintain this downward trend.”

During nearly the past two decades, overall global tobacco use has fallen, from 1.397 billion in 2000 to 1.337 billion in 2018, or by approximately 60 million people, according to the WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco use 2000-2025 third edition.

This has been largely driven by reductions in the number of females using these products (346 million in 2000 down to 244 million in 2018, or a fall over around 100 million).

Over the same period, male tobacco use had risen by around 40 million, from 1.050 billion in 2000 to 1.093 billion in 2018 (or 82% of the world’s current 1.337 billion tobacco users).

But positively, the new report shows that the number of male tobacco users has stopped growing and is projected to decline by more than 1 million fewer male users come 2020 (or 1.091 billion) compared to 2018 levels, and 5 million less by 2025 (1.087 billion).

By 2020, WHO projects there will be 10 million fewer tobacco users, male and female, compared to 2018, and another 27 million less by 2025, amounting to 1.299 billion. Some 60% of countries have been experiencing a decline in tobacco use since 2010.

“Reductions in global tobacco use demonstrate that when governments introduce and strengthen their comprehensive evidence-based actions, they can protect the well-being of their citizens and communities,” said Dr Ruediger Krech, Director of Health Promotion at WHO.

Despite such gains, progress in meeting the global target set by governments to cut tobacco use by 30% by 2025 remains off track. Based on current progress, a 23% reduction will be achieved by 2025. Only 32 countries are currently on track to reach the 30% reduction target.

However, the projected decline in tobacco use among males, who represent the overwhelming majority of tobacco users, can be built on and used to accelerate efforts to reach to the global target, said Dr Vinayak Prasad, head of WHO’s tobacco control unit.

“Fewer people are using tobacco, which is a major step for global public health,” said Dr Prasad. “But the work is not yet done. Without stepped up national action, the projected fall in tobacco use still won’t meet global reduction targets. We must never let up in the fight against Big Tobacco.”

Other key findings of the report included:

- **Children:** Approximately 43 million children (aged 13-15) used tobacco in 2018 (14 million girls and 29 million boys).
- **Women:** The number of women using tobacco in 2018 was 244 million. By 2025, there should be 32 million fewer women tobacco users. Most gains are being made in low- and middle-income countries. Europe is the region making the slowest progress in reducing tobacco use among females.
- **Asian trends:** WHO’s South East Asian Region has the highest rates of tobacco use, of more than 45% of males and females aged 15 years and over, but the trend is projected to decline rapidly to similar levels seen in the European and Western Pacific regions of around 25% by 2025. The Western Pacific Region, including China, is projected to overtake South East Asia as the region with the highest average rate among men.
- **Trends in the Americas:** Fifteen countries in the Americas are on track to reach the 30% tobacco use reduction target by 2030, making it the best performing of WHO’s six regions.
- **Policy action:** more and more countries are implementing effective tobacco control measures, which are having the desired effect of reducing tobacco use. Tobacco taxes not only help reduce tobacco consumption and health-care costs, but also represent a revenue stream for financing for development in many countries.

Every year, more than 8 million people die from tobacco use, approximately half of its users. More than 7 million of those deaths are from direct tobacco use while around 1.2 million are due to non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. Most tobacco-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, areas that are targets of intensive tobacco industry interference and marketing.

Background notes

The WHO report covers use of cigarettes, pipes, cigars, waterpipes, smokeless tobacco products (like cheroots and kretek) and heated tobacco products. Electronic cigarettes are not covered in the report.

The report supports the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 3.a, which calls for strengthening implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC). The WHO “MPOWER” measures are in line with the WHO FCTC and have been shown to save lives and reduce costs from averted healthcare expenditure, including:

- Monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies.
- Protecting people from tobacco smoke.

- Offering help to quit tobacco use.
- Warning people about the dangers of tobacco.
- Enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.
- Raising taxes on tobacco.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The global campaign to position tobacco usage as a health hazard shows that such campaigns do work in the face of enormous odds, including the well-funded tobacco industry. Today, the Travel & Tourism industry recognises the rights of non-smokers not to be exposed to cigarette smoke. Why can't similar campaigns be conducted to achieve much

LEAD STORY 8:

UN leads bid for cheaper insulin, expanding access for diabetics worldwide



WHO/A. Loke. A health worker checks a diabetic patient's blood sugar levels.

United Nations, 13 November 2019, UN News - Overly expensive insulin could be a thing of the past – and life-changing news – for millions of diabetics under a plan launched by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) on Wednesday to diversify production globally, just ahead of [World Diabetes Day](#).

Announcing the initiative in Geneva, the UN agency said that it had already had informal expressions of interest from pharmaceutical companies looking to produce insulin and have [WHO](#) assess whether it is safe for people to use.

“The simple fact is, that the prevalence of diabetes is growing, the amount of insulin available to treat diabetes is too low, the prices are too high, so we need to do something,” said Emer Cooke, Director of Regulation of Medicines and other Health Technologies at WHO.

Coinciding with the project launch, which comes ahead of World Diabetes Day marked each 14 November, UN [Secretary-General António Guterres highlighted](#) the impact of “catastrophic”

medical expenses on sufferers.

“Diabetes damages health and undermines educational and employment aspirations for many, affecting communities and forcing families into economic hardship”, he said, particularly in low and middle-income countries.

The WHO’s two-year pilot project, unveiled on Wednesday, involves the evaluation of insulin developed by manufacturers to ensure their quality, safety, efficacy and affordability.

Room for expansion of diabetic care

Assuming there is enough interest from manufacturers and, crucially, more insulin available for diabetics, the scheme could be expanded more widely.

“We’re going to look at the number of companies that will apply, we’re going to look at how long it takes, we’re going to look at the outcomes and we’re going to see whether this makes sense and it really is increasing access”, Ms. Cooke said.



The procedure is known as prequalification and WHO has done it in the past for non-brand vaccines, including those used to treat TB, malaria and HIV.

This had resulted in massive savings for sufferers around the world, with 80 per cent of HIV patients now relying on generic products, Ms. Cooke said.

She noted too that some companies had already committed to lowering prices.

HIV drug price plunge led the way

“When (HIV) anti-retrovirals were first produced, the cost per patient per year was \$10,000,” she said. “Once we opened prequalification for generic HIV products, the price went down to \$300 per year.”

She added: “We’re also confident that competition will bring prices down. That way, countries will have a greater choice of products that are more affordable.”

Today, three manufacturers control most of the global market for insulin, which was discovered as a treatment for diabetes in 1921.

The medicine works by lowering blood glucose levels, a task that is usually carried out by natural insulin, which is produced by the pancreas whenever we eat.

The quadrupling in the number of people with diabetes since 1980 – to around 420 million today, mostly in low and middle-income countries - is widely attributed to poor diet and a lack of exercise.

Those with type one diabetes – around 20 million people - need insulin injections to survive, while only around half of the 65 million type-two sufferers who need insulin are able to get it, WHO said.

Diabetics forced to ration insulin

In some countries, prices are so prohibitive that some people are forced to ration their insulin.

This leaves them susceptible to heart attacks, stroke, kidney failure, blindness and lower limb amputations.

And while diabetes was the seventh leading cause of death globally in 2016, the finding is

only worrying because the disease kills people prematurely, said Dr Gojka Roglic, WHO medical officer and diabetes expert.

“We all have to die of something and why not of diabetes - but (only) after celebrating our 90th birthday,” she joked. “The problem with diabetes is that it accounts for a large proportion of premature diabetes – almost half of them occur before 70.”

In low and middle-income countries, the percentage rises to around 60 per cent, Dr Roglic added.

Data collected by WHO from 24 countries on four continents showed that human insulin was available only in 61 per cent of health facilities. The data from 2016-2019 also showed that a month’s supply of insulin costs a worker in Accra, Ghana, more than a fifth of their take-home pay.



Risk factors for type 2 diabetes

Genetics, age and family history of diabetes can increase the likelihood of becoming diabetic and cannot be changed. But some behaviours that increase risk can:



Unhealthy diet



1 in 3 is overweight








Physical inactivity



1 in 10 is obese

KEY ACTIONS

FOR EVERYONE

-  Eat healthily
-  Be physically active
-  Avoid excessive weight gain
-  Check blood glucose if in doubt
-  Follow medical advice

FOR GOVERNMENTS



What you need to know

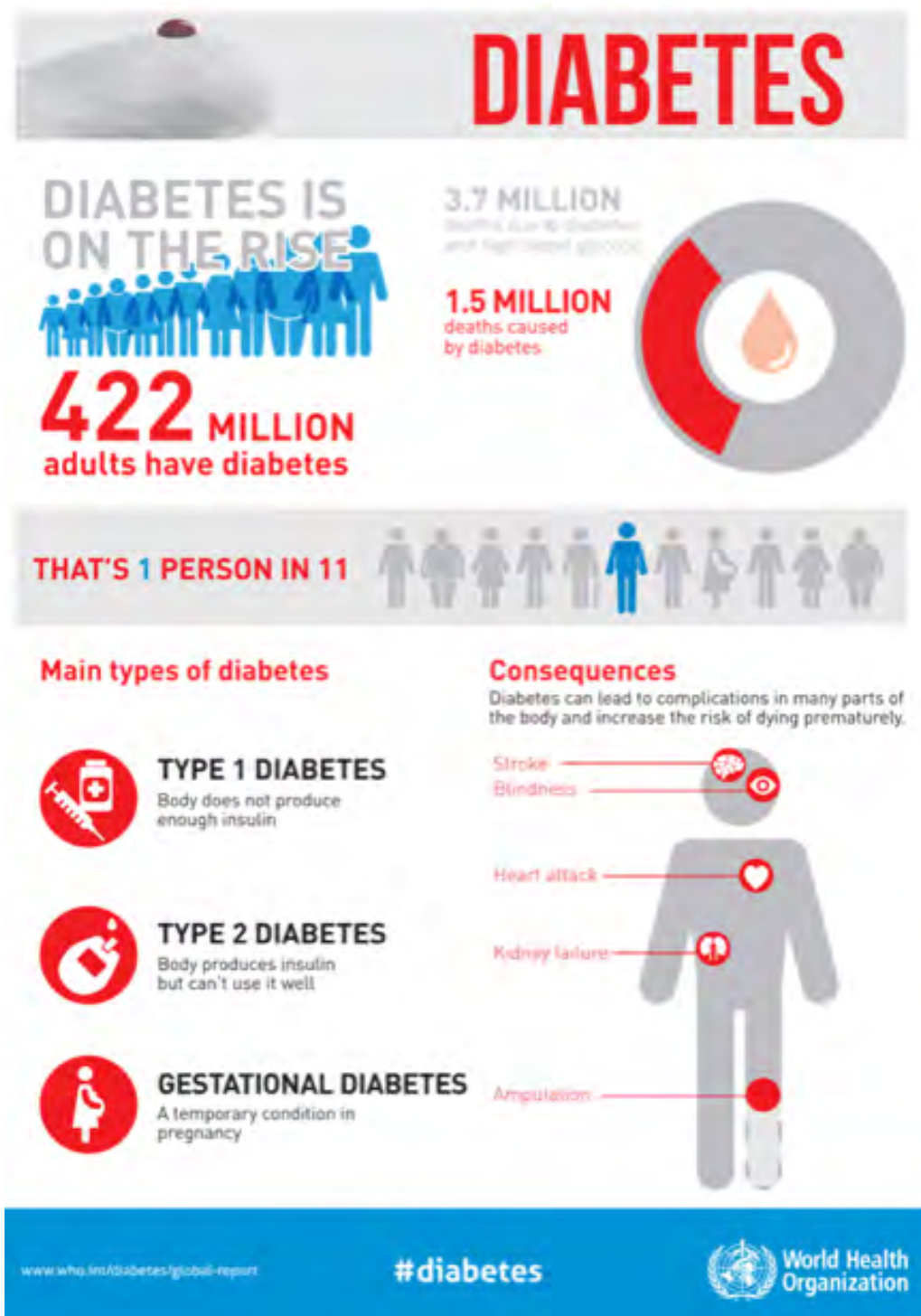
Diabetes is a chronic, metabolic disease characterized by elevated levels of blood glucose (or blood sugar), which leads over time to serious damage to the heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves.

The most common is type 2 diabetes, usually in adults, which occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin or doesn't make enough insulin. In the past three decades the prevalence of type 2 diabetes has risen dramatically in

countries of all income levels.

Type 1 diabetes, once known as juvenile diabetes or insulin-dependent diabetes, is a chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin by itself.

Gestational diabetes is a third type, characterized by hyperglycaemia, or raised blood sugar, with values above normal but below those diagnostic of diabetes, during pregnancy. Women and their children are also at increased risk of type 2 diabetes in the future.



IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Diabetes is just one of the widely prevalent chronic diseases, thanks to imbalanced lifestyles and many other factors. I would suspect that a comprehensive health check of Travel & Tourism employees worldwide would show up some shocking statistics of not just diabetes but a range of associated ailments such as depression, alcoholism, etc.

LEAD STORY 9:

Universal Health Coverage will ‘drive progress’ on 2030 Development Agenda



OCHA/Giles Clarke. An aid worker from the UN refugee agency attends to a baby at a UN-supported health center in the northern region of Burkina Faso.

United Nations, 11 December 2019, UN News - Last September world leaders at the United Nations endorsed an ambitious political declaration on universal health coverage, “reaffirming that health is a human right”, Secretary-General António Guterres [said](#) on Wednesday in his message for [International Universal Health Coverage Day](#).

He called the agreement “a significant achievement that will drive progress over the next decade on the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)” and asked leaders to “keep the promise and ensure health for all is a reality for everyone, everywhere”.

While more people than ever before are accessing essential health services, far too many are still missing out. Coinciding with the Day, the UN is joining an international coalition calling on world leaders to “Keep the Promise” made at the end of [September’s High-Level Meeting](#) on Universal Health Coverage, one of the major summits held during the opening of this year’s General Assembly.

“It is unacceptable and unjust that half of the world’s population still lacks access to these essential services and 100 million people are driven into extreme poverty every year due to healthcare costs”, the UN chief argued.

Health coverage should never depend upon wealth or location.

On the path to health for all, Mr. Guterres highlighted the importance of prioritizing “the needs of those most vulnerable and furthest behind, through increased public investment in resilient primary health care systems, including for mental health needs”.

He also stressed the need to recognize the increasing burden that pollution and the climate crisis place on health and healthcare systems.

“Universal health coverage is integral to delivering the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), our blueprint of a better future for people and planet”, he spelled out



It aims to ensure that all people obtain the health services they need without suffering financial hardship when paying for them.

“On this International Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to health for all as an investment in humanity, wellbeing and prosperity for everyone”, concluded the Secretary-General.

Universal health coverage requires

- A strong, efficient, well-run health system.
- A system for financing health services.
- Access to essential medicines and technologies.
- A sufficient capacity of well-trained, motivated health workers.



IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

What is the level of health coverage in the Travel & Tourism? How do different companies treat their staff? Is there a difference between foreign multinational corporations and locally-owned companies? Between public and the private sectors? How much competitive advantage does it pose for attracting job-seekers? How does it differ from country to country? Well worth researching.

LEAD STORY 10:

Empowering people living with HIV 'will end the epidemic'



© UNICEF/Frank Dejong. In the center of Chad, 19-year-old Achta holds up condoms during an HIV awareness-raising session in her Moussoro community. (March 2019)

United Nations, 26 November 2019, UN News - When people living with HIV actively participate in their own care, new infections decline and more affected people access treatment, according to a new report launched on Tuesday by [UNAIDS](#), the United Nations agency leading the fight against the disease.

[Power to the people](#), released ahead of [World AIDS Day](#) on Sunday, illustrates that when people have the power to choose and work together, lives can be saved, injustices prevented and dignity restored.

“When people and communities have power and agency, change happens,” said [UNAIDS](#) Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima. “The solidarity of women, young people, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who use drugs and transgender people, has transformed the AIDS epidemic – empowering them will end the epidemic.”



Where we stand

Significant progress has been made, particularly in expanding access to treatment. As of mid-2019, an estimated 24.5 million of the 37.9 million people living with HIV were able to access it. Moreover, as treatment roll-out continues, fewer people are dying of AIDS-related illnesses.

However, since 2010, new HIV infections have only slightly declined, while the rise of new cases in some regions is causing mounting concern.

Some 320 children and adolescents died every day from AIDS-related causes in 2018, or 13 every hour, according to a global snapshot on children, HIV and AIDS released by UN Children's Fund [UNICEF](#) on Tuesday.

Low access to antiretroviral treatment, in addition to limited prevention efforts, is a leading cause for these deaths, with only 54 per cent of children up to the age of 14, living with HIV in 2018 – or 790,000 children – receiving lifesaving antiretroviral therapy.

“The world is on the cusp of making great gains in the battle against HIV and AIDS, but we must not rest on the laurels of progress made,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “Neglecting testing and treatment initiatives for children and adolescents is a matter of life and death, and for them, we must choose life.”

African women

In eastern and southern Africa, the region most affected by HIV, the rate of incidences among girls and women between 15 and 24, showed a marked decline between 2010 to 2018.

Nevertheless, the report flags that girls account for four-out-of-five new HIV infections among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa where around half of women and girls aged 15–19, have unmet contraception needs.

Gender inequalities, patriarchal norms, violence, discrimination and limited access to sexual health services exacerbate the HIV risk among adolescent girls and young women, particularly in this region.

“In many parts of the world, significant progress has been made in reducing new HIV infections, reducing AIDS-related deaths and reducing discrimination...but gender inequality and denial of human rights are leaving many people behind”, stressed the [UNAIDS](#) chief.

Each week, some 6,000 young women and girls are infected with HIV.

Moreover, by doing unpaid and often undervalued work – looking after the sick, elderly and disabled – they underpin fragile social support systems that hinder their community involvement in the HIV response.

“This must change”, [UNAIDS stated](#).

Other vulnerable groups

Men who have sex with men, transgender people and sex workers account for at least 75 per cent of new HIV infections, and they are less likely to be on treatment. Furthermore, more than a third do not know their HIV status.

“Social injustices, inequality, denial of citizenship rights and stigma and discrimination are holding back progress against HIV and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#)”, Ms. Byanyima said.



UNAIDS report update on new HIV infections

- Eastern Europe and Central Asia – 29 per cent jump.
- Middle East and North Africa – 10 per cent increase.
- Latin America – 7 per cent rise.

UNAIDS urged all countries to bolster community-led organizations, indicating that sitting at decision-making tables not only

supports the well-being of their communities but also removes barriers.

To better respond to their needs, [UNICEF](#) encouraged governments and partners to improve HIV testing and treatment data for youth.

It pressed for investing in and implementing innovative interventions “to urgently close the persistent testing and treatment gap for children and adolescents living with HIV”.

“The cost of failing to test and treat every child at risk of HIV is one we measure in children’s lives and futures – a cost that no society can afford”, concluded Ms. Fore. “HIV initiatives need to be fully funded and equipped to preserve, protect and improve the quality of life for children, in the first and second decades”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Just as science proves that climate change is a reality, so too is it a proven fact -- as mentioned in this UN dispatch -- that men who have sex with men contributes to the spread of HIV. That is a challenge for Travel & Tourism which is now big on promoting LGBTQ travel. Of course, this topic is taboo at LGBTQ travel forums. Another example of Travel & Tourism’s fondness for sweeping critical issues under the carpet.

LEAD STORY 11:

Legendary Harlem Globetrotters slam-dunk at the UN, with message that brings families, nations together



DGC Visitor Center. Nov. 21, 2019, Harlem Globetrotter made its debut at the UN.

United Nations, 22 November 2019, UN News - You don't have to be from New York or even the United States to be a Harlem Globetrotter. Yet in the team's 93-year history, less than two dozen players have been born overseas, UN News learned, during an impromptu visit by the legendary basketball role models to UN Headquarters this week.

This year, the exhibition team that integrates athletics, theatre and fun into the squad mantra, has for the first time ever signed players from China and Poland to be part of the rookie class of 2020.

Over the years, the Globetrotters have played more than 26,000 exhibition games in 124 countries and territories, showcasing their iconic skills in every corner of the globe.

And each year they dribble and pass their way through more than 450 live events.

Much like the UN, these gifted players often break down cultural and societal barriers – only they do it through fancy footwork and basketball-handling mastery.

In their first-ever visit to the UN, members of the team were given a guided tour, touching on all the highlights, including the General Assembly Hall and the Norman Rockwell Mosaic, "The Golden Rule".

And they also saw a short film about Sports and Development around the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

But the visit was far from one-sided. They dazzled staff and visitors alike with their showmanship and trademark antics on the Visitor's Plaza.



‘A blessing’ to be a Globetrotter

There, UN News caught up with Cherelle “Torch” George, a two-year veteran with the team and the 16th woman to play with the Globetrotters. At 5’3” she’s one of the shortest members in the lineup.

While pointing out that others stand at 6’9” or 6’11”, Torch quickly indicated though that she can “hold her own”.

But how does she feel playing alongside the men? “It’s a dream come true” she spelled out. “Being able to travel the world and make an impact on lives”.

This feisty young woman also saw a correlation between the team and the UN, namely to unite people: “We bring families together, we bring nations together!”, she said, calling it “a blessing” to be able to travel the world and be “ambassadors of goodwill”.

Torch was also enthusiastic to have her first teammates from China and Poland.

‘Adventure of my life’

Speaking to rookie Paweł “Dazzle” Kidoń from Poland, UN News learned that the team discovered him at one of their pre-game Magic Pass meet-and-greets last spring during a tour.

The 5’-11” guard stopped by a ball-handling trick station where, to everyone’s amazement, he put on a display that captivated all – including the Harlem Globetrotters.

His success in making the cut is not lost on this agile young man. When he started doing basketball tricks as a youth, he hoped that one day he would wear a Harlem Globetrotter jersey.

“This is a dream come true for me”, he raved, calling the upcoming tour “the adventure of my life!”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: *Much like the UN, these gifted players often break down cultural and societal barriers – only they do it through fancy footwork and basketball-handling mastery.* As Travel & Tourism is also supposed to be in the business of breaking down cultural and societal barriers, perhaps it can learn a trick or two from the Harlem Globetrotters.

LEAD STORY 12:

Year of the Nurse and the Midwife highlights ‘backbone’ of health systems



UNICEF/Vishwanathan An Auxiliary Nurse Midwife performs critical ante-natal services in Shrawasti, India.

United Nations, 1 January 2020 (UN News) - The world will need an additional nine million nurses and midwives to achieve the commitment of providing all people with access to health care by 2030, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) has warned.

For this reason, the UN agency and its partners will use the coming year to advocate for greater investment in these crucial health workers.

“Nurses and midwives are the backbone of every health system: in 2020 we’re calling on all countries to invest in nurses and midwives as part of their commitment to health for all,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the [WHO](#) Director-General.

The [International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife](#) marks the bicentenary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.

It celebrates professionals who provide a broad range of essential services to people everywhere.

Besides preventing, diagnosing and treating

diseases, and providing expert care during childbirth, nurses and midwives also serve people caught in humanitarian emergencies and conflicts.

Currently, there are 22 million nurses and two million midwives worldwide, accounting for half of the global health workforce, according to WHO.

However, the world requires 18 million more health workers—approximately half of them nurses and midwives—to realize universal health coverage before the end of the decade, in line with a pledge that world leaders made at a [UN meeting](#) in September.

During the year, WHO will push for measures to ensure that nurses and midwives can work to their full potential.

Key areas for investment include employing more specialist nurses, making midwives and nurses central to primary health care, and supporting them in health promotion and disease prevention.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Definining quote: *“They are doing life-saving work every day, including during holidays when the rest of us are with our loved ones at home. But the world needs to do a better job in supporting our health workers, paying them, training them and protecting them”.* I do hope that every Health and Wellness conference, forum and event this year begins by recognising this noble work by the Florence Nightingales of the world.

LEAD STORY 13:

Investing in health workers yields ‘triple dividend’, WHO chief says in New Year’s message



*World Bank/Salahaldeem Nadir
Nurse training in Hamashkoreeb,
Sudan. (file)*

Geneva, 02 Jan 2020, (UN News) - At the start of the new year and new decade, the head of the United Nations health agency thanked “the brave health workers” around the globe and asked that the world do better in supporting them.

“They are doing life-saving work every day, including during holidays when the rest of us are with our loved ones at home”, said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), in his video message for the new year.

“But the world needs to do a better job in supporting our health workers, paying them, training them and protecting them”.

WHO estimates that the world will need another 18 million health workers, mostly in low- and middle-income countries.

He recalled that 2020 is the Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, which celebrates the professionals who provide a wide range of health services “from the first moments of life to the last”.

There are 22 million nurses and two million midwives worldwide, who prevent, diagnose and treat diseases, provide expert care during childbirth and also serve people caught in humanitarian emergencies and conflicts, according to WHO.

“During this year, WHO and our partners will ask countries to improve the education and employment of nurses and midwives”, said the WHO chief.



He also observed that 70 per cent of the global health workforce is female, pointing out that “jobs for health workers are often jobs for women”.

“Investing in health workers pays a triple dividend for health, economic growth and gender equality”, spelled out the WHO Director-General.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

“The world requires 18 million more health workers—approximately half of them nurses and midwives—to realize universal health coverage before the end of the decade.” Quite a tall order. Given the pace of rapidly ageing societies, this is one statistic that is extremely unlikely to be met.

The image features a monochromatic blue color scheme. In the upper half, two women are silhouetted against a lighter blue sky with wispy clouds. They are standing on a grassy bank, performing a yoga pose with one leg extended forward and the other back, and their arms raised above their heads. The lower half of the image shows a calm body of water that perfectly reflects the women and the sky above. The overall mood is serene and minimalist.

SECTION 2



SDG 4:

**Quality education
an 'essential pillar'
of a better future**



SDG 4: Quality education an ‘essential pillar’ of a better future



© UNESCO/Christelle Alix
Secretary-General António Guterres delivers remarks at the 40th General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, France.

United Nations, 12 November 2019, UN News - Education is an “essential pillar” to achieving the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN chief António Guterres told an audience on Tuesday at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO, the UN Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization, ahead of the agency’s [General Conference](#).

Mr. Guterres, who noted that one-fifth of young people are out of work, lack education or adequate training, praised [UNESCO](#)’s fundamental role in coordinating and monitoring global efforts, such as the agency’s initiative on the future of education.

The theme was taken up by Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the UN General Assembly, in his opening remarks to a ministerial meeting on education at the Conference.

Mr. Muhammad-Bande referred to estimates showing that some 265 million children are out of school. The number is projected to fall to 220 million over the next decade, but he declared that the illiteracy figures forecast for 2030 remain a scandal: “We must remove all barriers to education. We must ensure, at a minimum, universal access to basic education for every child, everywhere.”

He also highlighted the importance of educating children effectively, and equipping them with the necessary analytical and critical thinking abilities, in “an ever-changing and more complex world”.

Recalling his former experience as an educator in his home country of Nigeria, Mr. Muhammad-Bande called for more efforts to ensure that teachers are adequately qualified, because “no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers”.

Other important measures cited by the General Assembly President include strong curricula that fully integrate Information and Communications Technology (ICT); ensuring that girls complete at least 12 years of education (which, according to the World Bank, would add some \$30 trillion to the



global economy); and the effective monitoring and evaluation of learning.

Mr. Muhammad-Bande called on nations to meet their commitments to education spending, and for donor countries to increase international aid directed towards education.

‘Powerful agents of change’

As well as the difficulties in accessing quality education, Mr. Guterres also outlined several other challenges faced by young people: the fact that millions of girls become mothers while they are still children; that one quarter are affected by violence or conflict; and that online bullying and harassment are adding to high levels of stress, which see some 67,000 adolescents die from suicide or self-harm every year.

World leaders, and others who wield power, he continued, must treat young people not as subjects to be protected, but as powerful agents for change, and the role of the powerful is not to solve the enormous challenges faced by young people, but rather to give them the tools to tackle their problems.

Mr Guterres underscored the importance of bringing young people to the table as key partners, and praised UNESCO’s efforts to include their voices, which include holding a major event at the General Conference, and the [Youth Forum](#).

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: *Mr. Muhammad-Bande referred to estimates showing that some 265 million children are out of school. The number is projected to fall to 220 million over the next decade, but he declared that the illiteracy figures forecast for 2030 remain a scandal: “We must remove all barriers to education. We must ensure, at a minimum, universal access to basic education for every child, everywhere.”* Another great project for Travel & Tourism companies seeking valuable CSR project ideas



SDG 5:

**Nairobi summit:
Women's
empowerment
a 'game changer'
for sustainable
development**



SDG 5: Nairobi summit: Women's empowerment a 'game changer' for sustainable development



United Nations, 12 November 2019, UN News - The global goal of a sustainable future for all cannot be achieved until women, girls and young people gain control over their own bodies and lives, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told world leaders meeting in Nairobi on Tuesday.

The Kenyan capital is hosting a [three-day summit](#) to mark 25 years since the landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

The conference, held in Cairo, produced a Programme of Action which recognized that reproductive health, women's empowerment and gender equality are critical to sustainable development.

Ms. Mohammed said it must be carried forward: "Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and upholding women's rights is a game changer - for poverty-reduction, inclusive growth, democratic governance, peace and justice," she said.

"The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) cannot be achieved until women, girls and young people are able to control their bodies and their lives, and live free of violence. The power to choose the number, timing and spacing of children is a human right that can bolster economic and social development."

SDGs deadline approaching

For Ms. Mohammed, the Nairobi Summit is also an opportunity to mobilize political and financial momentum towards realizing the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015.

Next year will see the start of a Decade of Action ahead of the 2030 deadline.

"We must continue to work even harder towards preventable maternal and child mortality, achieving the unmet need for family planning, and eliminating violence and harmful practices against women and girls everywhere, not least in humanitarian and fragile settings," the UN

deputy chief told the gathering.

As too many are still being left behind, Ms. Mohammed called for action.

“Hundreds of millions of women and girls are still waiting for the promise to be kept. They have been waiting long enough,” she said.

“It’s time for urgent and transformative change as we enter the decade of action to 2030.

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ICPD, the UN committed on Tuesday to:

- Uphold the human rights of all people, including their right to sexual and reproductive health.
- Intensify system-wide efforts to eliminate all preventable maternal and child mortality,
- to eradicate gender-based violence against women, girls and youth, and to eliminate the unmet need for family planning that constrains the rights and wellbeing of millions of women and young people,
- Support investments in adolescents and youth that uphold their rights,
- Support governments in the full and accelerated implementation of the ICPD agenda, in line with implementation of the SDGs,
- Ensure that no one is left behind, and that we reach the furthest behind first,
- Incorporate the outcomes of the Nairobi Summit as an integral component in the Decade of Action to deliver on the SDGs.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

As employees, consumers and travellers, women are critical to the survival of Travel & Tourism. They face many challenges ranging from safety & security, to working conditions, to imbalanced pay scales to sexual harassment. Yet, industry forums are loathe to put these issues seriously on the table. Why?



SDG 5:

**25 years on
from landmark
conference, millions
of women and girls
still in danger**



SDG 5: 25 years on from landmark conference, millions of women and girls still in danger



United Nations, 11 November 2019, UN News - The UN Deputy Secretary-General has called for gender equality, women's empowerment and women's rights to be integrated at the heart of global efforts to achieve a sustainable future for all.

[Amina Mohammed](#) was [speaking on Monday](#) in Nairobi, where countries are meeting this week to mark 25 years since the International Conference on Population and Development ([ICPD](#)).

The landmark gathering held in Cairo concluded with a Programme of Action “that placed individual dignity and human rights, including the right to plan one's family, at the very heart of development”, according to the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)).

Leaders reneging on Cairo promises

Ms. Mohammed acknowledged that although “significant gains” have been made since its adoption, progress is fragile and millions are being left behind.

“The world is still a difficult, and often dangerous, place for hundreds of millions of women and girls,” she stated.

“To make it even more complex, leaders across constituencies are reneging the promise of Cairo, the promise to secure a just future for our youth especially our girls.”

The UN deputy chief outlined some of the tragedies that befall women and girls across the world, including dying during childbirth and being forced into early marriage.

At the same time, five million pregnant women displaced by conflict or disaster require medical care, while more than 230 million women worldwide cannot prevent pregnancy because “they do not have



access to the contraceptives they need and have a right to.”

Ms. Mohammed said the Programme of Action “has never been more relevant” in the current era of urbanization, increased migration, and rising population.

“We urgently need to mobilize political and financial momentum to advance the ICPD agenda, particularly around harnessing the demographic dividend, reducing preventable maternal and child mortality and the unmet need for family planning, and eliminating violence and harmful practices against women and girls,” she said.

Rights experts highlight fundamentalist opposition

Twenty-four independent UN human rights experts are also pressing countries to reaffirm their commitments and “fulfil the ambitious commitments” made in Cairo.

“The push back against women’s rights from religious fundamentalists and political conservatives that oppose women’s rights are particularly acute in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights,” they said in a statement.

“Despite States’ clear human rights obligations in these areas, the strong opposition discourse seeks to retreat from the ambitions of the ICPD agenda, challenging women’s right to equality and relegating a woman’s role to only the family and procreation”.

Women’s empowerment central to sustainable development

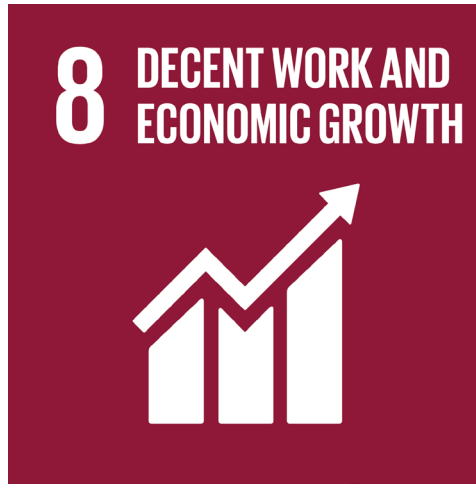
Four years ago, world leaders meeting at the UN adopted the [Sustainable Development Goals](#)(SDGs) to create a more equitable and just world by 2030.

This will only be possible when the promise made to millions of women and girls 25 years ago is fulfilled, according to Ms. Mohammed.

“So, as we enter a Decade of Action for the delivery of the SDGs, let us seize this opportunity to build momentum and firmly integrate gender equality, women’s empowerment and women’s rights at the heart of our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda,” she said.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: Ms. Mohammed said the Programme of Action “has never been more relevant” in the current era of urbanization, increased migration, and rising population. “We urgently need to mobilize political and financial momentum to advance the ICPD agenda, particularly around harnessing the demographic dividend, reducing preventable maternal and child mortality and the unmet need for family planning, and eliminating violence and harmful practices against women and girls,” she said. That alone sets the agenda for a potential sub-conference within Travel & Tourism to advance the cause.



SDG 8:

**Multilateralism must
weather 'challenges
of today and
tomorrow'**



SDG 8: Multilateralism must weather ‘challenges of today and tomorrow’



AGORA

UNESCO/Christelle Alix.
Secretary-General António
Guterres delivers remarks
at the Paris Peace Forum
in Paris, France.

United Nations, 11 November 2019, UN News - In a speech to the [Paris Peace Forum](#) in Paris on Monday, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said that to thrive, multilateralism had to adapt, mindful that “conflicts persist, creating suffering and displacement: our world is unsettled”. He was speaking as commemorations took place in countries across the world, marking the official end of the First World War, in 1918.

Drawing parallels with the geopolitical landscape in the early 20th Century, Mr. Guterres described today’s world as neither bipolar, unipolar, nor multipolar, but rather “chaotic and uncertain”.

Prevention ‘more indispensable than ever’

Today, he said, conflicts are not between sovereign States, but rather consist of asymmetrical conflicts, in which countries are often pitted against non-State actors.

When third-party states interfere, these conflicts take on a regional dimension, continued Mr.

Guterres, at a time when relations between the most powerful countries are dysfunctional, and with a Security Council that is frequently paralysed.

The UN chief declared that conflict prevention is more indispensable than ever, citing growing links to a new form of global terrorism, as seen in Libya and the Lake Chad region, and the danger of nuclear proliferation. He called for the root causes to be addressed, as well as the prevention of new tensions and conflicts.

Mr. Guterres explained that international cooperation is the only way to solve these issues, which is why crisis prevention and mediation, as well as a framework for fighting violent extremism, and reinforcing peace and international security, are at the heart of his UN reforms.

Five fault-lines that threaten the world

The world is facing five major risks, declared



the Secretary-General. Firstly, an economic, technological and geostrategic fault line. This sees the planet divided in two, with the two largest economies dividing the world between them, each imposing their own financial and economic rules on their spheres of influence.

“We must do all we can to avoid this ‘Great Fracture’ and preserve a global system, a universal economy that respects international law, a multipolar world with solid multilateral institutions”.

The second risk lies in the social contract between citizens and governments, leading to a wave of demonstrations around the world, said Mr Guterres, which demonstrates a growing distrust in institutions and political leaders. “The people are suffering”, he declared, “and want to be heard”.

This leads to a third risk, said the UN chief: a solidarity gap, and rise in inward-looking attitudes, in which the most vulnerable –

minorities, refugees, migrants, women and children – are the first to suffer:

“Fear of foreigners is being used for political ends. Intolerance and hatred are becoming commonplace. People who have lost everything are being blamed for all the world’s ills. This exacerbates the polarization of political life and the risk of divided societies”.

The fourth risk, Mr. Guterres spelled out, is the climate crisis, a “race against time for the survival of our civilization, a race that we are losing”. The UN chief described record temperatures, receding icecaps, expanded deserts, and destructive storms, such as those he has witnessed as UN chief in Dominica, Mozambique and the Bahamas

It’s not too late to act

“If we fail to act now”, said Mr. Guterres, “history will remember that we had all the means needed

to fight back, but that we chose to do nothing”.

However, he continued, solutions exist and if countries find the political will to act, honour pledges to cut emissions, and mobilize funding for sustainable development, catastrophe can be averted.

A technological divide, declared Mr. Guterres, is the fifth emerging global fault-line, because, whilst new technology has the potential to be a powerful tool for peace and sustainable development, it can also increase risk and accelerate inequalities.

Solutions outlined by the Secretary-General include education systems that integrate lifelong learning, because “we must no longer simply learn, but learn how to learn.”

Overcome hate, together

Turning to the rise of hate speech and the manipulation of information, Mr. Guterres said that he plans to make the UN a place in which governments, companies, researchers and civil society can meet to “define together the red lines and best practice rules”.

The threat of cyber-attacks and a new “cyber-arms” race involving killer robots and autonomous weapons must also be tackled, warned Mr. Guterres, who said that “machines that have the power and discretion to kill without human intervention are politically unacceptable

and morally despicable”.

The world must instead ensure, said the UN chief, that artificial intelligence is used to guarantee that everyone can live in dignity, peace and prosperity.

Multilateralism must “adapt to challenges of today and tomorrow”

The Secretary-General concluded his speech with a vision of multilateralism, that can adapt to the challenges of today and tomorrow, and make the UN more effective and agile.

Multilateralism, he said, must be networked, and close to the people, working hand in hand with regional organizations, but also with international financial institutions, development banks and specialized agencies.

It must also be inclusive, he added, with the full participation of civil society, including young people, business, academic and philanthropic circles, and tackle gender equality, an issue that the UN is addressing, with a strategy to achieve parity well before 2030.

The UN chief called for a “sustained strategic vision” to solve the world’s interdependent and long-term challenges, noting that the international community has shown, in the past, that it can come together and rise to the occasion: “So let us fight, fight and not give up”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The Five Risks outlined by the UN Secretary General are all equally applicable to Travel & Tourism, and pose a clear and present danger to its survival. On the bright side, Travel & Tourism can also be a part of the solution. The industry needs to start taking them very, very seriously – both comprehensively and urgently.



SDG 10:

**Inequality
threatening human
development, new
global UN report**



SDG 10: Inequality threatening human development, new global UN report



UNDP 2019 Human Development Report says business as usual will not solve new generation of inequalities.

United Nations, 9 December 2019, UN News - Despite global progress in tackling poverty, hunger and disease, a “new generation of inequalities” indicates that many societies are not working as they should, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) argues [in its latest report](#) released on Monday.

The 2019 Human Development Report (HDR) states that just as the gap in basic living standards is narrowing for millions of people, inequalities surrounding education, and around technology and climate change, have sparked demonstrations across the globe.

Left unchecked, they could trigger a ‘new great divergence’ in society of the kind not seen since the Industrial Revolution, according to the report.

“This Human Development Report sets out how systemic inequalities are deeply damaging our society and why,” said Achim Steiner, the UNDP Administrator.

“Inequality is not just about how much someone earns compared to their neighbour. It is about the unequal distribution of wealth and power: the entrenched social and political norms that are bringing people onto the streets today, and the triggers that will do so in the future unless something changes. Recognizing the real face of inequality is a first step; what happens next is a choice that each leader must make.”

‘Inequality not beyond solutions’

Mr. Steiner added crucially that “inequality is not beyond solutions”.

The human development approach views “richness” as going beyond the idea that economic growth will automatically lead to development and wellbeing.



It focuses on people, and their opportunities and choices.

UNDP research shows that in 2018, 20 per cent of human development progress was lost due to the unequal distribution of education, health and living standards.

“What used to be ‘nice-to-haves’, like going to university or access to broadband, are increasingly important for success, but left only with the basics, people find the rungs knocked out of their ladder to the future,” said Pedro Conceição, Director of the HDR Office at UNDP.

Invest in education, productivity, public spending

The report recommends revamped policies in the areas of education, productivity and public spending.

As inequality begins even before birth and can accumulate through adulthood, investing in young children’s learning, health and nutrition is key. These investments must continue throughout life as they have an impact on earnings and productivity in the labour market.

UNDP observed that countries with a more productive workforce generally have a lower concentration of wealth at the top, which is enabled by policies that support stronger unions, the right to a minimum wage, social protection and which bring more women into the workplace.

The report further highlights the role of taxation, which cannot be looked at on its own. Rather, fair taxation should lie behind policies that include greater public spending on health, education and greener energy alternatives.

Beyond today

As the UNDP chief noted, “Different triggers are bringing people onto the streets -- the cost of a train ticket, the price of petrol, demands for political freedoms, the pursuit of fairness and justice. This is the new face of inequality”.

Looking to the future, the report asks how inequality might be viewed years down the line, especially in relation to “two seismic shifts” that will shape the next century.

Those are the climate crisis, and the progress of the technological transformation that includes renewables and energy efficiency, digital finance and digital health solutions.

The report calls for opportunities to be “seized quickly and shared broadly”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travel & Tourism is a proven income distributor and job creator. Hence, it can verifiably claim to be a major contributor towards reduced inequalities. But, as this report points out, *“Inequality is not just about how much someone earns compared to their neighbour. It is about the unequal distribution of wealth and power: the entrenched social and political norms that are bringing people onto the streets today, and the triggers that will do so in the future unless something changes.”* Clearly, this sets a completely new agenda for change that goes well beyond measuring economic impact of tourism.



SDG 10:

**At this ‘critical
moment’,
UN chief urges
anti-corruption
conference to adopt
united front**



SDG 10: At this ‘critical moment’, UN chief urges anti-corruption conference to adopt united front



World Bank/Chhor Sokunthea. A gamma ray scanner station of the Sihanoukville Port in Cambodia is being used to detect illegal items in container vans.

United Nations, 16 December 2019, UN News - As we enter the Decade of Action to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the world must “unite against corruption” to stop precious resources from being drained by illicit financial flows, an international conference on the issue heard on Monday in Abu Dhabi.

“You meet at a critical moment”, [said](#) Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), on behalf of [Secretary-General António Guterres](#), addressing the [UN Convention Against Corruption](#) in the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

The world’s primary anti-corruption summit began with a call to advance efforts to prevent and combat corruption to achieve the SDGs: “Through corrupt practices, trillions of dollars are diverted every year from schools, hospitals and other essential services and infrastructure”, spelled out Mr. Fedotov, underscoring that “action against corruption...is crucial to reducing

inequalities, promoting inclusive growth and addressing the climate crisis”.

The anti-corruption chief maintained that fighting corruption can prevent criminal traffickers from “exploiting human misery and plundering natural resources”.

Looking ahead to 2021, when the first-ever General Assembly Special Session on ending corruption will convene, he urged everyone to make the fight a “top priority”.

Loopholes that allow financial assets to illegally cross borders, and public funds to be laundered and embezzled, help fuel large-scale corruption.

Mr. Fedotov stressed that “international cooperation is fundamental”.

As corruption threatens the well-being of societies, the future of children and the health of the planet, “it must be fought by all, for all”, he concluded.

Measures to fight corruption:

- - Strengthen law enforcement and criminal justice.
 - Partner with the financial sector and businesses to increase accountability and transparency.
 - Engage more with civil society.
 - Support young people in their demand for accountability, justice and a fair future.

Sinister enabler

Preventing and combatting corruption offers “a key to unlock progress towards ending poverty and inequalities, protecting health and planet, and strengthening justice and the rule of law”, Mr. Fedotov [said](#) in his own address, describing it as “the sinister enabler of some of the worst problems we face”.

He added that “by preventing and curbing corruption, we can nip corruption’s contribution to instability in the bud”, stopping it “from prolonging conflict and spoiling peace”.

The top UN official argued that the international convention “offers a genuine chance to agree new approaches and seek innovative solutions to corruption threats facing all our countries”.

In what he acknowledged to be the last time he addressed the Conference as [UNODC](#) Executive Director, he concluded by saying, “we are on the cusp of a new decade, with renewed hope that together we can win this fight”.

About the Convention

With 186 parties, the Convention against Corruption, is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument.

It came into force in December 2005 and has

been [ratified](#) by most UN Member States, with the newest being Samoa, Equatorial Guinea and Chad in 2018.

The Convention covers various forms of corruption, including bribery, trading in influence, abuse of functions, as well as corruption in the private sector.

Under the Convention, States are legally obliged to prevent and criminalize corruption; promote international cooperation; recover and return stolen assets; and improve technical assistance and information exchange in both the private and public sectors.

Every two years, its States parties meet to review implementation and discuss how corruption can better be tackled.

In addition to reviewing its core mandates, the week-long eighth session will deliberate on preparations for the 2021 Special Session next year in New York.



IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Yes, there is plenty of corruption in Travel & Tourism – from advertising contracts to purchasing, bidding for conventions to duty-free monopolies. The broader impact is well worth studying further.



SDG 13:

**COP25: Support
business efforts
to tackle climate
change, urges
Guterres**



SDG 13: COP25: Support business efforts to tackle climate change, urges Guterres



UNFCCC UN Secretary-General António Guterres (centre) addresses the high-level meeting on Caring for Climate at the UN Climate Change Conference COP25 in Madrid.

United Nations, 11 December 2019, UN News - The UN Secretary-General has called on business and civil society leaders to press Governments into articulating policies that support private sector efforts to address climate change.

António Guterres issued the charge on Wednesday in a speech to the annual Caring for Climate Meeting, held during the on-going UN COP25 climate conference in Madrid.

“I’m meeting more and more business leaders that complain that they cannot do more because governments will not allow them to do so, because of the environment that is still created in the bureaucratic, administrative, tax regulatory and other frameworks that are under government control”, he said.

Business sector fights climate change

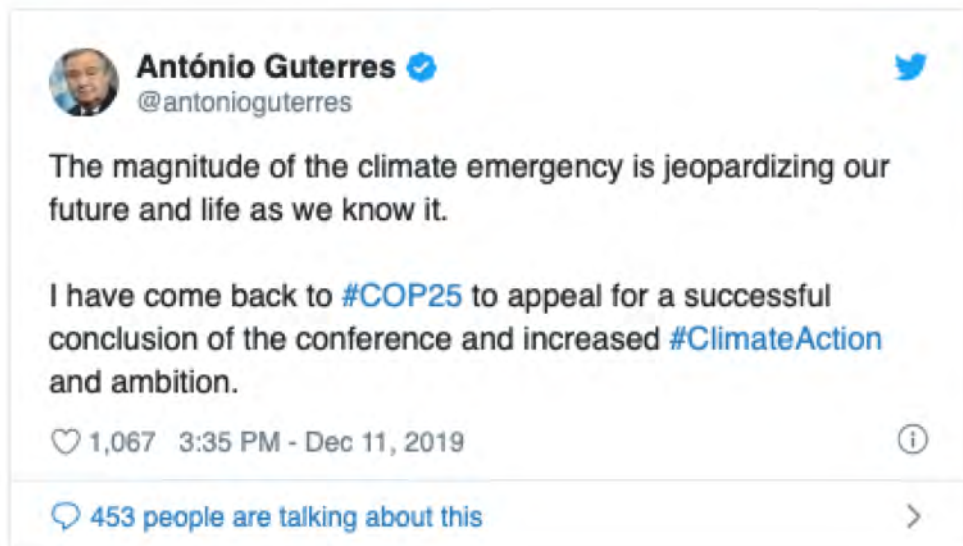
[Caring for Climate](#) mobilizes business leaders to implement and recommend solutions and policies to beat climate change.

It was launched in 2007 and is convened by the [UN Global Compact](#), the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)), and the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)).

With the climate crisis increasingly jeopardizing life on the planet, the Secretary-General stressed that more collective action will be needed from governments, regions, cities,

“While we see some incremental steps towards sustainable business models, it is nowhere near the scope or scale required”, he said.

“What we need is not an incremental approach, but a transformational approach. And we need



businesses to unite behind the science by taking rapid and ambitious action across their operations and value chains.”

The “science” refers to the goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, in line with the 2015 [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

This will require reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming, by 45 per cent by 2030, and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

Business and finance cannot act alone

Business and financial leaders have been doing their part to beat climate change, as the Secretary-General acknowledged.

He was encouraged that 170 major companies have committed to set scientific, verifiable emission reduction targets through the ‘Business Ambition for 1.5 degrees’ campaign.

However, he said the business and financial sectors cannot act alone.

Next year, many governments will present plans to reduce their emissions, in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement. Mr. Guterres forecast that these enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions ([NDCs](#)) will include carbon neutral strategies and green initiatives in sectors such as energy, industry, construction and transport.

“In support of these efforts, I am calling on you, leaders from the private sector and civil society, to challenge your Governments to use this opportunity to make clear their economic development policies that will enable your companies to invest decisively in a net-zero future,” he said.

The UN chief added that millions worldwide, particularly young people, recognize that more must be done to limit the worst impacts of climate disruption.

“That’s why they are calling on leaders from all sectors to do exponentially more to address the climate emergency,” he said. “We are quickly nearing our last opportunity to be on the right side of history.”

In his speech to the COP’s high-level event, the Secretary-General urged the world’s biggest emitters to do more on climate.

“If we do not reach carbon neutrality by 2050, all our current efforts to promote sustainable development will be undermined,” he said.

Mr. Guterres also laid out 10 priorities to tackle the climate crisis. They including securing commitments from the main emitters of more ambitious national commitments by 2020, ensuring that all governments follow the example of the 75 countries that committed to coming forward by next year with net zero emissions strategies for 2050, and ensuring that national commitments include a just transition for people whose jobs and livelihoods are affected in the transition to a green economy.



UNFCCC Youth climate activist, Greta Thunberg, addresses the high-level meeting on Caring for Climate at the UN Climate Change Conference COP25 in Madrid.

Greta Thunberg's visit

The teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg was at the UN conference on Wednesday, urging participants to focus on the science behind climate change.

She explained it was important to keep to the 1.5-degree threshold “because even at one degree, people are dying from the climate crisis.”

“Because that is what the united science calls for, to avoid destabilizing the climate so that we have the best possible chance to avoid setting off irreversible chain reactions such as melting glaciers, polar ice and thawing arctic permafrost. Every fraction of a degree matters.”

Ms. Thunberg [told world leaders](#) at the UN's Climate Action Summit in September that they were “failing” her generation, by not taking action to ease the climate crisis fast enough, and on Wednesday, the 16-year-old Swede who founded the school strike movement, was named by TIME magazine as their 2019 Person of the Year.

The UN Secretary-General has welcomed this acknowledgement of young people's role in climate action, his deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq told journalists in New York.

“As I understand it, this is a recognition of the effect that youth have been having on this debate, and the Secretary-General has been very clear about the need for the world's leaders to listen to youth. It is their world that we are currently damaging through our inaction and our delayed action.

On day, they will be the inheritors of the world that we have left for them, and we need to make sure at we have done right by them. And it's good to see recognition, both of the powerful role they can have when they make their voices heard and of the importance of listening to them,” he said.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This is one area where Travel & Tourism is doing more than its fair share, and rightly so. The benchmarks need to be simultaneously matched and raised right across all the other 17 SDGs, too.



SDG 13:

**Calls for
'green and clean'
development
for Africa**



SDG 13: Calls for ‘green and clean’ development for Africa



*UNDP/Louis Fourmentin.
As part of a UNDP-led
green renovation project,
technicians install
solar panels at a police
academy in Rajaf, South
Sudan. (21 August 2018)*

United Nations, 20 November 2019, UN News - As African countries gear up to implement an historic free trade agreement, the UN Secretary-General is urging leaders to pursue economic growth that benefits both people and the planet.

António Guterres made the appeal in his message for [Africa Industrialization Day](#), observed annually on 20 November.

The UN chief said industrial development is “of critical importance” for sustained and inclusive economic growth in African countries. While manufacturing on the continent has been growing faster than the world average, he said it will need to speed up.

Launched last year, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement is expected to usher in a market of at least \$3 trillion and a consumer base of more than one billion.

At the same time, the manufacturing sector is projected to double by 2025, creating millions of jobs.

“I call on African countries to adopt a holistic

approach to industrial policy, pursuing, through stronger multi-stakeholder partnerships, green and clean industrialization strategies that promote equitable economic opportunities and take into account the urgency of addressing the climate crisis,” said Mr. Guterres.



The Secretary-General underscored international commitment to Africa's sustainable development, with the UN General Assembly proclaiming the period from 2016-2025 the [Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa](#)

As a result, the UN Industrial Development

Organization ([UNIDO](#)) will scale up technical assistance to countries on the continent.

The agency also will partner with other UN entities on initiatives in areas such as technology transfer, agribusiness value chain development, renewable energy and development of special economic zones and industrial parks.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Africa is today the target of the latest Gold Rush. Unfortunately, it is blindly and uncritically adopting the same "development model" as Asia, and will fall victim to the same manipulations and boom-and-bust cycles. Sadly, there seems to be little appetite for learning from Asia's mistakes.

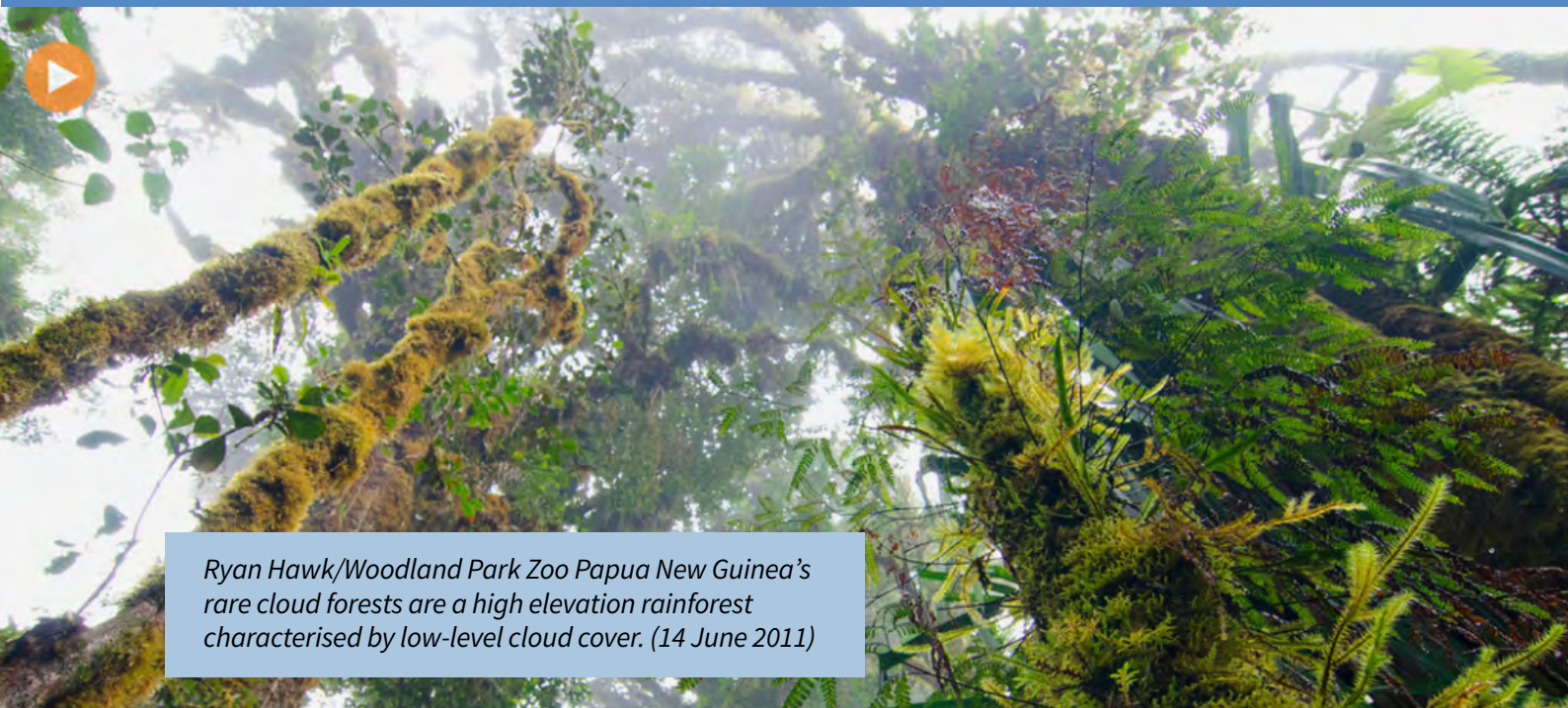


SDG 13:

**New UN forestry
project bids to help
countries meet
climate change
commitments**



SDG 13: New UN forestry project bids to help countries meet climate change commitments



Ryan Hawk/Woodland Park Zoo Papua New Guinea's rare cloud forests are a high elevation rainforest characterised by low-level cloud cover. (14 June 2011)

United Nations, 11 November 2019, UN News - More than two dozen countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America are set to benefit from a UN project to help tackle climate change through better forestry management.

Under the scheme, announced on Monday by the Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), 26 nations will soon be able to provide improved data on forest and land use – a key [pledge](#) of all State signatories to the [Paris Climate Agreement](#).

Accurate monitoring of forest and land use is essential if countries are to track progress towards the sustainability goals ([SDGs](#)) as they adopt climate change-mitigation and adaptation measures, [FAO explained](#).

Forests provide security, income

“Forests are more than trees and fundamental for food security and improved livelihoods”, [FAO](#) said in a statement.

“They contribute to resilience of communities by regulating water flows, providing food, wood energy, shelter, fodder and fibre, generate income and employment as well as harbour biodiversity. Furthermore, forests support sustainable agriculture and human wellbeing by stabilizing soils and climate.”

The \$7.1 million initiative is being implemented by [FAO](#) and national officers, who already support 70 countries with forest-monitoring to ensure more sustainable land management.

The data gathered on the status of the world's forest resources is available via [FAO's Global Forest Resources Assessment \(FRA 2020\)](#) reporting platform.

Welcoming the launch of the project, Hiroto Mitsugi, from the agency's Forestry Department, explained that many developing countries are unable to generate reliable forest data to highlight their "climate achievements".



"This project will provide an essential platform for more transparent forest-related data, helping countries to compile, analyse and disseminate better data in line with the [Paris Agreement](#)'s requirements," he said.

In concrete terms, the scheme will support an e-learning course on transparency in the forest sector for national forestry staff.

The course will also be made available more widely, to universities, the private sector and intergovernmental organizations, FAO said.

[Reached](#) on 12 December 2015, the Paris Agreement calls on countries to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low-carbon future.

To date, 187 Parties have ratified the Agreement, out of 197 Parties to the United Nations Framework [Convention](#) on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)). The United States formally announced its withdrawal just last week.

The Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping global temperature rise this century to well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Countries are also expected to pursue efforts to limit the planet's temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius and invest in ways to strengthen their ability to deal with the impacts of climate change.

All Parties to the Agreement are also required to implement "nationally determined contributions" ([NDCs](#)) and to strengthen these efforts in the years ahead.

This includes requirements that all Parties report regularly on their emissions and on their implementation efforts and participate in a global stock take every five years to assess progress.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Can Travel & Tourism launch a global forest conservation and replanting campaign. Today, the overarching focus is on curbing plastic usage and preventing food waste. All noble efforts, for sure. But still failing to embrace far more important priorities.



SDG 13:

‘Embrace the transformation’ to a carbon-neutral world by 2050



SDG 13: ‘Embrace the transformation’ to a carbon-neutral world by 2050



*ILO/Marcel Crozet.
Solar panels provide clean
energy to many Zambians.
(file 2015)*

United Nations, 12 December 2019, UN News - With millions of workers increasingly affected by the climate crisis the route to securing livelihoods in the future lies in a wholesale transformation of how we power the planet and manage our resources, the UN chief said on Thursday, at a COP25 climate action event focused on greener jobs.

“We are still losing the climate race”, [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said in Madrid, “but we can choose another path, the path of climate action and well-being for people and planet”, which is about jobs, health, education, opportunities and the future.

He maintained that the answer to the climate crisis “lies in transforming how we generate our power, design our cities, and manage our land”, but it also requires actions “consistent with making people’s lives better”.

The [Paris Agreement](#) agreed in 2015 included “a just transition” for people whose jobs and livelihoods are impacted by moving “from the grey economy to the green”, he noted, part of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#)(SDGs).

“We can no longer refuse to face up to the climate crisis”, he spelled out, urging governments to commit, businesses to lead and people everywhere to “embrace the transformation that will bring us to a carbon-neutral world by 2050”.



New Climate Economy

Mr. Guterres spoke encouragingly about “enormous opportunities” linked to climate action.

According to the UN chief, shifting to a low-carbon economy represents a \$26 trillion-dollar growth opportunity that could create 65 million new jobs by 2030 – with solar, wind and geothermal energy already being the fastest-growing job creators in several economies.

“The green economy is the economy of the future and we need to make way for it right now”, he stated, encouraging countries to re-train people so they can “switch careers with the concept that education now became a lifelong enterprise”.

Stressing that the transition to a low-carbon future be “fair and inclusive”, he said that this means “a future of green and decent jobs... of thriving, resilient communities, cities and countries.”

Climate Action for Jobs

Meanwhile, the [Climate Action for Jobs](#) initiative, which the UN chief launched at the conference with Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)), puts job creation and livelihoods at the centre of national climate action plans, the UN chief enumerated measures to ensure inclusivity, such as assessing the employment, social and economic impacts of ecological transition and the potential of green jobs.

He underscored that economic growth and tackling climate change are “mutually reinforcing”, adding that “failing to tackle global heating is a sure-fire recipe for economic disaster”.

Cleaner, greener future for all

Detailing the need to “reduce emissions 45 per cent by 2030 from 2010 levels, achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and stabilize global temperature rise at 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century”, Mr. Guterres said the Paris Agreement must be used as “our multilateral path forward”.

Without achieving our climate goals, the Secretary-General maintained that only the richest would survive.

And because “we cannot continue to have one foot in both the grey and the green economies at the same time”, he underlined that developed nations must fulfil their pledges under the Paris Agreement to mobilize at least \$100 billion dollars a year for mitigation and adaptation in developing nations.

Decisive challenge of our time

For his part, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder told delegates that greening the world of work was “the defining and decisive challenge of our time.”

He called for “a jobs-and-human-centred policy agenda for climate action, based on country-level assessments, innovative social protection and strong consensus” saying the initiative “can make a major contribution” to this.

Moreover, it will focus on three inter-related, complimentary areas of advocacy and outreach; a policy innovation hub that will gather knowledge and generate innovative solutions; and capacity building and support for governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations.

“The fight against climate change is inextricably linked with the battle for greater social justice”, he concluded.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This is one area where Travel & Tourism is doing more than its fair share, and rightly so. The benchmarks need to be simultaneously matched and raised right across all the other 17 SDGs, too.



SDG 14:

**Sustainable fishing
staying afloat in
developed world,
sinking in poorer
regions**



SDG 14: Sustainable fishing staying afloat in developed world, sinking in poorer regions



Seychelles Tourism Board/Ennio Maffei. Fishermen at Beau Vallon beach in the Seychelles prepare their nets for fishing.

United Nations, 18 November 2019, UN News - More people than ever rely on fisheries and aquaculture for food, and income, but the seafood industry is facing a “dangerous” sustainability divide when comparing trends in the developed world versus those in poorer regions, the Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) revealed on Monday.

“Fisheries are facing an important crossroad and the world needs a new vision in the 21st century”, the UN agency lead with in a [press statement](#), echoing the main message by it’s Director General, Qu Dongyu, at the opening of a [major conference](#) on the matter, which opened Monday.

By 2050, humans will be nearly 10 billion in number, and “land alone will not feed us”, Mr. Donguy explained, thus, the world will need to increasingly rely on aquatic species to eat.

[The International Symposium on Fisheries Sustainability](#), taking place from 18 to 21 November at [FAO](#)’s Rome headquarters, convenes researchers, business people and members of various other sectors to identify how to maximize food from the world’s rivers and oceans, without compromising the health of aquatic ecosystems.

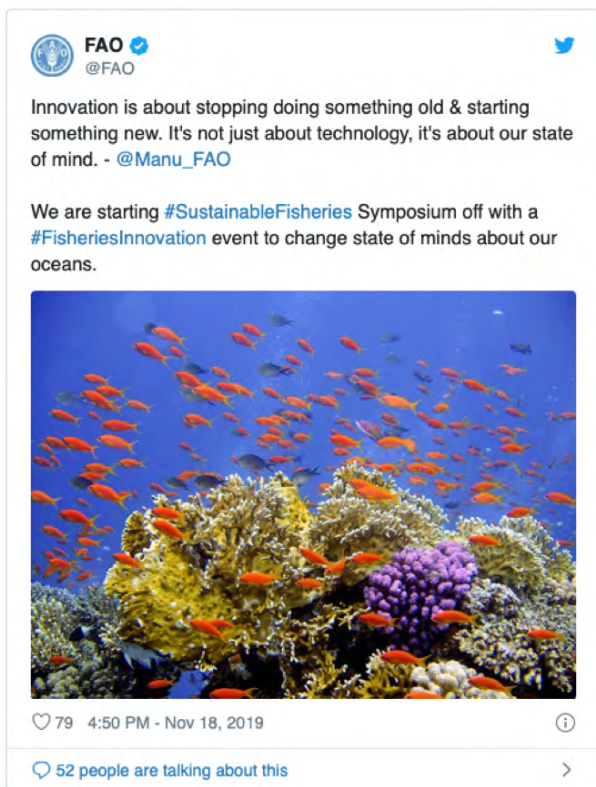
Noting a “dangerous trend” in the fishing industry, the FAO chief said that while fisheries in developed regions are increasingly sustainable, meaning fished populations are being replenished, and conditions for industry workers are improving, developing regions lagging behind.

The great provider of life

Achieving global sustainability in the seafood sector looks murky. With the concerning state of the world’s oceans and increasing demand for freshwater species keeping best practices at bay, FAO noted.

Plastic pollution, the effects of climate change, habitat degradation, and overfishing are draining marine fish stocks, with one in every three stocks overfished, compared to one in ten 40 years ago. In addition, inland fisheries (in rivers or fish farms), are feeling the pressure of a growing demand on freshwater species.

Worldwide, one billion people [rely](#) on fish as their main source of animal protein, according to the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), and in some small island states, people meet their protein needs exclusively from seafood.



A person derives, on average, 20.3 kilograms of top-quality protein and essential micronutrients from fish every year, with a rise in 3 percent of global fish consumption since the 1960's, according to FAO.

As far as economies go, around the world, one in ten people depend on fishing for their livelihoods and are often the poorest in society.

From the mid-1970's, developing countries have increased their net trade benefits from fish from almost zero to over 40 billion dollars each year, FAO's Director of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Manuel Barange, pointed out at the Conference.

Some 95 per cent of people hinging on seafood for their livelihoods live in Africa and Asia, many struggling to make ends meet despite the degree of danger involved in the work. Commercial fishing was rated the second deadliest profession on earth in 2019.

The FAO Director-General put forward three solutions to guide fisheries toward

sustainability, including re-investing in marine and freshwater sustainability programmes, investing in ocean growth, and ensuring protection measures are met with effective management.

"Treat the ocean with the respect it deserves, and it will forgive our foolish ways, and it will replenish itself and do what it has done in the past - be the great provider of life on planet earth", Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Oceans, urged at the Symposium's opening.

2020: 'A new deal with nature'

Four of the ten targets under the UN Sustainable Development Goal ([SDG](#)) to protect oceans, will mature come 2020, including illegal fishing, which the UN's Special Envoy said begs cooperation from countries who haven't signed FAO's [Agreement](#) to stamp out the problem.

Moreover, the coming year will be one "in which we create a new deal with nature" he highlighted, as a host of environmental protection events will take place: [The UN Ocean Conference to scale up ocean action](#), the [UN Biodiversity Conference](#), the IUCN World Conservation Congress, and the UN Climate Change Conference ([COP26](#)).

By the Symposium's end, participants are expected to present a technical document that synthesized the information and debate in each of the event's sessions, to be table at the 34th session of the FAO Committee on Fisheries, set for July 2020.

The document will form the platform for a high-level policy statement on the role, value and sustainability status of global and regional fisheries.

“If we focus on our science, our innovation spirit, our technologies, we will secure and protect one of the oldest and most undervalued food industries,” the FAO chief said, urging for delegates to “aim big” and take “concrete” steps toward change.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Thousands of seafood restaurants with tourists as their major clientele claim to be serving the “freshest” catch of the day. May be useful for them to also tell their clients about what they are doing to address the sustainability agenda, too.



SDG 15:

**Dwindling
agrobiodiversity
'severe threat'
to food security**



SDG 15: Dwindling agrobiodiversity ‘severe threat’ to food security



© FAO/Xavier Bouan.
Villagers grow rain-fed rice in Beung Kiat Ngong wetlands, Lao People's Democratic Republic. (File)

United Nations, 14 November 2019, UN News - To help ensure the most-consumed foods don't disappear in the face of the climate crisis, farmers must cultivate crops able to resist environmental shocks and other stresses, the Food and Agriculture Organisation ([FAO](#)) highlighted in a new set of conservation guidelines published on Thursday.

[The Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Farmers Varieties](#), spotlights the need for food systems to be sustainable, but the lack of variety and increasing uniformity of crops may render them unsuitable for the changing conditions under which they grow.

“It is worrisome that humans rely on only three crops - maize, wheat and rice - for 51 per cent of all plant-based food”, Assistant Director-General of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department at [FAO](#), Bukar Tijani, said in the publication's foreword, highlighting that plants account for more than 80 per cent of the human diet.

FAO documented the decline in agrobiodiversity [20 years ago](#), noting the “genetic erosion” in crops reported by almost all countries, and highlighting that diversity within species is at least as important as diversity between species.

“The more diverse a crop production system is, including within and among species, the more unlikely that it would be affected uniformly by biotic and abiotic stresses”, Mr. Tijani added.

Farmer's traditional varieties and so-called landraces (species that are locally-adapted to their environment) are more resilient than those with little genetic diversity, and yet, food producers are increasingly abandoning cultivation of traditionally-diverse varieties, for uniform types with higher yields.

The erosion of crop diversity “poses a particularly severe threat to global food security and nutrition, potentially undermining our efforts to attain the goal of eradication hunger and malnutrition by 2030.”

Systematic approach to farming

FAO's new recommendations identify actions for sustainable crop growth: from documenting existing plant genetic resources for agriculture, to mapping their actual and potential uses; promoting their retention, and providing farmers and local communities with information and support in relation to crop conservation and sustainable use, bearing in mind different countries and contexts.

The importance of a systematic approach to

these on-farm activities has been recognized by international organizations and instruments, the agency said in a press statement. The framework is the first of its kind to outline such an approach.

The food management tool was launched at a side event of the [Eighth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture](#) in Rome. It will act as a compliment to the agency's guidelines on [conservation and sustainable use of wild food plants](#), launched last year.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

An excellent tool and information source for the rapidly-growing agro-tourism sector, especially in view of the growing gastronomy tourism movement. Should be must reading for all chefs and Food & Beverage managers.

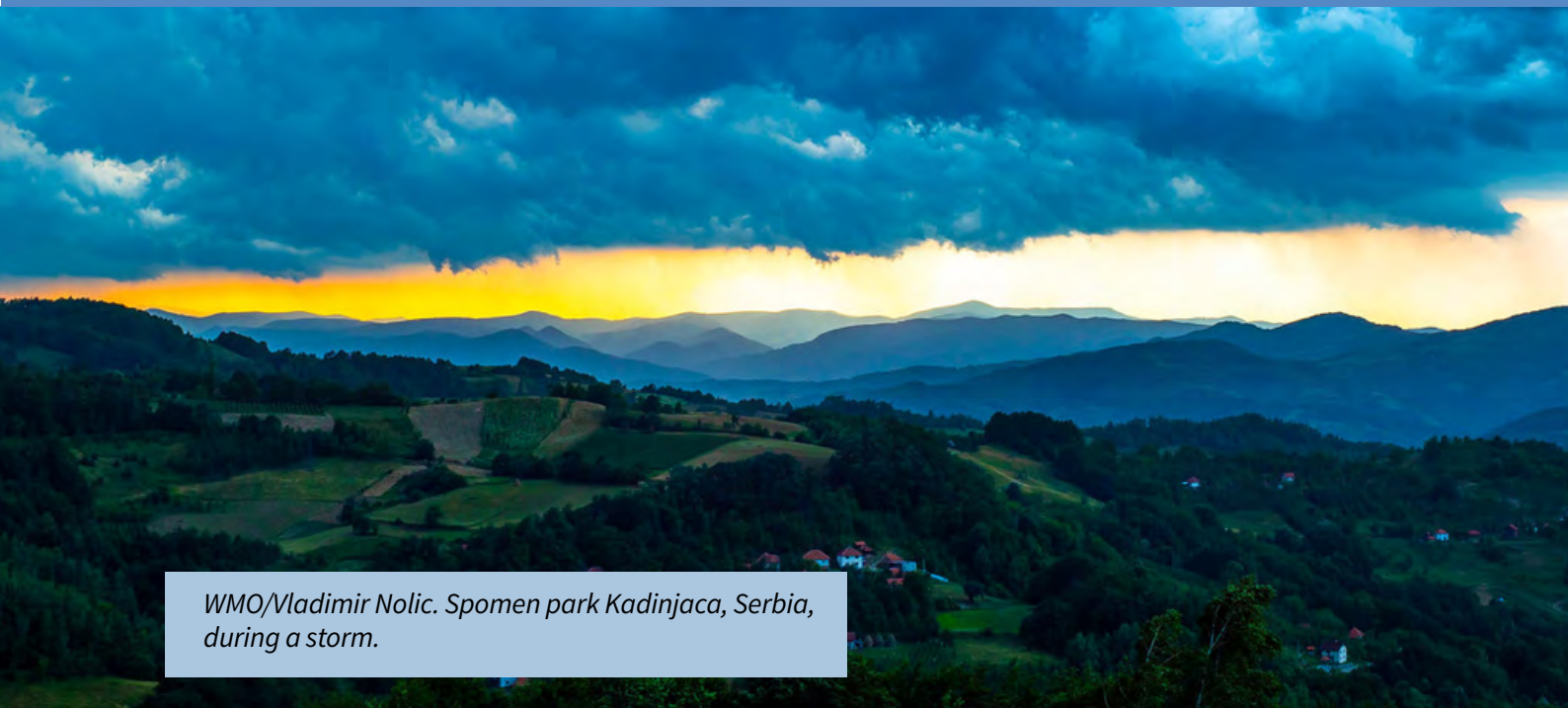


SDG 15:

**Mountains matter,
especially
if you're young**



SDG 15: Mountains matter, especially if you're young



WMO/Vladimir Nolic. Spomen park Kadinjaca, Serbia, during a storm.

United Nations, 10 December 2019, UN News - Covering around 27 per cent of the earth's land surface, mountains play a critical role in moving the world's towards sustainable economic growth. With the future in mind, the theme for this year's international day celebrating the world's peaks and summits on Wednesday, is Mountains matter for Youth.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), mountains not only provide sustenance and well-being to 1.1 billion mountain people around the world but also indirectly benefit billions more living downstream. And they provide freshwater, energy and food – resources that will grow increasingly scarce over the coming decades.

This year, the spotlight shines on the importance of protecting ecosystems around the world's summits, for future generations.

It is an occasion to educate children about the role that mountains play in supporting billions up and downstream – providing freshwater, clean energy, food and recreation.

Making education, training, employment, and access to technology readily available, can ensure a brighter future for young communities on mountainsides everywhere.

Listen here to the FAO's podcast Target: Zero Hunger. In this episode, FAO's Charlotta Lomas visits Montenegro, where smallholder farmers rely heavily on traditional agriculture practices for their livelihoods. So much so, that a poor blueberry harvest or honey season can have devastating impacts on rural households.

Lack of opportunities

As access to opportunities for youth living in mountains can be scarce, the day offers the chance



Did you know?

- Potatoes, maize, tomatoes, sorghum, apples and barley crops originate in mountains.
- More than half of humanity relies on mountain freshwater for everyday life
- Family farming is the backbone of mountain economies
- Some 53 per cent of rural mountain populations in developing countries are vulnerable to food insecurity
- Mountains play a key role in providing renewable energy through hydropower, solar power, wind power and biogas.

to demand improvements in order to prevent the drift away to lowland areas, in search of a better life and employment.

Without investment, agricultural land is abandoned and degraded, while cultural values and ancient traditions are forgotten.

Education and training, market access, diverse employment opportunities and good public services can ensure a brighter future for young mountain dwellers.

Call to action

To harness the day, [FAO](#) suggests that young people raise mountain awareness by organizing youth forums, student debates, photo and art competitions, hikes and events targeted to specific age groups.

And of course, everyone who cares about mountain life, is invited to join the conversation by sharing stories of living as a young mountain dweller, or posting a photo of a favourite vista, using the #MountainsMatter hashtag.

It has been observed every year to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *mountains not only provide sustenance and well-being to 1.1 billion mountain people around the world but also indirectly benefit billions more living downstream. And they provide freshwater, energy and food – resources that will grow increasingly scarce over the coming decades.*” Yes, mountains need to be treated with greater respect than just elevated terrain for someone’s climbing or skiing pleasure.



SDG 16:

**‘Diversity is a form
of wealth, not a
factor of division,’
UNESCO chief says**

SDG 16: ‘Diversity is a form of wealth, not a factor of division,’ UNESCO chief says



UNDP Ukraine/Oleksandr Ratushnyak Children in Ukraine play with an SDG poster illustrating children from different races around the world.

United Nations, 15 November 2019, UN News - At a time when extremism and fanaticism are too often unleashed, when “the venom of hatred” continues to poison a part of humanity, “tolerance has never been more vital a virtue”, the United Nations cultural agency’s chief has [said](#) in her message on the [International Day for Tolerance](#).

“Tolerance is more than standing idly by or remaining insensitive to differences between men and women, cultures and beliefs”, [Audrey Azoulay](#), the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) said, but instead a “state of mind, an awareness and a requirement.”

In 1996, the [UN General Assembly](#) invited Member States to observe the Day each year on 16 November to, among other things, foster mutual understanding among cultures and peoples. The 2019 edition of the Day will be marked this Saturday.

Ms. Azoulay stressed that tolerance is “to realize that cultural diversity is a form of wealth, not a factor of division”.

“It is to perceive that each culture, beyond immediate or apparent differences, is a constituent part of universality and speaks the common language of humanity.”

Quoting former UN Secretary-General [Kofi Annan](#), she said that tolerance is “a virtue that makes peace possible”.

Combating intolerance

Since its foundation, UNESCO has aimed to “build peace by combating the intolerance that still too often tears our societies apart, and by relentlessly fighting all forms of racism and discrimination”, the agency chief maintained.

Ms. Azoulay cited the words of former Director-General Federico Mayor: “UNESCO bears and



Tomorrow is #InternationalDayforTolerance. #Tolerance means respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our cultures and unique ways of being human - @AAzoulay

It is at the core of the @UN values. #toleranceday



30 9:33 PM - Nov 15, 2019

17 people are talking about this

echoes the message of tolerance, true to its mission of being ‘the conscience of the United Nations’”.

In conclusion, Ms. Azoulay invited everyone to share UNESCO’s message of tolerance and peace.

Fighting intolerance requires

- Law: Governments are responsible for enforcing human rights laws and banning and punishing hate crimes and discrimination against minorities.
- Education: Greater efforts must be made to teach children about tolerance, human rights and other ways of life, both at home and in school.
- Information access: Policies must be developed to generate and promote press freedom and press pluralism, to allow the public to differentiate between facts and opinions.
- Individual awareness: People should become aware of the link between their behavior and the vicious cycle of mistrust and violence in society, by asking yourself if you stereotype people, reject those who are different from you and/or blame you problems on ‘them’?
- Local solutions: Tools of nonviolent action include discrediting hateful propaganda, co-organizing groups to confront problems and establishing grassroots networks to demonstrate solidarity with victims of intolerance.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Another challenge that has gone relatively unaddressed by Travel & Tourism over the years, even in the face of growing hate and violence. Travel & Tourism prefers to operate within its comfort zones. Hence, curbing plastic and food waste takes priority over the potentially politically controversial challenges such as promoting peace, inclusiveness and ethnic harmony. Unfortunately, this living-in-denial attitude remains in place as numerous destinations fall victim to the divide-and-rule policies of nefarious politicians.



SDG 16:

**Bold, innovative
measures for
refugees and
their hosts sought,
at first Global Forum**



SDG 16: Bold, innovative measures for refugees and their hosts sought, at first Global Forum



A young boy rides his bicycle inside the Kara Tepe accommodation site, on the Greek island of Lesbos.

© UNHCR/Achilleas Zavallis. A young boy rides his bicycle inside the Kara Tepe accommodation site, on the Greek island of Lesbos.

United Nations, 16 December 2019, UN News - As refugee numbers approach 26 million, heads of state, top UN diplomats, powerful figures from the private sector and civil society are heading to Geneva to agree on “bold, new” ways to help, at the first ever [Global Refugee Forum](#), which got underway on Monday.

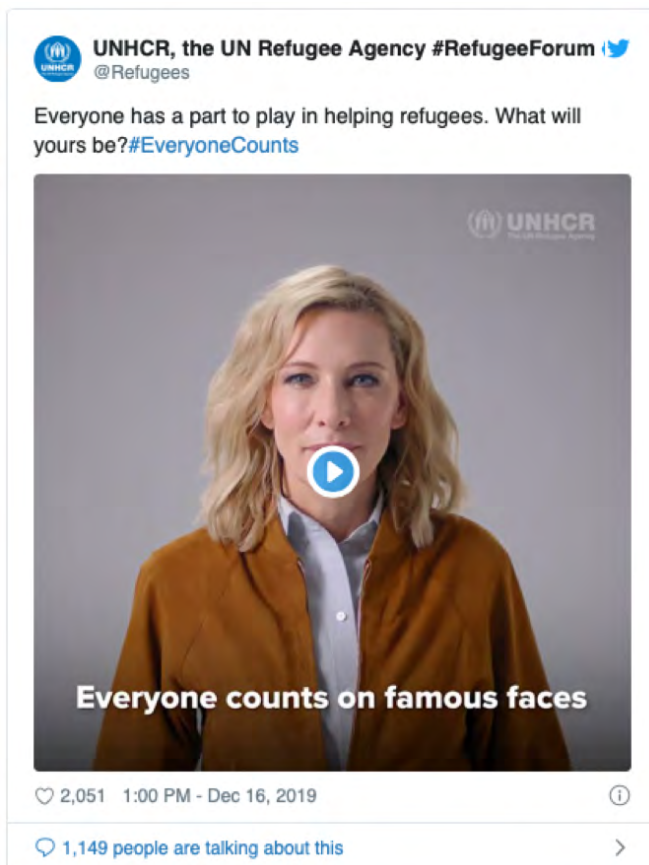
On Tuesday, in addition to the presence of UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) – previously the High Commissioner for Refugees – other high-level attendees are expected to include Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose country has hosted millions of displaced Syrians for years.

Find lasting solutions

“The international community is coming together to announce bold, new measures to ease pressures on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, and find lasting solutions for those uprooted from their homes by wars and persecution”, the UN Refugee Agency ([UNHCR](#)) said ahead of three days of discussions led by High Commissioner Filippo Grandi.

Turkey’s policy towards the refugee influx created by nearly nine years of civil war in Syria, is likely to be among the good practices highlighted at the UN Palais des Nations, from 16-18 December; in particular, how the Turks have managed to double the number of children in formal education since 2016, to nearly 650,000 this year.

Italy’s voluntary guardianship system is also in focus for enabling protection and care for unaccompanied minors, while Ethiopian investment in public water works has been shown to benefit refugees and host communities alike.



VIPs from Costa Rica, Germany, Ethiopia and Pakistan are also due to attend, their Governments having expressed a willingness to engage in finding solutions to alleviating the plight of the growing number of people in need of international protection.

Guided by the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) – inked by governments a year ago in New York – the Geneva meeting “is an opportunity to translate the principle of international responsibility-sharing into concrete action” that is more equitable, sustained and predictable, UNHCR said in a statement.

During the forum, national governments and other stakeholders will also have to opportunity to announce concrete pledges and contributions “that will achieve tangible benefits for refugees and host communities”, the agency insisted.

#EveryoneCounts

Highlighting the forum’s social media campaign message that #EveryoneCounts – and dovetailing with UNHCR’s longstanding emphasis on access to education as a key factor in arming refugees with skills they need for a better future – it announced that Sesame Street puppet Grover has already arrived in the Swiss city.

Echoing the impact of emergency displacement on youngsters ahead of the meeting, UN Children’s Fund [UNICEF](#) reiterated its warning that they represent around half of all refugees – around 13 million.

More than half of school-aged refugee children are not in class, UNICEF added, and “at the end of 2018, 138,000 unaccompanied and separated children were on the move alone”, it said in a statement.

In a bid to generate innovative approaches and long-term commitments from as many sectors of society as possible to help refugees and host communities, UNCHR has encouraged senior representatives from the private sector to attend, too.



These include the Ingka Group – part of the IKEA empire – the LEGO Foundation and British-based multinational Vodafone, which provides free communications and technical support in areas affected by natural or humanitarian disaster.

Telecoms solution for disaster victims

In the seven years since the telecoms



firm set up its “Instant Network Emergency Response” units, its 70 staff have intervened in 14 countries and facilitated millions of calls to disaster victims, aid workers and refugees, according to its website.

Non-profit organization, the Tent Partnership for Refugees, is also attending the forum.

“One of the world’s most disturbing trends has been the shocking increase in the number of people driven from their homes by conflict and other calamities”, Tent Partnership founder Hamdi Ulukaya says on the non-profit’s website. “How we respond to this global humanitarian crisis may well be one of the defining challenges of our generation.”

Working with around 100 partners including coffee chain Starbucks and McCain Foods, Tent has helped some 200,000 refugees in 34 countries, its website notes.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: *“One of the world’s most disturbing trends has been the shocking increase in the number of people driven from their homes by conflict and other calamities. How we respond to this global humanitarian crisis may well be one of the defining challenges of our generation.”* As all conflicts are man-made, who is causing them? Do travel & tourism leaders care? Is it about time for industry forums to start taking these issues seriously?



SDG 16:

**‘World has failed’
victims of genocide
too often**

SDG 16: 'World has failed' victims of genocide too often



UN Photo/Violaine Martin. Marking the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (2019).

United Nations, 9 December 2019, UN News - Too often, “the world has failed” populations under threat of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and ethnic cleansing, Secretary-General António Guterres said in his message for the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of Genocide on Monday.

Marking the day at a round table event, Chef de Cabinet Maria Luiza Viotti spoke on behalf of the UN chief, saying that, genocide remains “a scourge...causing great suffering”.

“On this day we remember and pay tribute to the victims of the horrendous crime of genocide” she [stated](#), encouraging all to reflect on what can be done to uphold the responsibilities set out in the [Genocide Convention](#).

She maintained that the devastating impact on the victims, communities and society as a whole “can take generations to overcome and heal”.

“Acting quickly to early warning signs and investing in early prevention can save lives and prevent attempts to destroy vulnerable groups,



in whole or in part”, Ms. Viotti said.

Pointing to people facing systematic discrimination or becoming targets of violence simply because of their identity, she stressed that “we must act, both to defend those at immediate risk and those who could be in jeopardy in the future”.

“By promoting a culture of peace and non-violence that includes respect for diversity and non-discrimination, we can build societies that

are resilient to the risk of genocide.”

The imperative to prevent genocide is not only moral, it is a legal obligation set out in the first article of the Convention, putting the prevention of genocide in the hands of each State. But civil society, religious leaders, media outlets and teachers also play an important role.

“Across the world, we are seeing an alarming surge in xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hatred and attacks against Christians, often fed by nationalist and populist ideologies”, she said.



Underscoring the importance of investing in prevention, Ms. Viotti spoke about two UN initiatives, namely the [UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#) and the [Action Plan for the Protection of Religious Sites](#), explaining that they “aim to galvanize our work and to encourage contributions from these partners, working hand

in hand with States”.

“It is important on this day to recognize that the Holocaust did not start with the gas chambers, nor did the genocides in Rwanda, Srebrenica or Cambodia start with mass killings” she flagged. “They were all preceded by discrimination, hate speech, incitement to violence and the dehumanization of ‘the other’”.

In conclusion, the Chef de Cabinet encouraged everyone to “pay tribute to the victims of this egregious crime by remembering their suffering and by recommitting to equality and prevention, not only in our words but in our actions”.

Education is ‘key’

Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, [Adama Dieng](#), opened the event with a focus “on ways in which we can all contribute to the prevention of genocide”, noting that religious leaders have a “particularly important role”.

“When they promote messages of peace and inclusion, they are actively contributing to prevention”, he indicated.

Discussions examined prevention tools, such as education programmes, which were seen as key to addressing the root causes of intolerance and discrimination, prevention of crimes against humanity and genocides.

The UN General Assembly designated 9 December as the commemoration day in 2015.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: Pointing to people facing systematic discrimination or becoming targets of violence simply because of their identity, she stressed that “*we must act, both to defend those at immediate risk and those who could be in jeopardy in the future*”. *By promoting a culture of peace and non-violence that includes respect for diversity and non-discrimination, we can build societies that are resilient to the risk of genocide.*” So, what is Travel & Tourism, which claims to be an industry of peace and non-violence, doing about this? Does it have the intellectual horsepower to at least discuss it?



SDG 16:

**Human Rights
Day celebrates
'tremendous
activism' of the
world's young
people**



SDG 16: Human Rights Day celebrates ‘tremendous activism’ of the world’s young people



© UNICEF David Berkwitz High school girls from Long Island, New York, join other youth climate activists in a demonstration calling for global action to combat climate change. (20 September 2019)

United Nations, 10 December 2019, UN News - Activists, students and UN officials came together on Tuesday to pay tribute to young people’s “tremendous activism” in promoting human rights for everyone.

Speaking at UN Headquarters during an event to mark [Human Rights Day](#), the [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) urged governments to “invest in progress and hope” by paying attention to youth and engaging with them.

“Young people are on the front lines of action against the climate emergency, which poses a serious threat to human rights and to human life. Young women are at the forefront, making the link between the denial of their rights and rising populism, xenophobia and discrimination of all kinds.

“Young people are rightly demanding that governments listen to them and respect them. Their voices must be heard,” he said.

Human Rights Day commemorates the 10 December 1948 adoption by the UN General Assembly of the landmark [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), which proclaims the inalienable rights of all people.

It is an annual reminder that everyone is entitled to all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, social origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other status.



Praise for youth leadership in climate action

This year's observance comes as countries are meeting in Madrid for the [UN COP25](#) conference on climate change, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights pointed out.

Michelle Bachelet added that it also falls amid an era of “tremendous activism”, particularly by young people.

Ms. Bachelet described the climate emergency as the most profound threat to human rights globally since the Second World War. It puts numerous rights at risk, including the right to life, health, food, water, shelter, development and self-determination.

“We owe a debt of gratitude to all those millions of children, teenagers and young adults who have been standing up and speaking out more and more loudly about the crisis facing our planet”, Ms. Bachelet said in her [statement](#) for Human Rights Day.

“Rightly, these young people are pointing out that it is their future which is at stake, and the future of all those who have not yet even been born. It is they who will have to bear the full consequences of the actions, or lack of action, by the older generations who currently run governments and businesses, the decision-makers on whom the future of individual countries, regions and the planet as whole depends.”

Education supports human rights

The rights chief stressed that young people must be heard: an opinion shared by another top UN voice.

Active engagement of youth is central to achieving societies that are inclusive and stable, according to Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, the President of the UN General Assembly.

“We have to utilize the idealism of youth and empower them to stand up for equal rights and fair treatment of everyone everywhere”, he said. “We need to ensure that youth have the right to participate in decision-making and have their voices heard.”

Mr. Muhammad-Bande believes that providing youth with access to inclusive quality education is one way to guarantee that they know their rights and are thus empowered.

Human Rights Day also marks another UN annual observance: the end of [16 days of activism against gender-based violence](#), and he commended the contributions of women activists worldwide for their dedication to upholding collective human rights.



IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: *Young people are pointing out that it is their future which is at stake, and the future of all those who have not yet even been born. It is they who will have to bear the full consequences of the actions, or lack of action, by the older generations who currently run governments and businesses, the decision-makers on whom the future of individual countries, regions and the planet as whole depends.* Those “older generations” include today’s Travel & Tourism leaders who deserve to be held accountable for the “consequences of their (in)actions.” Simply cutting back on plastic and food waste is not going to cut it.



SDG 16:

**Nations urged to
observe Olympic
Truce throughout
Tokyo Summer
Games**

SDG 16: Nations urged to observe Olympic Truce throughout Tokyo Summer Games



UN Photo/Evan Schneider. The United Nations and the Olympic flags raised at UN Headquarters. (file)

United Nations, 9 December 2019, UN News - The General Assembly on Monday urged United Nations Member States to observe the Olympic Truce – the ancient Greek tradition calling for the cessation of hostilities before, during and after the Games – in the context of next year’s Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, Japan.

The symbolic Truce would start one week before the XXXII Olympiad, set for 24 July to 9 August 2020, and the XVI Paralympic Game, to be held from 25 August to 6 September 2020.

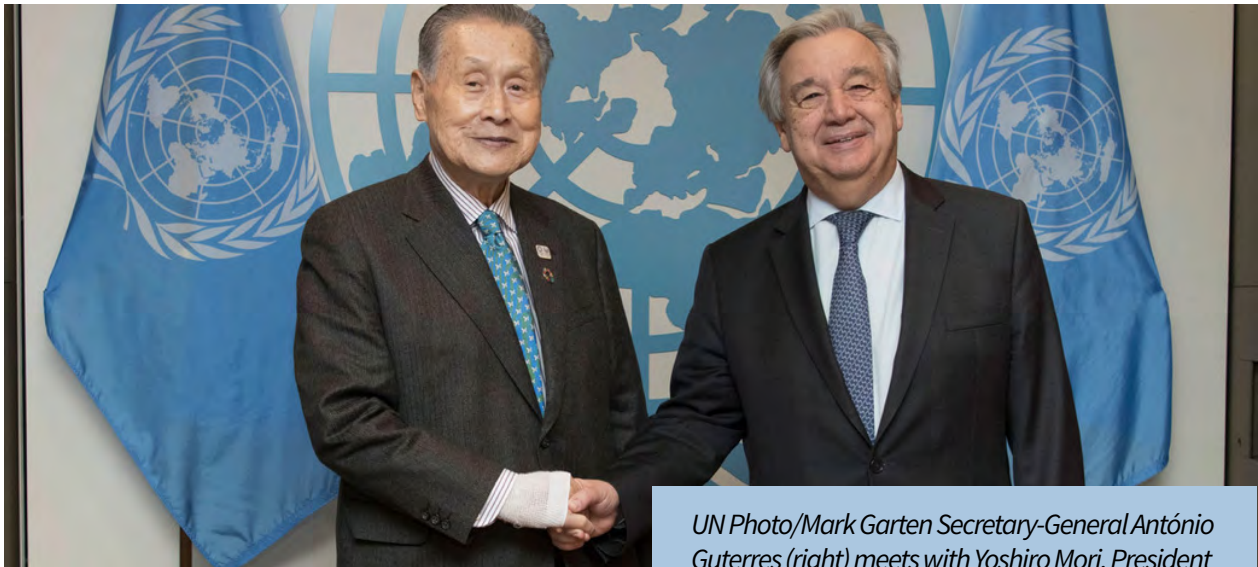
Adopting a consensus resolution, the 193-Member Assembly underlined the importance of cooperating to “collectively implement the values of the Olympic truce around the world,” and agreed to “cooperate with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee in their efforts to use sport as a tool to promote peace, dialogue and reconciliation in areas of conflict during and beyond” the holding of the Games.

The ancient Greek tradition of the ekecheiria, or Olympic Truce, was born in the eighth century

BC “to encourage a peaceful environment and ensure safe passage, access and participation for athletes and relevant persons at the Games, thereby mobilizing the youth of the world to the cause of peace.”

The resolution has itself become a tradition at the UN, being passed every two years preceding the holding of the Winter and Summer Games respectively.





UN Photo/Mark Garten Secretary-General António Guterres (right) meets with Yoshiro Mori, President of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

As for the upcoming Olympiad, the text adopted today notes that the vision of the Tokyo 2020 Games is to bring positive reform “by encouraging people to achieve their personal best, raising awareness of unity in diversity among citizens of the world, and leaving a positive legacy for future generations.”

It also recognized that Tokyo 2020 aims to ensure a sustainable delivery of the Games, building on its sustainability principle ‘Be better, together: for the planet and the people,’ contributing to the achievement of the UN [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

2020 Olympics, UN75, opportunity to celebrate ‘shared values’

Member States also recalled that Tokyo 2020 is the second of three consecutive Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in Asia, following Pyeongchang 2018 and preceding Beijing 2022, thereby enhancing trilateral partnership in sports and beyond.

Mori Yoshiro, President of the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, introduced the draft resolution underscoring that people can live together by fostering understanding. Peace was the original concept for creating the Olympics, he stated, and it must be the mission of the international community to promote the Olympics for future generations.

Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) recalled that when Pierre de Coubertin revived the Olympic Games 125 years ago, the founder saw it as a way to promote peace among all nations and people.

The resolution taken up by the Assembly today “demonstrates clearly that his vision endures”, the OIC chief said, adding that is also a powerful reminder of the shared values on which both the UN and the Committee are built. As the United Nations looks ahead to its [seventy-fifth anniversary](#) next year, there is no better time than the 2020 Olympic Year to celebrate these shared values, Mr. Bach declared.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Like Travel & Tourism, the Sports sector has also lost track of its founding values. Building peace and friendship has given way for the mindless pursuit of profit. Politics dominate all sporting events at every level. Competition has become conflict in different guise. Commercialisation does serve a purpose, for sure, but when it becomes the be-all and end-all of everything, some rethink is required. Perhaps the Olympics 2020 would provide a good opportunity to re-set the mindset.



SDG 16:

**INTERVIEW:
Guterres urges
world leaders to
'do what is
necessary'
for peace and
the planet**



SDG 16: INTERVIEW: Guterres urges world leaders to ‘do what is necessary’ for peace and the planet



United Nations, 20 September 2019, UN News - As global leaders prepare to convene in New York next week to debate the best way forward for the planet, Secretary-General [António Guterres](#) is urging them to “do what is necessary” to ensure that “we are able to solve the dramatic problems we face.”

The UN chief is urging Member States to bring “concrete plans” to the [74th session of the General Assembly](#), in hopes of bolstering the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, and the ambitious goals that are the bedrock of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

In a special interview for UN News conducted this week by newly-appointed head of Global Communications, [Melissa Fleming](#), Mr. Guterres lamented that “we are not on track” to meet a 2030 deadline in many aspects, highlighting that the first-ever [SDG summit](#) on 24 and 25 September, will inject more momentum.

The UN chief told Ms. Fleming that “more and more of the crises we face, have a multiplicity of factors, from different parts of the world” and resolving these issues begs “more international cooperation” with the UN firmly “at the centre of it.”

Melissa Fleming: You have said that the world is facing a critical time on a number of fronts: The climate emergency, rising inequality, an increase in hatred, intolerance as well as peace and security challenges. Do you have a formula to address them?

Secretary-General: The formula is more international cooperation. These are global issues that no country can solve alone, in relation to climate. That’s why we are having a summit. And that summit is aiming at making countries understand that they need to do much more than what they have been until now, because we need to defeat climate change that is still running faster than what we had.

And we see the consequences in devastating hurricanes, we see the consequence in glaciers melting, we see the consequences in public health deteriorating, with heat waves and new diseases coming to several areas. And so, we need more international cooperation to defeat climate change. And inequality is the same. We need fair globalization, and fair globalization is only possible with more international cooperation. That's why we are going to have a summit on the [Sustainable Development Goals](#). That's why we have the Agenda 2030, which is the blueprint of the UN to bring all countries together for fair globalization.

Then if you move into all the other areas, from hate speech - it is clear that this is now spreading like wildfire everywhere - we need to fight it together. Or even security issues - more and more of the crises we face have a multiplicity of factors, from different parts of the world. So only with more international cooperation and the UN at the centre of it, are we able to address these challenges and hopefully to start solving them.

The General Assembly will be an excellent opportunity for many of these issues to move forward. We have a [climate summit](#). We have a summit on the Sustainable Development Goals - which means on the Agenda 2030, the blueprint for fair globalization - and a [summit for financing it](#), which is absolutely central because without finance, there is no way we can move in the development areas; a summit on public health and [Global Health Coverage](#) for public health; a summit on the [Small Island Developing States](#) (SIDS) that are the first victims of climate change as we all know.

And all these combined, all these together, represent a comprehensive response in which the UN is trying to bring all countries into the same platform to be able to solve exactly the kind of problems that you mentioned in your first question.

Melissa Fleming: One of those summits is a youth climate summit. Why is this special? Why are the youth being called together now here in New York?

Secretary-General: Because the youth has shown an enormous leadership on this and it's perfectly understandable. Climate change is already a dramatic problem today, but it is clear it will be even more dramatic in the years to come. And so, when the young people of today will be the adults that will be running the world in a few decades, they will be facing the worst consequences of the mistakes we might make now. So, the youth have been really in the forefront of pushing governments and pushing businesses and pushing cities and pushing all other actors to do what they have to do, to stop climate change. And so, a youth summit is a very important instrument to put pressure on those who have to take the decisions that are necessary.



Melissa Fleming: Well the following day, you will be convening the global climate summit here. You have quite famously now said you are asking countries to come, not with beautiful speeches, but with real action. What kind of expectations do you have for the kind of initiatives that might come?

António Guterres: The action that is needed to meet the requirements that the international community of scientists is telling us are necessary to defeat climate change. Not to let temperatures go above 1.5 degrees at the end of the century, means that we need to be carbon-neutral in 2050, that we need to reduce dramatically the emissions during the next decade. And what we want to have, is more and more countries coming here and committing to carbon neutrality in 2050, and committing to reductions.

And our target is 45 per cent of the emissions during the next decades. Coming here to commit in relation to the financing of the Green Climate Fund and the \$100 billion we need to have every year to support developing countries - in adaptation and mitigation in the coming year - and announcing the other investments that are absolutely essential in order to make sure that we promote the kind of energy - renewable energy - that is needed in relation to the fossil fuels that represent the past; that we are able to have different agriculture, a different use of land; that cities have different strategies in the way they reduce their emissions...(There are) lots of concrete, concrete measures that we hope States, cities, businesses will be able to announce during the summit.



Melissa Fleming: Let's move to the last two questions: Very importantly, the leaders at the GA (General Assembly) are also being asked to come here for a summit on the Sustainable Development Goals.

On Tuesday, also with commitments that will bring about results, there will be a meeting, as you just mentioned, on mobilizing financing to achieve the SDGs. What are your specific expectations for the outcome of this?

Secretary-General: Well, first of all, the recognition that we are not on track - the agenda 2030 in relation to the eradication of poverty in relation to health; in relation to education; in relation to water and sanitation; to the oceans, to climate change; to all these aspects, that the agenda 2030 determines that we should, in 2030, have reached a number of concrete goals. We are not on track; we are not doing enough.

And obviously there has been progress. There is less absolute poverty than a few decades ago. There has been improvement in child mortality or in access of education, but we are not on track.

We need more investment, more political action, more priority to those aspects that are described in the Goals that we have fixed to have a fair globalization, to have a development that is simultaneously sustainable and inclusive, that leaves no one behind, that brings all those that have been marginalized by development into the benefits of that development...(We must) recognize that we are not on track and then take the decisions necessary in investment, in policies, in changes of different forms of cooperation; also, at the international level or with the businesses, the civil society, the local authorities, in order to come together more effectively to make sure that Agenda 2030 is successfully implemented.

Melissa Fleming: Somewhat related to the SDGs, obviously is health, and there is going to be also a high-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage next week. Why is this so important in today's world?

Secretary-General: Because it's a basic right that is not yet universal. Many people have no healthcare and many people that have healthcare, have no quality of care. And one fundamental objective is to make sure that sooner rather than later, the world will be able to provide to all the citizens of the world the kind of quality of care they need, and they deserve.

Melissa Fleming: Finally, peace and security will likely loom large during the GA this week. Do you see any signs of hope in this area?

Secretary-General: There is hope in the sense that we see some problems moving forward in a positive way. We have seen progress in Sudan, we have seen progress in the conversations on South Sudan last week. We have seen progress in the Central African Republic, with its peace agreement. We see that many elections that were supposed to have been a disaster for the countries, ended without violence - from the DRC, to the Maldives, to Madagascar.

So, there are many positive signs, but unfortunately, we also have many negative signs and we see people going on dying in Syria, in Libya, in Yemen. And so, we need to increase our commitment to diplomacy for peace, and we need to make countries understand - especially those that to a certain extent, are responsible for these wars by proxy - make countries understand, that these are wars nobody's winning, everybody is losing.

And they are becoming more and more interlinked to global terrorism and becoming a threat, not only for the countries where these conflicts take place, but for the whole of the international community.

Melissa Fleming: A final note: your message to the leaders coming here to New York, to the General Assembly next week.

Secretary-General: Do what is necessary to make sure that we are able to solve the dramatic problems we face.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: *"We need more investment, more political action, more priority to those aspects that are described in the Goals that we have fixed to have a fair globalization, to have a development that is simultaneously sustainable and inclusive, that leaves no one behind, that brings all those that have been marginalized by development into the benefits of that development".* Is Travel & Tourism in sync with this elevated objective? Or is it still far too focussed on parochial, short-term issues?



SDG 16:

**UN policewoman
recognized for
'speaking up and
speaking out'
on behalf of the
vulnerable**

SDG 16: UN policewoman recognized for ‘speaking up and speaking out’ on behalf of the vulnerable



*UN Photo/Douglas Coffman.
From left, UN Under-Secretary-
General for Peacekeeping
Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix,
UN Female Police Officer of the
Year Major Seynabou Diouf and
MONUSCO Police Commission
Awale Abdounasir at the award
ceremony. (5 November 2019)*

United Nations, 5 November 2019 (UN News Centre) - At the core of peacekeeping lies the notion of shared responsibility, the UN peacekeeping chief said on Tuesday, presenting this year’s award for Female Police Officer of the Year, to a woman who “has made a career of speaking up and speaking out on behalf of all vulnerable populations”.

Police Major Seynabou Diouf has worked “tirelessly with her colleagues inside and outside the Mission to empower women, improve conduct, enhance protection, strengthen performance, and thereby build sustainable peace”, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Peace Operations chief, told the

heads of UN police and police experts from 14 peacekeeping operations, gathered at the award ceremony at UN Headquarters in New York.

Major Diouf is one of over 1,400 female police officers serving under the UN flag, carrying out a complex range of tasks – from capacity-building and reform, to community-oriented policing, investigations, protection of civilians, and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

“That is impressive enough”, asserted Mr. Lacroix, “but they also provide the added value of gender perspectives and mainstreaming at all levels and at all phases of engagement with host-State institutions and communities”.



He cited examples in South Sudan where female officers are helping women and youth attain better living conditions within and outside camps for the internally displaced; the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) where they are helping to build capacity and accountability in internal security forces; and Mali by promoting confidence-building between citizens and the reconstituted internal defence and security forces.

“Our female officers are also operating in areas affected by the Ebola virus disease, ensuring the required level of security for relief and humanitarian operations”, he maintained.

And female officers are a key element in the sensitization and delivery of training on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) throughout all UN Missions.

“As part of female police officers’ networks, such as the one Major Diouf leads in MONUSCO [UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC], they help prevent, counter and investigate SEA-related offences, advancing the Organization’s zero-tolerance policy”, elaborated the peacekeeping chief. He congratulated Major Diouf “for her outstanding service” to the UN Nations and

Congolese people and stated that “all UN police officers in the field and at the UN Headquarters are inspired” by her example to uphold the core values of the Organization.

Mr. Lacroix also thanked her family for supporting her and making sacrifices during her long deployments. “The more women we have in peacekeeping, the more effective we all will be”, he concluded.

Going the extra mile

Top UN Police Adviser, Luis Carrilho, spoke about Major Diouf’s experience, noting that in her native Senegal she became the first female police officer to be honoured as a Gardien de la Paix, which was previously reserved for male officers.

“Since early in her career, she has shown her determination to make the extra effort, go the extra mile, to achieve her goals”, he spelled out, flagging that as the team leader of an SEA task force in Goma and president of the UNPOL Women’s Network, “she has demonstrated her commitment to giving women a voice and putting an end to SEA”.

Previous Awardees

- 2018: Chief Supt. Phyllis Osei, Ghana, [UNSOM](#)
- 2017: Assistant Inspector Annah Chota, Zimbabwe, [UNISFA](#)
- 2016: Supt. Yvette Boni Zombre, Burkina Faso, [MINUSCA](#)
- 2015: Chief Supt. Raluca Domuta, Romania, [MINUSTAH](#)
- 2014: Inspector Shakti Devi, India, [UNAMA](#)
- 2013: Commissioner Codou Camara, Senegal, MINUSTAH
- 2012: Constable Rezi Danismend, Turkey, [UNMIL](#)
- 2011: Deputy Supt. Shahzadi Gulfam, Pakistan, [UNMIT](#)

“Her efforts have helped the mission to achieve zero SEA cases in 2018, compared to 140 cases between 2016 and 2017”, he attested, calling her “an incredible force for good in our ongoing efforts to root out SEA and ensure UN personnel at all levels perform to the highest standards”.

Motivated to do more

When Major Diouf learned that she had been selected to receive the award, she said she was proud, but also “humble to be recognized for something that has become almost second nature” to her and her life’s work.

“When I was young, I wanted to be a medical doctor but there was an urgent need to help support my family”, she told those assembled. “Being a police officer in the early years of female recruitment provided recognition and a decent salary, but it also allowed me to contribute to society in ways I had never thought possible”.

With this new accolade, Major Diouf says she now feels “motivated to do more” and will continue “to promote women’s rights, speak out against sexual and gender-based violence, and fight marginalization and discriminatory customary and religious practices targeted at women and girls”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Speaking out on behalf of vulnerable populations is dangerous business, which makes this kind of recognition even more significant. Security personnel at grassroots of operations also incur the highest risk. Interestingly, such grassroots people of courage are not considered “thought-leaders” enough to be featured as speakers at industry forums.



SDG 17:

**Young activists
do the talking as
UN marks World
Children's Day**

SDG 17: Young activists do the talking as UN marks World Children's Day



© UNICEF/Frank Dejong. For World Children's Day, children in Sakassou village in Côte d'Ivoire painted their new school blue. The school is made out of recycled plastic bricks.

United Nations, 20 November 2019, UN News - Children were both seen and heard in the UN General Assembly on Wednesday, [World Children's Day](#), during a celebration to commemorate 30 years since the adoption of a milestone treaty that protects their rights.

The ceremony was among numerous events this year taking stock of progress achieved under the landmark [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

"In world capitals and buildings like this, adults talk about children's rights. But today, young people don't want to be talked about. [We want to do the talking](#)", declared actress [Millie Bobby Brown](#), star of the hit Netflix series 'Stranger Things' and the youngest-ever Goodwill Ambassador with the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)),

Indeed, they have a lot to say.

Dante Vegara, an 11-year-old climate activist from Chile, had one request for the international community: Act now to protect our planet.

"Very often, issues of the environment and [climate change](#) are postponed because there are more urgent things to resolve and I am concerned many adults continue to see things that way," he said.

"Climate change is a very severe problem. Girls and boys have something to say because we are the ones who will inherit a sicker and sicker world. Without a healthy environment, all our rights are threatened."



A boost from Beckham

Though no longer a child, football legend [David Beckham](#) recalled his youth in the East End of London, where family, teachers and later, coaches, supported his dream of becoming a soccer player.

As a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador since 2005, Mr. Beckham has seen how scores of children worldwide have not been as fortunate.

“Children hungry and sick. Children living through wars. Children who lost their parents in earthquakes and floods. Girls and boys with different stories and backgrounds from my own, but like all children they have one thing in common: they have ambitions and they have dreams for a better future,” he [said](#).

Top UN officials have their say

The anniversary of the child rights convention provides an [opportunity for adults and children to work together](#) to build that brighter future, UN [Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed](#) told the gathering.

Although important markers have been achieved since its adoption, including the fact that more children are now in school, millions of the world’s poorest children are still being left behind.

They include children still living in slums, or who go to bed hungry, or who have no access to health care and education. Children also have been forced to fight in wars, labelled as terrorists, suffered sexual abuse or trafficked into bondage, among untold other horrors.

And while three decades of technological developments have empowered children, [Michelle Bachelet](#), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, [reported in Geneva](#), how the Internet has been used to bully, intimidate and exploit children.

We need to take action to protect children from exploitation and harm”, she said. “We need action to ensure that children are empowered to raise their voices - and to protect from physical attacks and other forms of abuse the children who stand up to defend human rights and the rights of the child.”

[Henrietta Fore](#), the head of UNICEF, [said](#) at the event in New York that the “best pathway to a better, more sustainable future for all is to invest in all children today. As we look ahead to the next 30 years of

progress, let's recommit to children's rights. And let's make these rights real in programmes, policies and services in every community, in every country, around the world."



‘Stranger Things’ star calls out online bullies

Ms. Brown, the UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, revealed that she too has been victimized.

"Like millions of other girls around the world, I've also been bullied and harassed online," she said. "It's a terrifying feeling to look at your phone and see that the messages that people are sending you are filled with anger, hate and even threats."

The [President of the General Assembly](#), which brings together all 193 UN Member States, underlined the need to make girls a priority. Some 650 million girls globally reportedly have been married off before turning 18.

"It is crucial that girls are encouraged to stay in school and attain necessary capacity for mental and human capacity development," Tijjani Muhammad-Bande said in his opening address.



Tackling climate change, ending poverty and hunger, providing quality education, and empowering women and girls are among the objectives of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), which have a deadline of 2030.

As Ms. Mohammed, the UN deputy chief, pointed out, there is still more work ahead and children must be at the heart of all efforts.

"The most important leaders of our time are children. Passionate, engaged child activists from all regions of the world are sending a wakeup call to older generations. They are rightly demanding action on the climate crisis, on gender inequality, on human rights and on economic systems that prioritize short-term gains over the health of our planet and its people," she said.

“Thirty years after the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is time to listen to the voices of our children and hear their pleas for the broken promises to be fulfilled.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Defining quote: *“The most important leaders of our time are children. Passionate, engaged child activists from all regions of the world are sending a wakeup call to older generations. They are rightly demanding action on the climate crisis, on gender inequality, on human rights and on economic systems that prioritize short-term gains over the health of our planet and its people.”* Perhaps Travel & Tourism forums need more children thought-leaders to come up and say how the industry is failing them too.



SDG 17:

**UNICEF reports
uneven progress in
30 years of child
rights treaty**



SDG 17: UNICEF reports uneven progress in 30 years of child rights treaty



© UNICEF Patrick Brown. Children raise their hands to answer a question in class at a UNICEF learning space in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. (8 July 2019).

United Nations, 19 November 2019, UN News - Although the world has made historic gains over the past three decades in improving children's lives, urgent action is required if the poorest children are to feel the impact, a new UN [report](#) published on Monday warns.

The study by the UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) calls on countries to recommit to promises made under the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), adopted 30 years ago.

[Henrietta Fore](#), UNICEF Executive Director, noted that while increasing numbers of children are living longer, better and healthier lives, the odds continue to be stacked against the poorest and most vulnerable.

"In addition to the persistent challenges of health, nutrition and education, children today have to contend with new threats like climate change, online abuse and cyberbullying," she [said](#).

"Only with innovation, new technologies, political will and increased resources will we help translate the vision of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into a reality for all children

everywhere."

Uneven progress, emerging threats

The Convention on the Rights of the Child [is the most widely and rapidly adopted international treaty in history](#), and has been ratified by more than 190 countries.

It acknowledges childhood, which lasts through age 18, as a special time in which children must be allowed to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity.

UNICEF reported that since its adoption, the global rate for under-five mortality has dropped by around 60 per cent, while the proportion of undernourished children has almost halved.

The Convention has also influenced numerous constitutions, laws and policies that reflect its guiding principles, which include non-discrimination, the right to protection and acting in the best interests of the child.

However, the report shows that progress has not been even.



UNICEF said the world's children continue to confront age-old threats while new hazards loom over their future.

The poorest children are still likely to die from preventable causes before reaching their fifth birthday. Millions of the most disadvantaged are still at risk due to poverty, discrimination and marginalization. At the same time, cases of the childhood killer measles are on the rise as immunization coverage rates have slowed down since 2010.

Progress in education also is dismal. The report reveals that the number of primary level children out of school has remained static for more than a decade.

"Many of those who are in school are not learning the basics, let alone the skills they need to thrive in today's economy," UNICEF added.

In recent years, young people have been speaking up and calling for action to address climate change. UNICEF said they are the ones most at-risk.

"Rapid changes in climate are spreading disease,

increasing the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, and creating food and water insecurity. Unless urgent action is taken, the worst for many children is yet to come," the UN agency warned.

Inclusive dialogue planned

UNICEF believes that where there is political will and determination, children's lives improve, as documented by the report, which has been released ahead of [World Children's Day](#) on 20 November.

The study calls for more data and evidence to accelerate progress and advance child rights, alongside recommendations such as involving young people in creating solutions.

UNICEF will use the coming 12 months to promote an inclusive global dialogue aimed at making the promise of the convention a reality for all children.

As Ms. Fore, the UNICEF chief, stated: "The Convention stands at a crossroads between its illustrious past and its future potential. It is up to us to recommit, take decisive steps and hold ourselves accountable."

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This is the future generation, the ones who are not supposed to be left behind by the UN SDGs. If their situation does not improve, what hope is there for any of the SDGs to be realised?

