

THE OLIVE TREE

Edition 5. January - February 2018

How travel and tourism
can contribute to the
UN Sustainable
Development Goals



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, 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.



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CONTENTS

<u>8</u>	Message from Executive Editor, Imtiaz Muqbil
<u>9</u>	Message from Chairman, Jetwing Hotels, Hiran Cooray
<u>10</u>	Message from Joint Managing Director, Creative Travel India, Rohit Kohli
<u>11</u>	Message from Group MD, Asian Overland Services and Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa, Anthony Wong
<u>12</u> <u>13</u>	LEAD STORY 1: Mandela Peace Summit to be held in September 2018 Importance to travel & tourism
<u>14</u> <u>18</u>	LEAD STORY 2: ‘Don’t let adults off the hook, keep raising your voices;’ Kids speak out on World Children’s Day Importance to travel & tourism
<u>19</u> <u>20</u>	LEAD STORY 3: Arctic forever changed by rapidly warming climate – UN weather agency Importance to travel & tourism
<u>21</u> <u>22</u>	LEAD STORY 4: Sanitation chain, wastewater treatment focus of World Toilet Day Importance to travel & tourism
<u>23</u> <u>24</u>	LEAD STORY 5: UN designates 2021-2030 ‘Decade of Ocean Science’ Importance to travel & tourism
<u>25</u> <u>27</u>	SDG 2: UN agency head warns of rising global hunger Importance to travel & tourism
<u>28</u> <u>30</u>	SDG 2: Conflicts, drought drive hunger despite strong global food supply Importance to travel & tourism
<u>31</u> <u>33</u>	SDG 2: Greater investment needed for sustainable agriculture in mountains Importance to travel & tourism

CONTENTS

<u>34</u> <u>36</u>	SDG 2: From thorny to tasty: Cactus as climate resilient food? Importance to travel & tourism
<u>37</u> <u>39</u>	SDG 3: Electronic waste poses ‘growing risk’ to environment, human health Importance to travel & tourism
<u>40</u> <u>44</u>	SDG 3: Careless disposal of antibiotics could produce ‘ferocious superbugs’ Importance to travel & tourism
<u>45</u> <u>47</u>	SDG 3: Half the world lacks access to essential health services Importance to travel & tourism
<u>48</u> <u>50</u>	SDG 3: Countries should ‘accelerate progress’ on goal of universal health coverage Importance to travel & tourism
<u>51</u> <u>53</u>	SDG 3: Remove physical, cultural barriers for Persons with Disabilities’ Importance to travel & tourism
<u>54</u> <u>57</u>	SDG 3: World AIDS Day: Can the epidemic become ‘a thing of the past’? Importance to travel & tourism
<u>58</u> <u>61</u>	SDG 4: ‘All of UN’ approach urged to stop destruction, smuggling of cultural heritage Importance to travel & tourism
<u>62</u> <u>64</u>	SDG 8: Lack of quality opportunities stalling young people’s quest for decent work Importance to travel & tourism
<u>65</u> <u>68</u>	SDG 8: Europe seeks to improve transparency and predictability of working conditions Importance to travel & tourism

CONTENTS

<u>69</u>	SDG 8: Four billion people have no social security protection
<u>71</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>72</u>	SDG 8 :Media coverage frames public thinking on migrants and migration
<u>74</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>75</u>	SDG 8: Call to recognize migration's positive impact, address its challenges
<u>77</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>78</u>	SDG 8: South-South Expo closes with strengthened cooperation to achieve SDGs
<u>80</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>81</u>	SDG 9: China tops patent, trademark and design filings in 2016
<u>83</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>84</u>	SDG 10: Lift in global economy opens door to tackle deep-rooted development issues
<u>86</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>87</u>	SDG 10: UNICEF report probes impact of digital technology on children's lives
<u>89</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>90</u>	SDG 10: Fiscal stability can bolster inclusive, sustainable development in Asia-Pacific
<u>92</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>93</u>	SDG 13: European Commission unveils Action Plan for the Planet
<u>96</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>97</u>	SDG 13: Construction sector can do more to cut energy use, meet climate goals
<u>99</u>	Importance to travel & tourism

CONTENTS

<u>100</u>	SDG 13: Green business key to winning war on climate change
<u>102</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>103</u>	SDG 13: 12.6 million deaths a year due to environmental causes
<u>105</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>106</u>	SDG 13: Rapid, large-scale, coordinated action needed to beat pollution
<u>108</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>109</u>	SDG 15: Caring for the planet starts with ‘the ground we walk on,’
<u>111</u>	World Soil Day message Importance to travel & tourism
<u>112</u>	SDG 16: UN pledge to advance human dignity, equality and rights
<u>114</u>	Importance to travel & tourism
<u>115</u>	SDG 17: ‘Discrimination against one is discrimination against all,’
<u>117</u>	says UNESCO on Day for Tolerance Importance to travel & tourism
<u>118</u>	SDG 17: Integrating entertainment with philanthropy, UN shines a
<u>120</u>	spotlight on World TV Day Importance to travel & tourism

THE OLIVE TREE

Design & Layout: Nusreen Ekachon



MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE EDITOR

IMTIAZ MUQBIL

When World Children's Day was marked last 20 Nov 2017 at the UN HQ, Secretary-General António Guterres said this to a standing-room-only audience of children, teachers, government delegates and a host of others:

"It's my job to meet with some of the most powerful and important people in the world ... Presidents and Prime Ministers... scientists... military leaders... scholars and academics... captains of industry and business. But none of these people are as important – or as inspiring – as the children I meet."

He painted a picture of millions of girls and boys fleeing deadly conflicts and going hungry, separated from their parents or making long, dangerous journeys to find safety. "As a global community, we cannot continue failing these children," he asserted. "So here is my commitment to you: I will spare no effort to make sure that the United Nations is working every day, every hour, every minute, for your best interests."

The UN Chief has got his job cut out for him. A compilation of core statistics from various UN announcements in the last two months of 2017 show that the world is betraying its children big time. Here are just some of the mind-boggling stats embedded in various items in the Jan-Feb 2018 edition of The Olive Tree.

- Nearly a quarter of all deaths worldwide – or 12.6 million people a year – are due to environmental causes. Air pollution alone kills some 6.5 million annually, affecting mostly poor and vulnerable people.
- The vast majority of the world's wastewater is released untreated, affecting drinking water to 300 million people. In addition to the impact on health and environment, pollution also causes over \$4.6 trillion (equivalent to 6.2 per cent of global economic output) each year in welfare losses.
- Nearly 900 million people worldwide practice open defecation – not because they want to but because they have no choice.
- In 2017, the number of hungry people rose to 815 million – the first increase after more than a decade of steady decline.
- In 2016, 44.7 million metric tonnes of e-waste were generated, an increase of 3.3 million metric

tonnes, or 8 per cent, from 2014. This is forecast to rise 17% to 52.2 million metric tonnes by 2021. In 2016, only about 20%, or 8.9 million metric tonnes, of all e-waste was recycled.

- For almost 100 million people, medical expenses are high enough to push them into extreme poverty, forcing them to survive on just \$1.90 or less a day.
- If current trends persist, there will be 3.5 million new adolescent HIV infections by 2030.
- An estimated 70.9 million youth were unemployed in 2017. That is expected to rise in 2018 to 71.1 million. About 39% of young workers in the emerging and developing world – 160.8 million youth – are living in moderate or extreme poverty (less than \$3.10 a day), and more than two in every five young people in today's workforce are unemployed or are working but poor.
- More than half of the global population – some four billion people – have no social security protection.
- Some one billion mountain people – about 13% of the global population – are increasingly being impacted by the effects of climate change and climate-induced disasters.
- In 2016, an estimated 235 billion square metres of total floor area was reached. Over the next 40 years, an additional 230 billion m² buildings will be constructed – the equivalent of adding the floor area of Japan to the planet every year to 2060. When upstream power generation is included, buildings and construction account for 39 per cent of energy-related CO₂ emissions.

As an industry that creates jobs for the millions and makes a handsome living off natural, cultural and spiritual resources given to us FREE, travel & tourism can do a lot to roll back these dire statistics. That should be the order of the day, if we truly want to make the world a better place for our children.

All Food for Thought at the start of the 3rd year of the UN SDGs target period, with 12 years still to go.

As always, I thank Jetwing Hotels Sri Lanka, the Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa, Asian Overland Services and, as of this edition, Creative Travel India, for supporting the continued publication of The Olive Tree.



MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN, JETWING HOTELS

HIRAN COORAY

UN World Tourism Organisation Secretary General Taleb Rifai has called for travel & tourism to never forget its primary calling: to make the world a better place.

This pioneering publication is a perfect partnership between the public and private sectors and the media to help make the world a better place.

Sri Lanka has overcome the challenges of a long and bloody war, and is now pursuing a path to nation-building. Travel & tourism is a critical contributor to this task, and the private sector has a major role to play.

As one of the country's largest private sector players in the travel & tourism sector, Jetwing is proud to be contributing to the job creation, cultural preservation, poverty alleviation in an environmentally friendly way.

We hope this publication will rally the entire PATA fraternity to forge stronger links with the UN system and other multilateral agencies in pursuit of a common objective: Fulfillment of the Sustainable Development Goals, well before the target of 2030.



MESSAGE FROM JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR, CREATIVE TRAVEL INDIA

ROHIT KOHLI

Creative Travel is proud to be a sponsor of The Olive Tree and join the growing global outpouring of support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Our company was founded in 1977 by my late father Ram Kohli who believed passionately in the power of national, social, cultural, ethnic and religious peace as the fundamental prerequisite for travel & tourism to flourish. He always believed in ethics and integrity above all else. Our organisations core values are very important to every individual in the extended team.

Global Tourism needs peace and stability to grow and create more jobs for millions around the world. All 17 points of the UN Sustainable Development Goals have much in common with the founding principles of Creative Travel. We are just one microcosm in the vast and incredibly diverse country of India, but we strongly believe that all charity begins at home, and that if each and every company can put its shoulder to the wheel, we can collectively help make the world a better place.

We compliment Travel Impact Newswire for taking this initiative, and are happy to be a part of the solution.



MESSAGE FROM GROUP MD, ASIAN OVERLAND SERVICES AND FRANGIPANI LANGKAWI RESORT & SPA

ANTHONY WONG

The travel & tourism industry, one of the world's biggest and fastest growing industries, has been battered by hurricane-force winds of change for the last two decades. Much has changed as a result, but one thing that has yet to change is our own industry mindset.

Because we sell dreams for a living, we in travel & tourism often see the world through rose-tinted glasses. Minus those glasses, a more realistic picture of the world emerges.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are designed as solutions to the problems of the "real world". A mindset reset will help travel & tourism deal objectively and realistically with those same problems, all of which, sooner or later, affect us too.

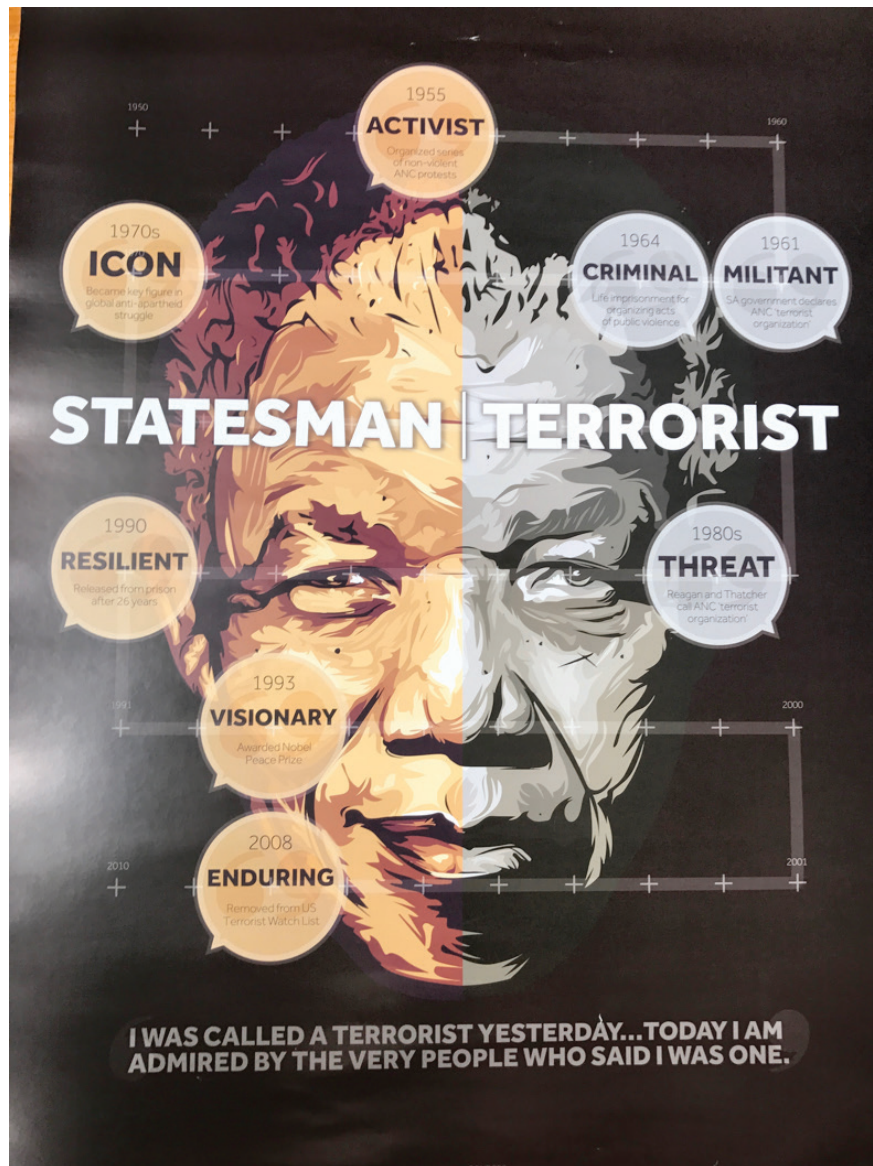
The Olive Tree, the first publication of its kind in travel & tourism, is designed to help our booming industry elevate the awareness levels of these problems, and help us become a part of the solution.

Asian Overland Services (www.asianoverland.com.my) and its subsidiary Frangipani Langkawi Resort & Spa (www.frangipanilangkawi.com) have been striving to be part of the solution since 1976. We were the first hotel in Malaysia to set up constructed wetlands for treatment of waste and sewage water. Over the years, we have invested heavily in many other such pioneering projects such as the "200 ways to save energy, water, food, and reduce waste." Training programmes and advisory services have been carried out in Malaysia and across the Asia-Pacific.

We are passionate about creating a better world for future generations. I compliment Travel Impact Newswire for this unique initiative, and am proud to support it.

LEAD STORY 1

Mandela Peace Summit to be held in September 2018



United Nations, 22 December 2017 - The United Nations General Assembly will hold a high-level meeting on global peace in honour of the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth a day before the general debate of its 73rd annual session in September 2018.

The 73rd session is scheduled to open on 18 September 2018. The first day of the high-level General Debate will be 25 September 2018.

Introducing the resolution, titled Nelson Mandela Peace Summit, on behalf of the African Group, Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee (Ghana) said the life of Nelson Mandela had been informed by his selfless commitment and deep sense of duty to South Africa, Africa and humanity as a whole. Mr. Mandela had ushered South Africa out of the insidious system of apartheid and strengthened national unity to avoid a civil war.

The summit will be in addition to the events that will be held on 18 July, his birthday, commemorated worldwide as Nelson Mandela International Day. Mr. Mandela was born in 1918 and died on 5 Dec 2013.

The preamble to the resolution said the General Assembly was guided by the purposes and principles enshrined in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and recalled the determination of the UN to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

It also acknowledged the calls by the UN Secretary-General for a renewed commitment to preventing conflict and sustaining peace with the support of prevention, conflict resolution and peacekeeping, peacebuilding, human rights and long-term development initiatives.

The UN General Assembly also “recognized Nelson Mandela’s values and his dedication to the service of humanity, as a humanitarian, in the fields of conflict resolution, race relations, promotion and protection of human rights, reconciliation, gender equality and the rights of children and other vulnerable groups, as well as the upliftment of poor and underdeveloped communities.” It also acknowledged his contribution “to the struggle for democracy internationally and the promotion of the culture of peace throughout the world.”

The UN has invited all Member and observer States to participate in the high-level meeting at the highest possible level, preferably at the level of Heads of State and Government, and also invited the participation of intergovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, the private sector, diaspora communities and migrant organizations.

Importance to travel & tourism

The centenary year of Nelson Mandela’s birth should be a cause célèbre across global travel & tourism, especially if framed within the context of his memorable quote, “*I was called a terrorist yesterday... Today, I am admired by the same people who said I was one.*” That alone deserves deeper introspection. In an era when terrorism is dominating global geopolitical agendas, and having a titanic ripple-effect impact, it behooves this so-called industry of peace to capitalise on the Nelson Mandela Birth Centenary to raise some serious questions about the costs and the price it is paying for a seemingly endless scourge. 2018 would be a good year for travel & tourism to learn from the Mandela school of courage and peacebuilding and end its well-known tendency to sweep critical issues under the carpet.

LEAD STORY 2

‘Don’t let adults off the hook, keep raising your voices;’ Kids speak out on World Children’s Day



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

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 20 November 2017 – It’s official, kids have taken over... at least for today – World Children’s Day – celebrated annually on 20 November, which this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), and also saw young people take over roles in government, media, and even at the United Nations, to raise awareness about issues important to them.

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

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

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

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

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



*Special Event to mark World Children’s Day 2017 with Zari (Afghanistan 6 y/o ... character from Sesame Street) and Anthony Lake, Executive Director of UNICEF, to the left.
UN Photo/Manuel Elias*

Keeping adults ‘on the hook’

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

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

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

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

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

*Emmanuel Elisha Ford
(Guyana - 15 y/o)
addresses the audience to mark
World Children’s Day 2017.
UN Photo/Manuel Elias*



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

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



Dafne Keen (Spain - 12 y/o) and Graciela Eisie Ouakabo (CAR 16 y/o) address the audience to mark World Children's Day 2017. UN Photo/Manuel Elias.

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

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

*Khyata Chauhan speaks at World's Children's Day at the UN in New York.
UN News/ Elizabeth Scaffidi*



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

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



*Cooper Megown is flanked
emcees Jaden Michael
and Isabela Moner as sisters
Chloe and Halle Bailey
stand in the back right.
UN News/ Elizabeth Scaffidi*

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

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

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

*Secretary-General António
Guterres (right) is interviewed by
Charlotte Fay of Scholastic Kids.
UN Photo/Manuel Elias*



Children in the spotlight

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

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

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

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

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

Importance to travel & tourism

Travel & tourism organisations pay excessive attention to “the millennials”, especially as revenue streams and business generators. When was the last time any travel & tourism association or organisation paid any attention to the generation which will succeed “the millennials”? What kind of world will they inherit? The events held at the United Nations to mark World Children’s Day 2017 flagged some of the concerns. They may be a good template for travel & tourism organisations to follow in 2018.

LEAD STORY 3

Arctic forever changed by rapidly warming climate – UN weather agency

A girl from the Iñupiat community stands on a ice floe on a shore of the Arctic Ocean in Barrow, Alaska in the United States. The anomalous melting of the Arctic ice is one of the many effects of global warming that has a serious impact on the life of humans and the wildlife.

Photo: UNICEF/Vlad Sokhin



United Nations, (UN News Centre) 20 December 2017 – The Arctic continued in 2017 to warm at double the rate of the global temperature increase, resulting in the second warmest air temperatures, above average ocean temperatures, loss of sea ice, and a range of human, ocean and ecosystem effects, according to the United Nations weather agency.

“While 2017 saw fewer records shattered than in 2016, the Arctic shows no sign of returning to the [reliably frozen region](#) it was decades ago,” said the Arctic Report Card, a peer-reviewed study that brings together the work of 85 scientists from 12 nations.

The UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said on Tuesday that the *Arctic Report Card* shows that the warming trend is continuing to drive dramatic transformation in the Arctic region.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said that the first 11 months of the year were the third warmest on record, behind 2016 and 2015, with much-warmer-than-average conditions engulfing much of the world’s land and ocean surfaces.

This means that the 2017 global land and ocean temperature will likely end among the three warmest years on record, and is expected to be the warmest year without a warming El Niño.

“What is more important than the ranking of an individual year is the overall, long-term trend of warming since the late 1970s, and especially this century,” said WMO senior scientist Omar Baddour.

“Along with rising temperatures, we are seeing more extreme weather with huge socio-economic impacts,” he said.

A separate report, published in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society (BAMS), said that last year's record global average temperatures, extreme heat over Asia, and unusually warm waters in the Bering Sea would not have been possible without human-caused climate change.

"This report marks a fundamental change," says Jeff Rosenfeld, editor-in-chief of BAMS. "For years scientists have known humans are

changing the risk of some extremes. But finding multiple extreme events that weren't even possible without human influence makes clear that we're experiencing new weather, because we've made a new climate."

Importance to travel & tourism

Following on from Lead Story 2, this is a strong indicator of the kind of world both the millennials and their children will inherit. All the more reason to start re-arranging the list of priority items on the travel & tourism agenda.

LEAD STORY 4

Sanitation chain, wastewater treatment focus of World Toilet Day



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

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 20 November 2017 – Even in wealthier countries, where people have access to toilets and faecal material is contained, treatment and final disposal of wastewater can be far from perfect, leading to polluted rivers and coastlines, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told a World Toilet Day event on Monday.

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

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

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

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



*Deputy Secretary-General
Amina Mohammed speaks
at World Toilet Day 2017*

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

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

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

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

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

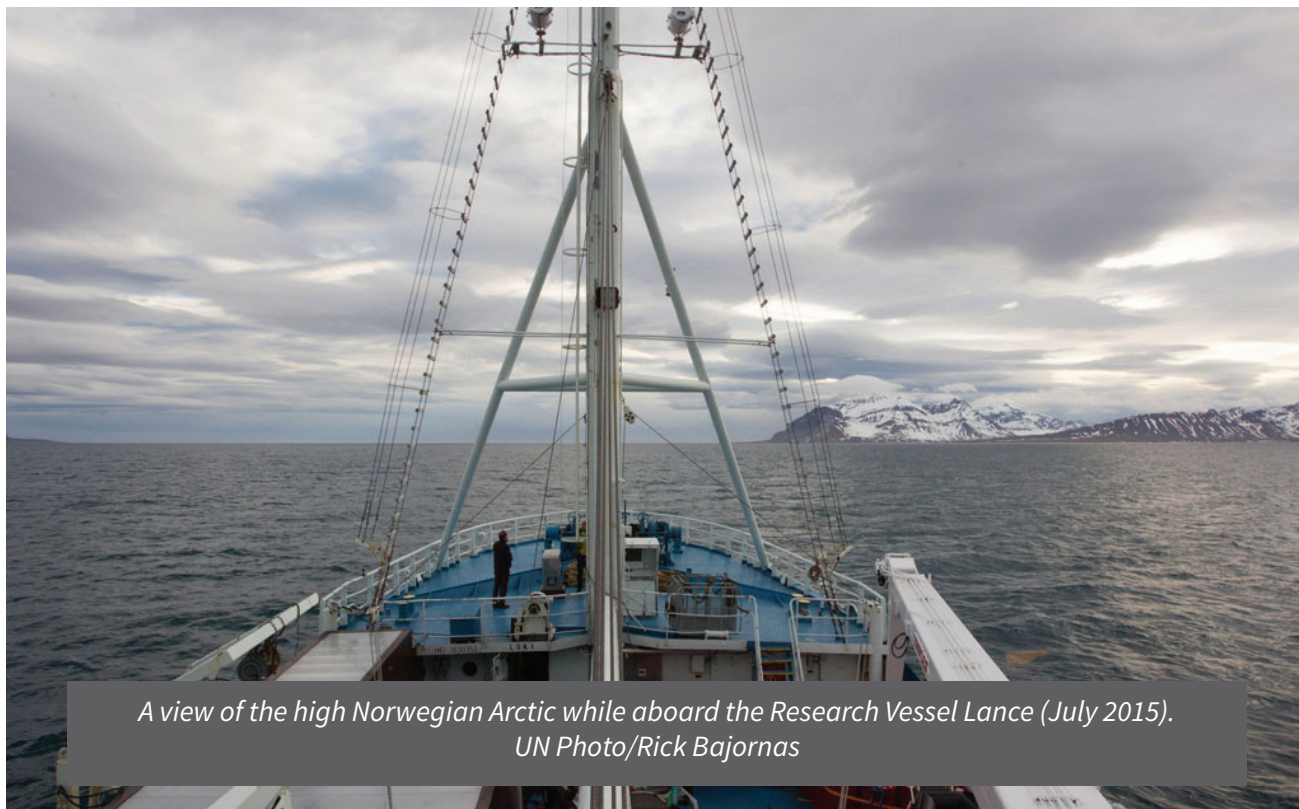
Wastewater and faecal sludge must also be treated and converted into products that can be safely used or returned to the environment, she stressed, highlighting the massive potential of treated wastewater as a source of energy, nutrients and water.

Importance to travel & tourism

No one invites friends or families to a dinner at home unless and until they can provide clean toilets. In fact, clean toilets are just as important as the quality of the dinner menu. Same applies to destinations. Increasingly, clean toilets are becoming an important criteria to determine quality-of-destination. Yet, how much are toilet cleaners paid for doing what must be one of the world’s most important jobs? How often do they get any awards or recognition?

LEAD STORY 5

UN designates 2021-2030 'Decade of Ocean Science'



*A view of the high Norwegian Arctic while aboard the Research Vessel Lance (July 2015).
UN Photo/Rick Bajornas*

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 6 December 2017 – The United Nations today designated the years 2021 to 2030 as the ‘Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development’ to boost international coordination and cooperation in research and scientific programmes for better management of ocean and coastal zone resources and reducing maritime risks.

The UN Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) will be leading the campaign.

“[The ocean is a new frontier](#) – it covers 71 per cent of the globe [but] we have explored less than 5 per cent. The Decade will ensure greater coordination of research,” said Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of UNESCO, urging all stakeholders to join the endeavour.

“[We are] proud to be at the forefront of this effort,” she added.

Across the world, close to three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity to meet their needs.

Oceans – critical for survival of all people across the planet – absorbs around a third of the carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced by humans and reduces the impact of climate change.

Given this important, the [2030 Agenda](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) call for specific action for the conservation and sustainable use the oceans, seas and marine resources (SDG 14).

The importance of oceans was also underscored at a [major conference](#) this past June at the UN Headquarters, in New York.

However, the cumulative effects of human activities on this vital important, including the impact of pollution, warming and acidification are yet to be fully evaluated scientifically and surveying the ocean requires costly ships and equipment, satellite imaging, underwater robots and remotely controlled vehicles.

It also requires thousands of scientists collecting and analysing the data, either in laboratories or in marine environments.

“One of the priorities of the Decade will be to strengthen and diversify financial sources, particularly for small island developing States and least developed countries,” said UNESCO.

“This Decade will provide a framework for international coordination and partnership to reinforce research capacities in marine sciences and the transfer of technology,” it added.

Importance to travel & tourism

The cruise and marine tourism sector and all the island and beach destinations can certainly put this 10-year commemoration at the core of their sustainability activities. The early announcement now makes plenty of time available for forward planning. There is no shortage of activities and events that can and should be carried out.

2 ZERO
HUNGER



SDG 2: UN agency head warns of rising global hunger





A woman, with her child on her back, looks to her husband who ploughs the field in rural Salyan district, in western Nepal. Photo: IFAD/Sanjit Das



SDG 2: UN agency head warns of rising global hunger

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 4 December 2017 – Immediate action is needed to address the rise in global hunger, the head of the United Nations food security agency has urged, highlighting the need to build resilience in poor and vulnerable communities.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), the number of hungry people around the world rose to 815 million – [the first increase after more than a decade of steady decline](#).

“The most important thing to do now is to build the resilience of poor people to face the impacts of conflicts and climate change,” José Graziano da Silva, the Director-General of FAO told the UN agency’s Council meeting in Rome, Monday.

In addition to rising hunger, obesity and overweight are also growing in developed and developing countries, adding further challenges and raising the cost of current food systems.

It is, thus, critical to ensure that humanitarian assistance is combined with development actions to chart a course to eradicate hunger by 2030, added Mr. Graziano da Silva, calling for new and increased investments from both the public and private sectors.

At the FAO Council, which manages administrative and financial affairs between biennial meetings of the UN agency’s Conference, the Director-General outlined major events in 2018, including those on agroecology, globally important agricultural heritage systems, innovation for smallholder and family farmers, as well as plan to launch an international platform for biodiversity.

These initiatives are designed to support countries put in place sustainable agricultural practices that combine food production, ecosystem services and climate-change resilience at the same time, Mr. Graziano da Silva explained.

Importance to travel & tourism

Growing global hunger is not something most tourists are concerned about when enjoying the feast at the buffet tables. Perhaps they should be, especially in order to cut down on wastage. Too much food is wasted in the global travel & tourism sector. A real tragedy, given the number of people who go to sleep hungry every night.



SDG 2: Conflicts, drought drive hunger despite strong global food supply





Loading farm carts in Bangladesh. Photo: FAO/Mohammad Rakibul Hasan

2 ZERO HUNGER



SDG 2: Conflicts, drought drive hunger despite strong global food supply

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 7 December 2017 – Despite strong global food supply, localized drought, flooding and protracted conflicts have intensified and perpetuated food insecurity, the United Nations agriculture agency reported Thursday.

The new edition of the UN Food and Agriculture Agency's ([FAO](#)) [Crop Prospects and Food Situation](#) report revealed that some 37 countries – 29 of which are in Africa – require external food assistance.

“Ongoing conflicts continue to be a key [driver of severe food insecurity](#), having triggered near-famine conditions in northern Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen, as well as widespread hunger in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo – and Syria,” FAO stated.

The report also said that conflict impedes productive activities, hinders access to food and significantly intensifies the numbers of internally displaced people.

In Africa, the report details that urgently in need of food assistance are about 1.1 million people in the Central African Republic; some 7.7 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which hosts more than 200,000 refugees and four million internally displaced persons; over three million in northern Nigeria; some 4.8 million in South Sudan; and 3.1 million in Somalia – a number that has tripled over the past year.

Elsewhere, it points out that chronic hunger or food insecurity is confronted by 7.6 million in Afghanistan; 3.2 million in Iraq; and 6.5 million in Syria.

Moreover, in Yemen 17 million, or 60 per cent of the population, are believed to require urgent humanitarian assistance. The report notes that should November's maritime port closures be repeated the country would risk famine.

Learn more about FAO's work in these countries [here](#).

In some regions, adverse weather conditions are taking their toll on farm food outputs – notably due to drought in East Africa and floods in parts of Asia.

Some 8.5 million people are estimated to be food insecure in Ethiopia, especially in the Somali region. Consecutive unfavourable rainy seasons have curtailed crop and livestock production in Kenya, leaving about 2.6 million people severely food insecure.

The report also flags concerns in Bangladesh, where three episodes of flash floods this year caused substantial damage to the rice crop.

A severe summer drought has also cut Mongolia's wheat harvest by almost half.

Despite local negative trends, the report points out that, overall, global food production is booming. In addition, production gains are being recorded in many low-income food-deficit countries, where the aggregate cereal output is forecast to grow by two per cent this year.

Importance to travel & tourism

Following on from the previous item, this is yet another report underscoring the importance of slashing over-consumption and wastage in travel & tourism.



SDG 2: Greater investment needed for sustainable agriculture in mountains





A mountain village in Bajhang district, Nepal. Photo: IFAD/Irshad Khan



SDG 2: Greater investment needed for sustainable agriculture in mountains

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 December 2017 – On International Mountain Day, the United Nations food security agency has called for greater focus on sustainable agriculture in highland regions around the globe to better respond to climate change impacts and migration challenges.

“Investing in sustainable agriculture in mountain regions is central to the response to climate and migration challenges as it promotes the adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and reduces other root causes of migration such as rural poverty and food insecurity,” said Maria Helena Semedo, the Deputy Director-General at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), in a [news release](#) marking the [International Day](#).

Across the world, some one billion mountain people – about 13 percent of the global population – are increasingly being impacted by the effects of climate change and climate-induced disasters. Furthermore, living in often geographically isolates areas and on the political and economic margins of their countries, they are more prone to hunger and poverty.

As mountain people become more vulnerable, migration to urban areas and abroad increases. Those who remain are often women, left to manage the farms but with little access to credit, training and land tenure rights, added FAO in the release.

In the release, the UN agency further noted that in an effort to address these challenges, some 60 countries and over 200 civil society organizations today [pledged](#) to strengthen mountain people’s and their environments’ resilience to climate change, hunger and migration as well as to bolster the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

The commitments include reviews and updates by Governments to their development policies, integrating strategies and international development cooperation policies for sustainable mountain development and mountain ecosystem conservation.

The pledge, made by members of the Mountain Partnership – an alliance founded in 2002 by Italy, Switzerland, FAO, the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) and over 300 members from other Governments, and intergovernmental, civil society and private sector organizations – also includes a focus on raising awareness on the importance of sustainable mountain development and mountain ecosystem conservation in all relevant international forums.

Recognizing the importance of mountain watersheds

Also in the news release, FAO announced the launch of its publication, [Watershed Management in Action](#), which recognizes the role of well managed mountain watersheds in supplying freshwater to humankind and reducing the risk of natural disasters for downstream communities.

The publication presents lessons learned and recommendations based on a comparative review of 12 FAO-supported projects testing new watershed management approaches over the past decade in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, the Gambia, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Mauritania, Morocco, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Tanzania and Zambia.

Importance to travel & tourism

Same comment as in an earlier item: Growing global hunger is not something most tourists are concerned about when enjoying the feast at the buffet tables. Perhaps they should be, especially in order to cut down on wastage. Too much food is wasted in the global travel & tourism sector. A real tragedy, given the number of people who go to sleep hungry every night.

2 ZERO
HUNGER



SDG 2: From thorny to tasty: Cactus as climate resilient food?





Cactus fruit. Photo: Tarquille.deviantart.com

2
ZERO
HUNGER



SDG 2: From thorny to tasty: Cactus as climate resilient food?

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 30 November 2017 – With the reality of climate change becoming more real by the day, including its impact on food sources, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) is urging communities around the world not to take the prickly cactus for granted.

“Climate change and the increasing risks of droughts are strong reasons to [upgrade the humble cactus](#) to the status of an essential crop in many areas,” said Hans Dreyer, the Director of Plant Production and Protection Division at FAO, noting the plant’s potential.

According to the UN agency, cultivation of cactus pear is slowly catching on, in part, boosted by growing need for resilience in the face of drought, degraded soils and higher temperatures.

This was evident during the recent intense drought in southern Madagascar, where the plant – once viewed as a worthless invasive species – provided a crucial supply of food, forage and water for local people and – whose spines have been bred out

but return after stress events – is naturalized in 26 countries beyond its native range,” says FAO, adding: “Its hardy persistence makes it both a useful food of last resort and an integral part of sustainable agricultural and livestock systems.”

Historically, cactus’ culinary qualities have been a prominent feature in Mexico as well as the Italian island of Sicily, renowned for its gourmet tradition.

In Mexico alone, the yearly per capita consumption of nopalitos – the tasty young pads, known as cladodes – is 6.4 kilograms and the plant is grown on small farms (as primary or supplemental crop) and harvested in the wild on more than three million hectares.

Cactus as source of water and to lower greenhouse gas emissions

Aside from providing food, cactus also stores water in its pads, providing up to 180 tonnes of water per hectare – enough to sustain five adult cows.

This usefulness is all the more important during droughts, when livestock survival rate has been far higher on farms with cactus plantations.

And with pressure on water sources only projected to rise in the future, cactus could become one of the important crops for the 21st century.

Furthermore, there is evidence that yields in barley – a major cereal grain globally – rise when cactus is grown alongside it as a soil-improving alley crop, and there is research showing that use of cactus in cattle diets reduces the ruminants' methanogenesis (production of methane in the guts of animals, especially

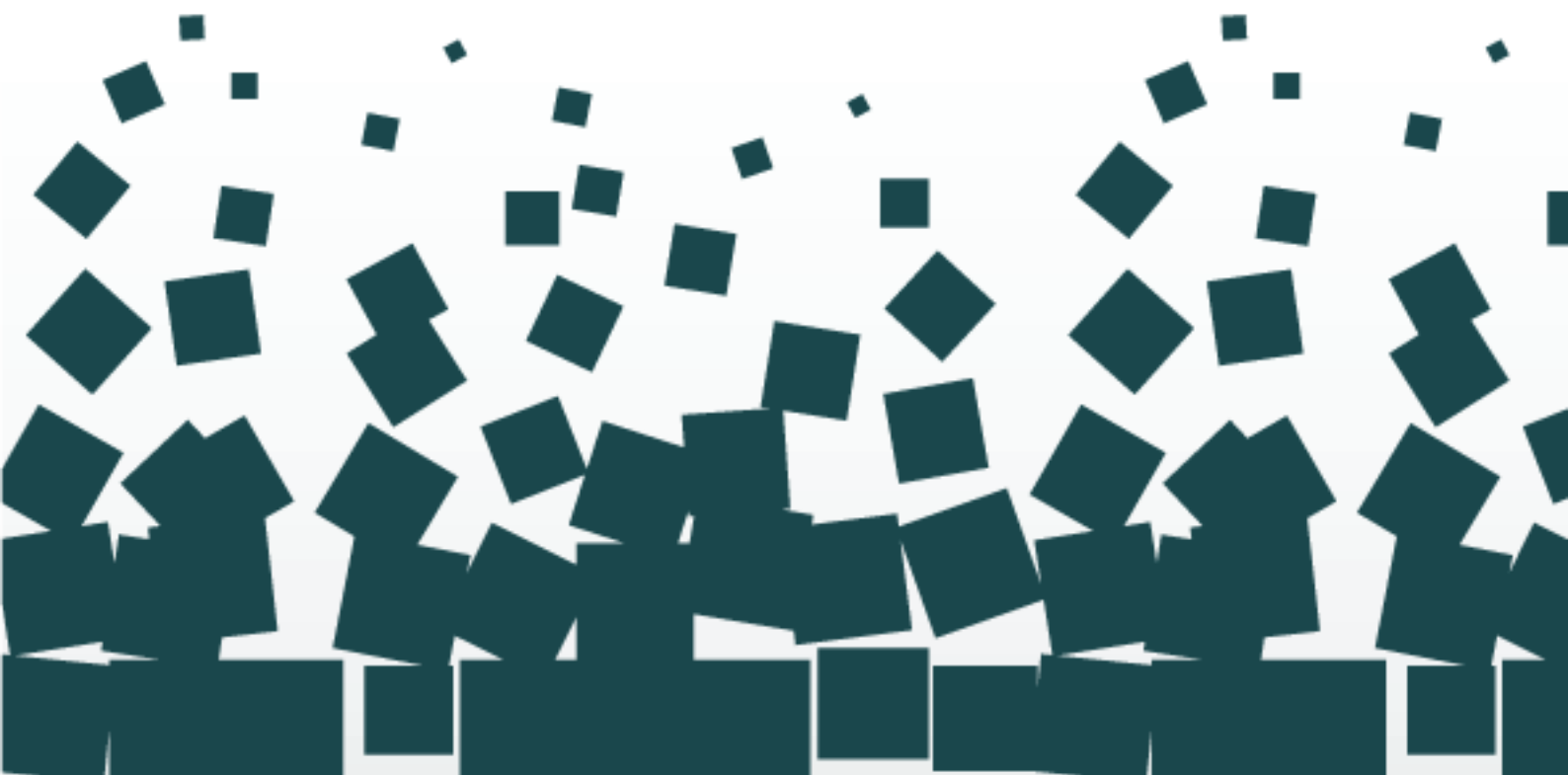
Importance to travel & tourism

There is more to it than just considering cactus as a source of nutrition and food. At a broader level, it flags the need to think about the unthinkable and put more alternative perspectives on the travel & tourism agenda. Another kind of “change” that the next generation needs to prepare for.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: Electronic waste poses 'growing risk' to environment, human health





Source: ITU - The Global E-waste Monitor 2017



SDG 3: Electronic waste poses 'growing risk' to environment, human health

Geneva, ITU media release, 13 December 2017 – The growing volume of electronic waste, including discarded products with a battery or plug, such as mobile phones, laptops, televisions, refrigerators and electrical toys, poses a major threat to the environment and human health, the United Nations warned on Wednesday.

“Environmental protection is one of the three pillars of sustainable development [...] E-waste management is an urgent issue in today’s [digitally dependent world](#), where use of electronic devices is ever increasing,” said Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)).

The [Global E-Waste Monitor 2017](#), released by ITU, the UN University (UNU) and the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), highlights increasing levels of e-waste and its improper and unsafe treatment and disposal through burning or at dumpsites.

In 2016, 44.7 million metric tonnes of e-waste were generated, an increase of 3.3 million metric tonnes, or 8 per cent, from 2014. Experts foresee e-waste increasing a further 17 per cent to 52.2 million metric tonnes by 2021.

E-waste contains \$55 billion worth of recoverable materials

In 2016, only about 20 per cent, or 8.9 million metric tonnes, of all e-waste was recycled.

“The Global E-waste Monitor serves as a valuable resource for governments developing their necessary management strategies, standards and policies to reduce the adverse health and environmental effects of e-waste,” said Mr. Zhao.

With 53.6 per cent of global households now having Internet access, national e-waste policies and legislation play an important role governing the actions of stakeholders who are associated with e-waste. Currently 66 per cent of the world population, living in 67 countries, is covered by national e-waste management laws, a significant increase from 44 per cent in 2014.

Low recycling rates can have a negative economic impact. In 2016, it was estimated that e-waste contained rich deposits of gold, silver, copper, platinum, palladium and other high value recoverable materials, whose total value is estimated at \$55 billion, a figure exceeding the gross domestic product of most countries in the world.

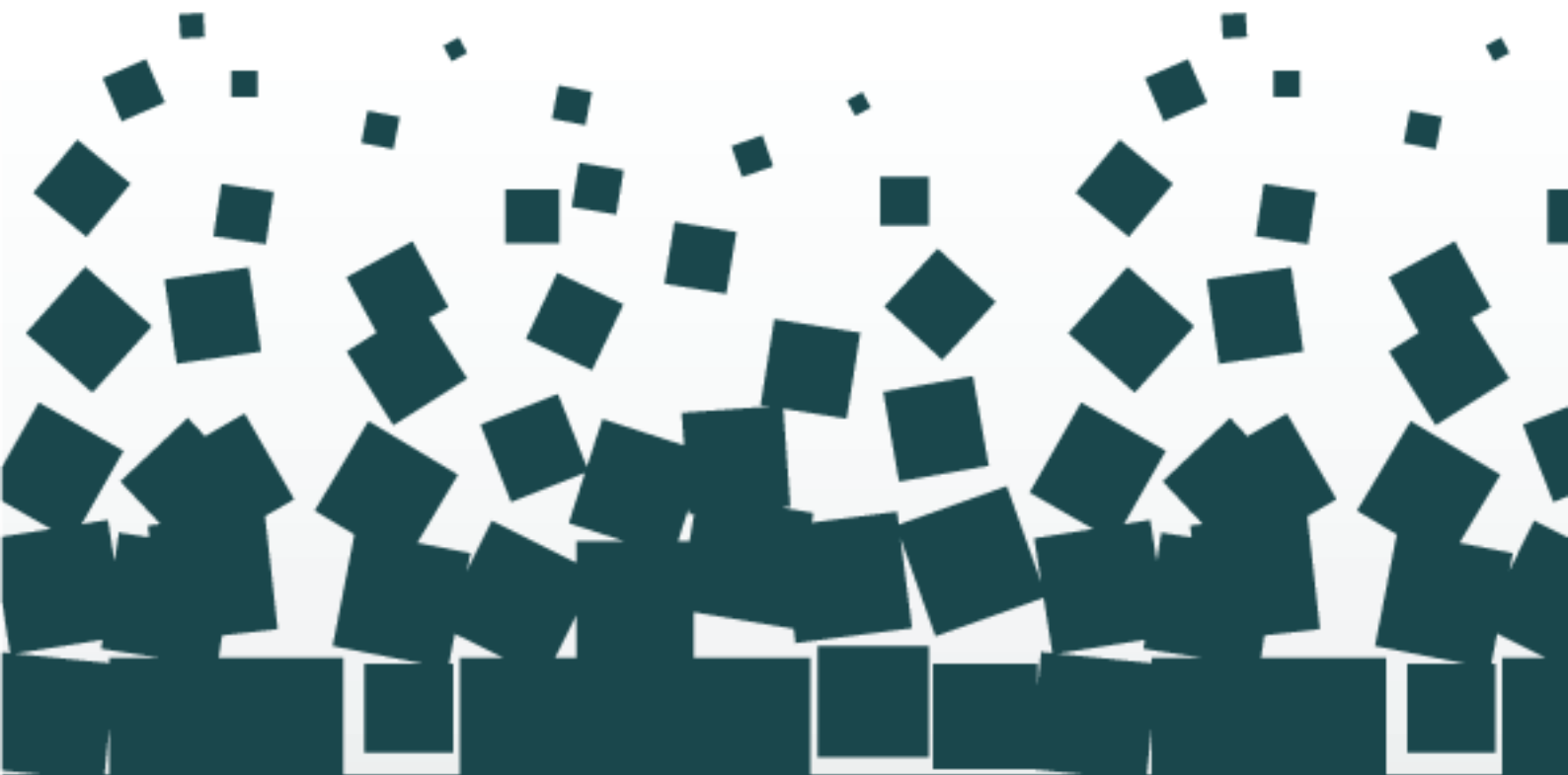
Importance to travel & tourism

If travel & tourism is a major user of IT products and services, it is certainly a major generator of e-waste. What is the industry doing about it? Another agenda item that is not often seen at techno-babble forums.

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: Careless disposal of antibiotics could produce 'ferocious superbugs'





Birds scavenging for food amidst the debris at the landfill in Danbury, Connecticut in the United States. UN Photo/Evan Schneider (file photo)



SDG 3: Careless disposal of antibiotics could produce 'ferocious superbugs'

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 5 December 2017 – Growing antimicrobial resistance linked to the discharge of drugs and some chemicals into the environment is one of the most worrying health threats today, according to new research from the United Nations that highlights emerging challenges and solutions in environment.

“The warning here is truly frightening: we could be spurring the development of [ferocious superbugs](#) through ignorance and carelessness,” said Erik Solheim, chief of the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), on Tuesday.

He added that studies have already linked the misuse of antibiotics in humans and agriculture over the last several decades to increasing resistance, but the role of the environment and pollution has received little attention.

As such, the [Frontiers Report](#), launched on the second day of the UN Environment Assembly ([UNEA](#)), which is running through 6 December at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, looks at the environmental dimension of antimicrobial resistance in nanomaterials; marine protected areas; sand and dust storms; off-grid solar solutions; and environmental displacement – finding the role of the environment in the emergence and spread of resistance to antimicrobials particularly concerning.

“This needs priority action right now, or else we run the risk of allowing resistance to occur through the back door, with potentially terrifying consequences,” stressed Mr. Solheim.

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when a microorganism evolves to resist the effects of an antimicrobial agent. Globally about 700,000 people die of resistant infections every year because available antimicrobial drugs have become less effective at killing the resistant pathogens.

Clear evidence shows that antimicrobial compounds from households, hospitals, pharmaceutical facilities and agricultural run-off released into the environment, combined with direct contact between natural bacterial communities and discharged resistant bacteria, is driving bacterial evolution and the emergence of more resistant strains.

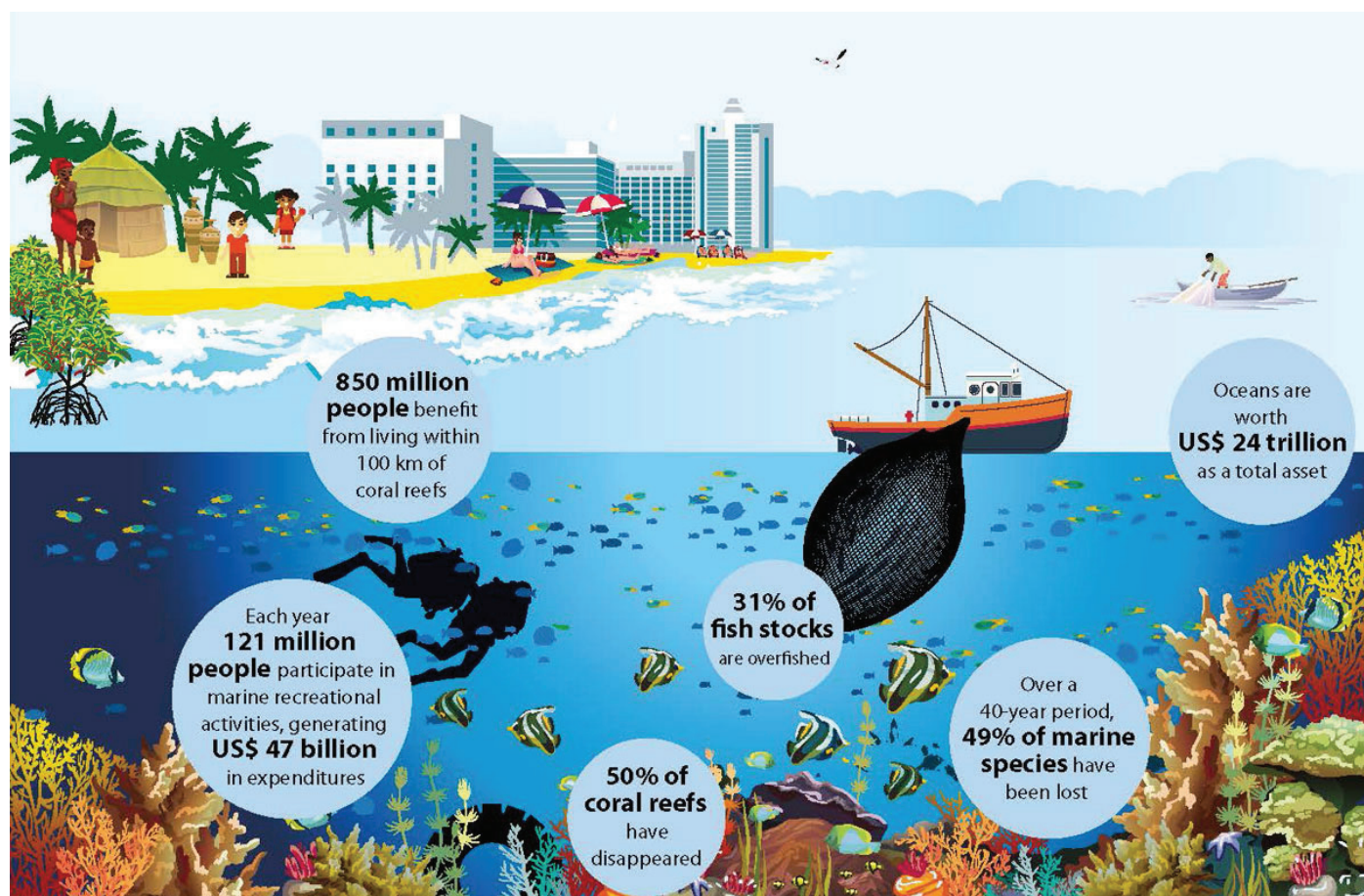
Once consumed, most antibiotic drugs are excreted un-metabolized along with resistant bacteria – up to 80 per cent of consumed antibiotics, according

to the report. This is a growing problem, as human antibiotic use this century has increased 36 per cent and livestock antibiotic use predicted to increase 67 per cent by 2030.

Evidence shows that multi-drug resistant bacteria are prevalent in marine waters and sediments close to aquaculture, industrial and municipal discharges.

Solving the problem will mean tackling the use and disposal of antibiotic pharmaceuticals as well as the release of antimicrobial drugs, relevant contaminants and resistant bacteria into the environment, the report says.

Ocean and coastal values at stake



Antimicrobial resistance and the environment



Other evolving issues

The report also considers other emerging issues, such as nanomaterials in which little is understood about their long-term effects. According to UNEP, past lessons reveal that “no evidence of harm” does not equal “evidence of no harm,” meaning that research into nanomaterials is essential.

Another area it highlighted was in securing Marine Protected Areas as one excellent option for maintaining or restoring the ocean’s and coastal ecosystems health, and a potential driver for economic benefits derived from them.

The Frontiers Report also noted that sand and dust storms, which impoverish arid landscapes soils, and can cause economic losses, indicted that

strategies promoting sustainable land and water management must be integrated with measures addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Pointing out that nearly one billion people live without electricity, the report emphasized the importance of bridging the off-grid energy gap as a possible key to achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for universal access to affordable, reliable energy services.

Finally, in an era of unprecedented mobility, unless we deal with long-term environmental vulnerability and build resilience, environmental the report points out that migration produces displacement will become a new normal. environmental changes that include pollution, deforestation and biodiversity loss, saying that

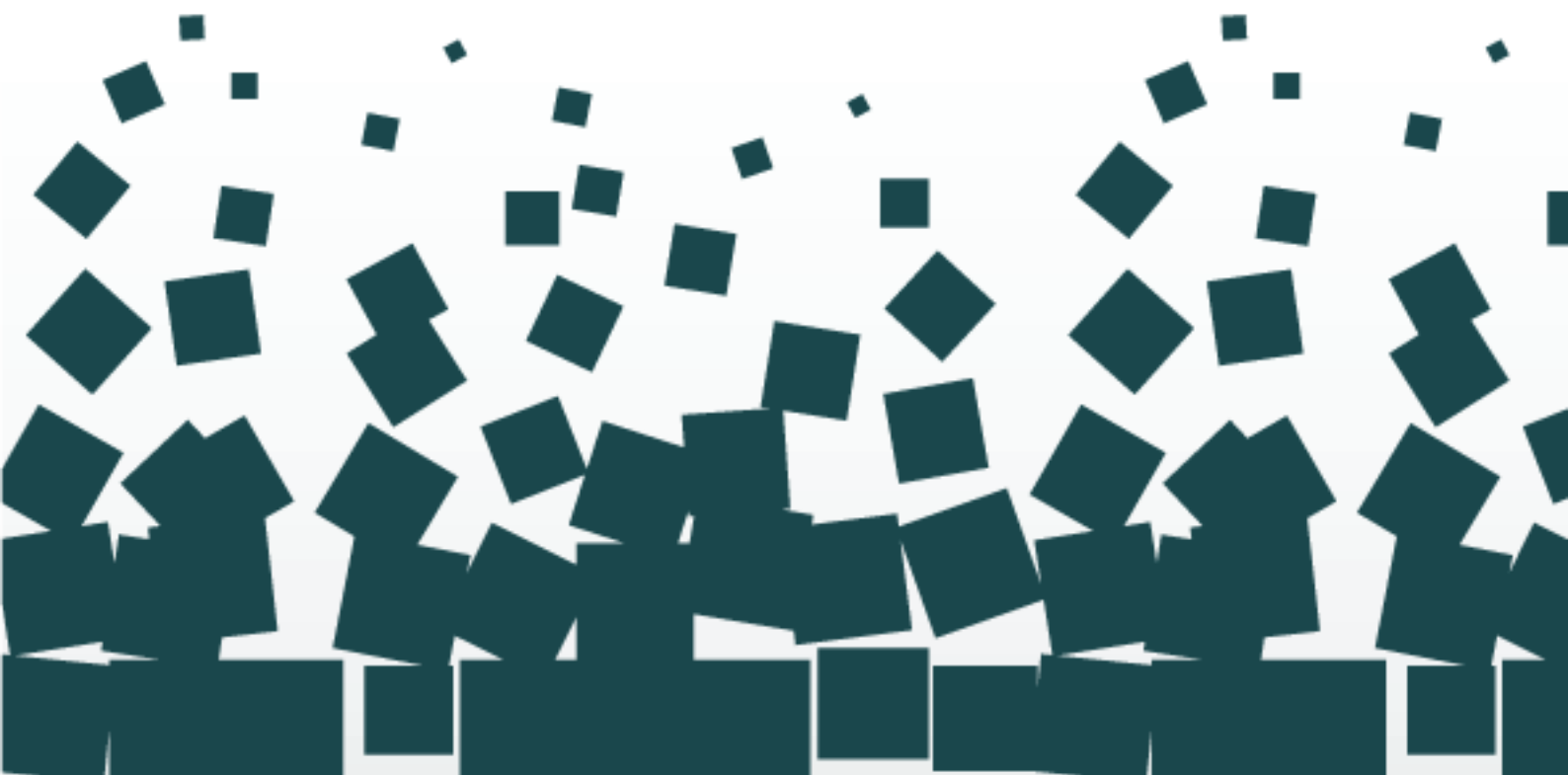
Importance to travel & tourism

Is this issue ever discussed at health and wellness and/or medical tourism conferences? Yes, medical tourism is a major money spinner for many countries, but warnings such as this require travel & tourism to broaden its range of agenda items to balance both the positive and negative impacts.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: Half the world lacks access to essential health services





Strong primary health care is the lifeblood of every health system and no country can achieve Universal Health Coverage without it. Photo: WHO



SDG 3: Half the world lacks access to essential health services

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 13 December 2017 – At least half of the world’s population cannot obtain essential health services, and nearly 100 million people are being pushed into extreme poverty each year due to the out-of-pocket health expenses they must pay, according to a United Nations-backed study.

“It is [completely unacceptable](#) that half the world still lacks coverage for the most essential health services,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), in a press release.

“A solution exists: universal health coverage allows everyone to obtain the health services they need, when and where they need them, without facing financial hardship,” Mr. Tedros added.

The study, [Tracking Universal Health Coverage: 2017 Global Monitoring Report](#), co-authored by the World Bank and WHO, notes that 800 million people spend at least 10 per cent of their household budgets on health expenses for themselves, a sick child or other family member.

For almost 100 million people, these expenses are high enough to push them into extreme poverty, forcing them to survive on just \$1.90 or less a day.

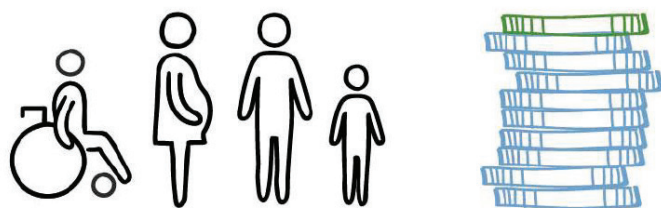
“The report makes clear that if we are serious – not just about better health outcomes, but also about ending poverty – we must urgently scale up our efforts on universal health coverage,” said World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim.

Wide gaps exist in the availability of services in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. In other regions, basic health care services such as family planning and infant immunization are becoming more available, but lack of financial protection makes it difficult for families to pay for these services.

Even in more affluent regions such as East Asia, Latin America and Europe, a growing number of people are spending at least 10 per cent of their household budgets on out-of-pocket health expenses.

Inequalities in health services are seen not just between, but also within countries: national averages can mask low levels of health service coverage in disadvantaged population groups.

800 million people
spend more than 10% of household
budget on healthcare



Source: World Health Organization

In low- and lower-middle income countries, only 17 per cent of mothers and children in the poorest fifth of households received at least six of seven basic maternal and child health interventions, while 74 per cent for the wealthiest fifth of households did so.

The report is a key point of discussion at the global Universal Health Coverage Forum 2017, currently taking place in Tokyo, Japan. In addition to Mr. Kim and Mr. Tedros, attendees include heads of State and ministers from over 30 countries. UN [Secretary-General](#) Antonio Guterres will address the Forum on Thursday.

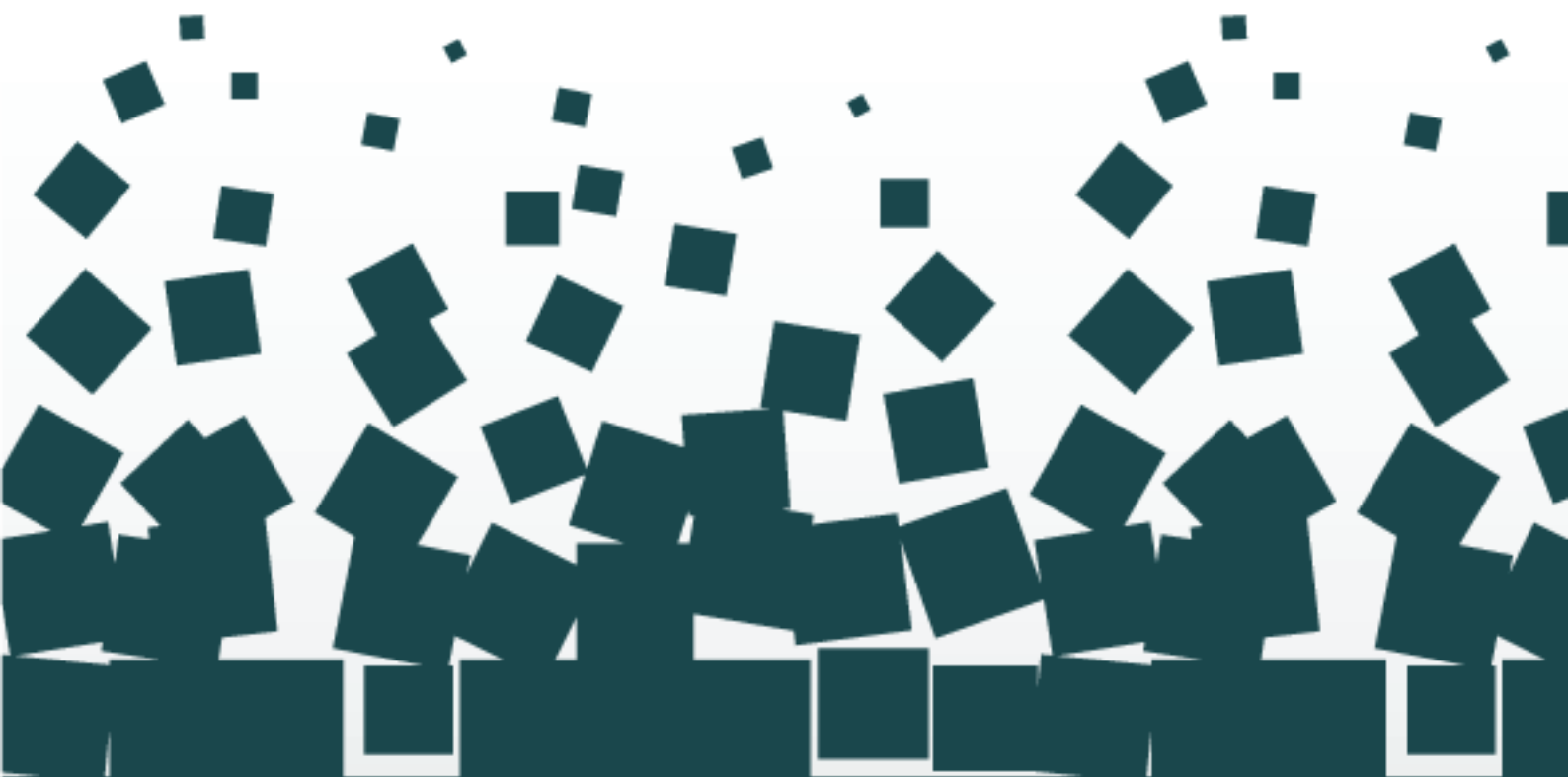
Importance to travel & tourism

Is this issue ever discussed at health & wellness and/or medical tourism conferences? Imbalanced access to health care is symptomatic of the rich-poor income gap which lies at the core of the UN SDGs. What can health and wellness practitioners do for the poor and under-privileged?

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



**SDG 3: Countries should
'accelerate progress' on goal
of universal health coverage**





*A home-based caregiver in a village near Kayar, Senegal, provides basic healthcare services, including malaria treatment for patients living in areas where there are no healthcare facilities.
Photo: The Global Fund/Nana Kofi Acquah*



SDG 3: Countries should 'accelerate progress' on goal of universal health coverage

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 12 December 2017 – The United Nations on Tuesday called for greater efforts on the part of its Member States to ensure universal health coverage, and designated 12 December as International Universal Health Coverage Day.

In one of the two resolutions adopted today, the UN General Assembly – composed of all 193 UN Member States – called for efforts ensure that all people have equal access, without discrimination of any kind, to quality promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative basic health services.

It also encouraged all Member States to promote the effective, full and meaningful participation of all – in particular those who are vulnerable or in vulnerable situations – in the design, implementation and monitoring of law, policies and programmes relevant to realizing the right of everyone to the

enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and to implementing the health-related Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), including strategies for universal health coverage.

Also in the resolution, the General Assembly called for reinforcing the protection of medical and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, their means of transport and equipment, and hospitals and other medical facilities, especially in armed conflict, consistent with their specific obligations under international humanitarian law.

Further, the Assembly also announced that it would hold a high-level meeting in 2019 on universal health coverage.

Acting on a related text, the Assembly proclaimed 12 December as International Universal Health Coverage Day and invited all Member States, entities of the UN system and all other relevant stakeholders, including the civil society and the private sector to observe the International

Day annually “in an appropriate manner and in accordance with national priorities, through education and activities, in order to raise awareness of the need for strong and resilient health systems and universal health coverage.”

Importance to travel & tourism

Same importance as the previous item: Is this issue ever discussed at health & wellness and/or medical tourism conferences? Imbalanced access to health care is symptomatic of the rich-poor income gap which lies at the core of the UN SDGs. What can health and wellness practitioners do for the poor and under-privileged?

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: Remove physical, cultural barriers for Persons with Disabilities'

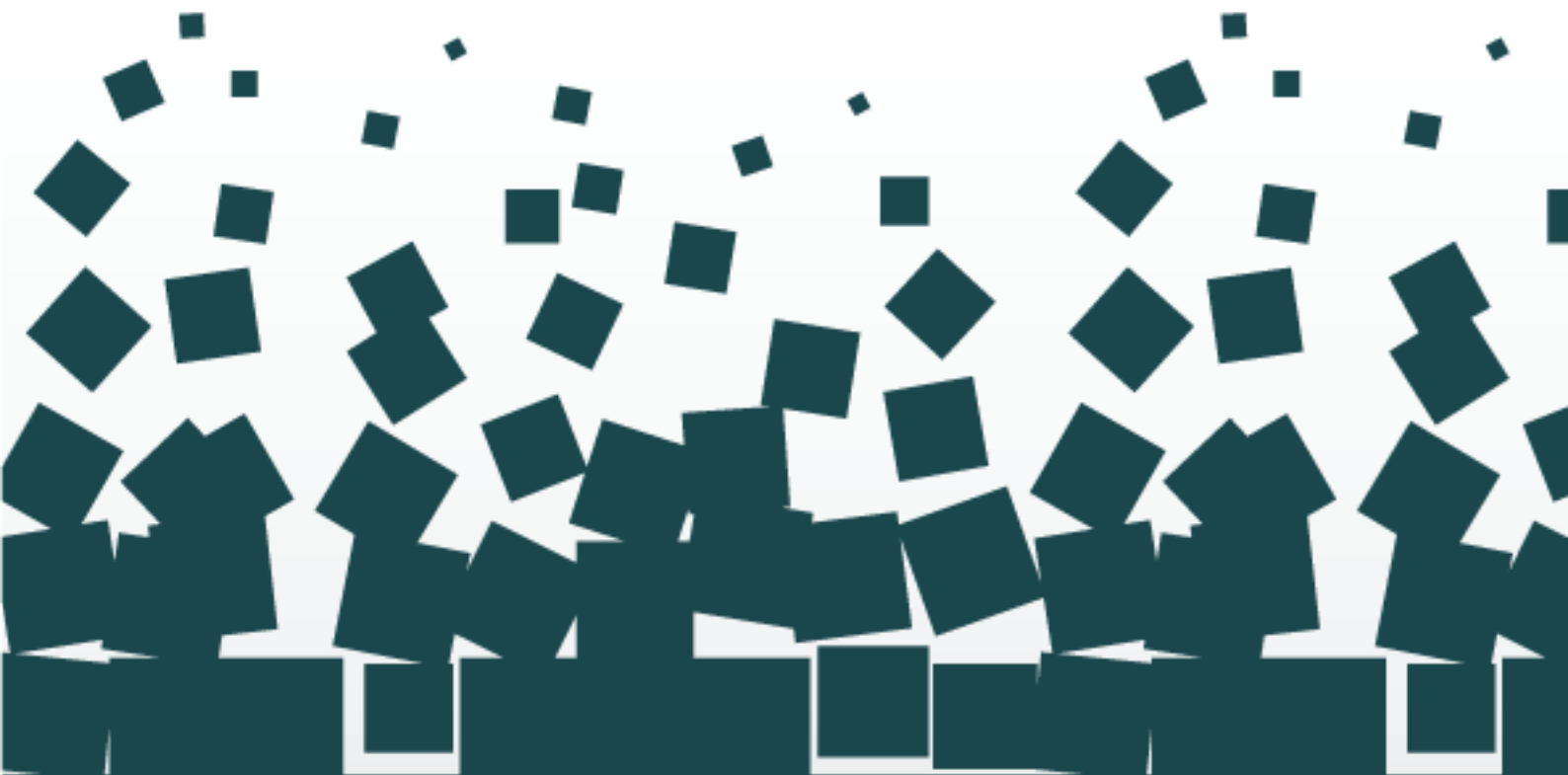




Photo: World Bank/Masaru Goto



SDG 3: Remove physical, cultural barriers for Persons with Disabilities'

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 3 December 2017 – Persons with disabilities, as both beneficiaries and agents of change, can fast track the process towards inclusive and sustainable development, and for the [2030 Agenda](#) to truly live up to its promise to ‘leave no one behind,’ all physical and cultural barriers must be removed to create societies that provide real opportunities for everyone everywhere, the United Nations has said.

The theme of the 2017 edition of the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) is ‘Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all,’ and the UN is urging governments, persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, academic institutions and the private sector to work as a ‘team to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

In his [message](#) on the Day, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development embodies a commitment to building the capacities of those who face marginalization and exclusion to reduce their vulnerability to economic, social and environmental shocks.

In recent years, the international community has achieved notable progress in advancing the rights of the world’s one billion persons with disabilities. Disability is recognized as a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda, the [New Urban Agenda](#), which sets a new global standard for sustainable urban development, and the [Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction](#).

“Yet, persons with disabilities remain too often excluded from the design, planning and implementation of policies and programmes that have an impact on their lives. Too often they face discrimination in labour markets and in access to education and other services,” stated Mr. Guterres.

To overcome this challenge, the UN chief said, the path towards inclusive, accessible, usable facilities, technologies, infrastructure, services and products must be ensured by, for and with persons with disabilities.

“We must build on their agency, working together to design, develop and implement affordable and innovative solutions to realize equality for all,” he underscored, adding: “On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, let us remove physical and cultural barriers, build resilient societies and create opportunities that truly leave no one behind.”

RELATED: [What Disability Means – Facts & Figures](#)

Echoing that call, Audrey Azoulay the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), said in her message that persons with disabilities are [on the frontlines of a world changing quickly](#) and societies transforming, and they are especially vulnerable to the impacts of humanitarian crises and environmental challenges.

“This cannot go on. We must integrate persons with disabilities into all decision-making and policies,” she emphasized, explain that UNESCO will continue acting across the board, starting with, among others, inclusive education, leading the Education 2030 Framework, drawing on UNESCO’s Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education to bolster educational systems that provide opportunity to all.

“UNESCO’s message is clear today. Building sustainable and resilient societies requires the inclusion, participation and empowerment of every woman and man, including persons with disabilities,” stressed Ms. Azoulay, adding: “This is about equal rights and dignity – this is about the better future we seek to build for all.”

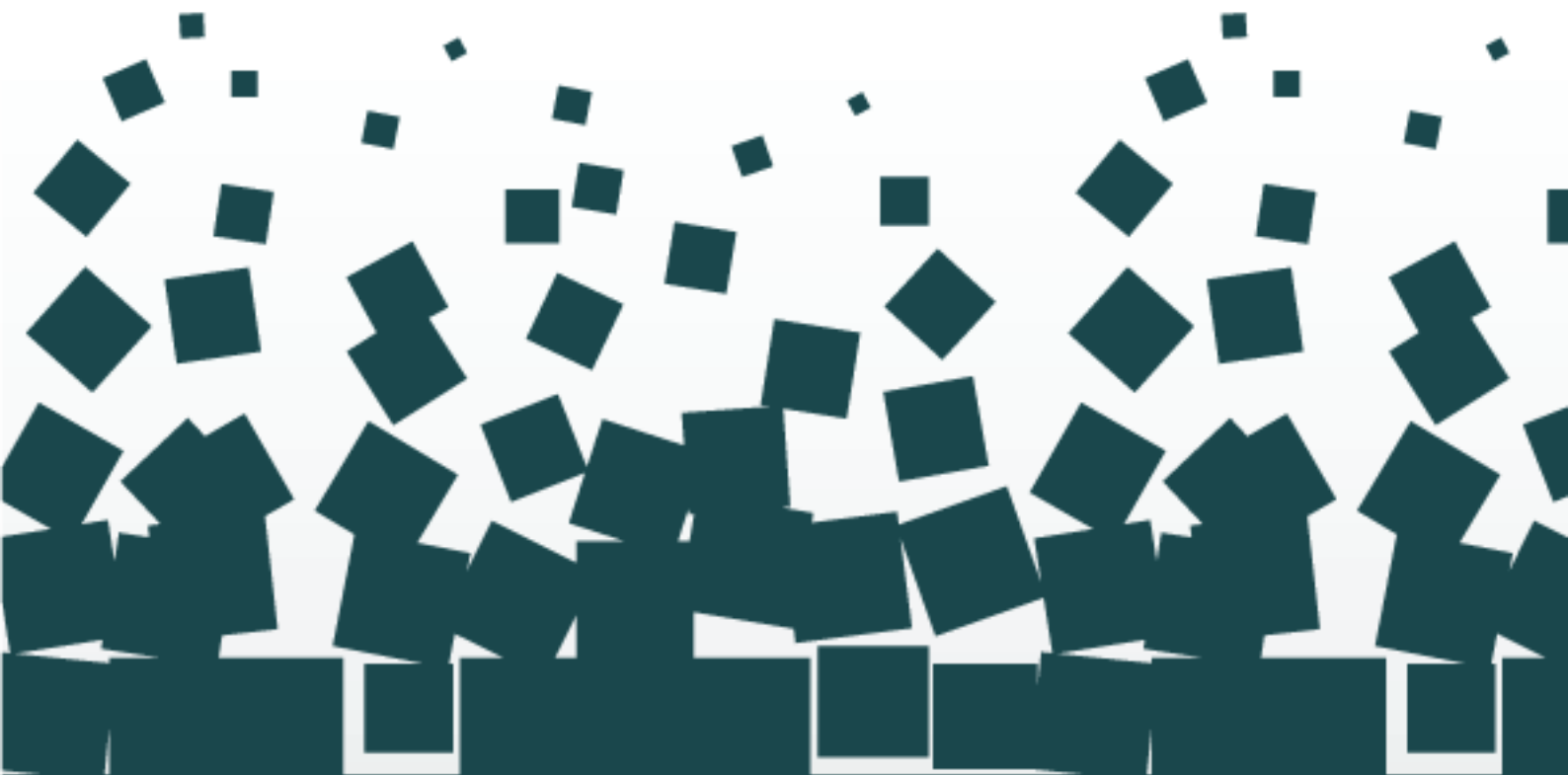
Importance to travel & tourism

The rapid onset of ageing societies in many countries in Asia is bringing this topic more into the mainstream. Again, travel & tourism needs to see not just the revenue potential but the broader social context, including the possibility of hiring more People with Disabilities. However, travel & tourism appears to be more focussed on how to take advantage of robotics and “Artificial Intelligence”. That will only widen the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: World AIDS Day: Can the epidemic become 'a thing of the past'?





*HIV positive Monica and her granddaughter sit at home on a bed in their village of Makuzeze, Zimbabwe.
Photo: UNICEF/G. Pirozzi*



SDG 3: World AIDS Day: Can the epidemic become 'a thing of the past'?

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 1 December 2017 – The world will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) – which include the target of ending AIDS by 2030 – without people attaining their right to health, the United Nations said Friday, marking [World AIDS Day](#) with a strong appeal for the full realization of this fundamental right by everyone, everywhere.

“The [right to health](#) is a fundamental human right – everybody has the right to the enjoyment of the [highest attainable standard](#) of physical and mental health, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,” Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS ([UNAIDS](#)) said in his message on the Day.

Indeed, the right to health is linked to all the [SDGs](#) and “is interrelated with a range of other rights, including the rights to sanitation, food, decent housing, healthy working conditions and a clean environment.”

He explained that it includes: equal access to health care; adequate health-care infrastructure; respectful and non-discriminatory health-care services; and that healthcare must be medically appropriate and of good quality.

“But the right to health is more than that,” he continued, saying that with it, “people’s dreams and promises can be fulfilled.”

Mr. Sidibé pointed out the most marginalized and affected still face challenges in accessing urgently-needed health and social services, asserting “we all must continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the people being left behind and demand that no one is denied their human rights.”

“For all the successes, AIDS is not yet over. But by ensuring that everyone, everywhere accesses their right to health, it can be,” he concluded.

In his [message](#) for the Day, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said that “the world is well on its way to meeting the target of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030,” noting that nearly 21 million people living with HIV now have access to treatment and this number should grow to more than 30 million by 2020.

With AIDS-related deaths and new HIV infections declining, there is great hope that the world can deliver on its promise, he added.

However, some parts of the response to HIV are lagging behind. “In some regions of the world, hard-won successes are being reversed, with rising numbers of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths,” Mr. Guterres warned, calling for “a renewed commitment to finish what we have started and to make the AIDS epidemic a thing of the past.”

For her part, Audrey Azoulay, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), stressed the right to quality education for all, because the two goals – [health and education](#) – go hand in hand. “This linkage stands at the heart of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the UNAIDS 2016-2021 Strategy, she explained.

As outlined in UNESCO’s Strategy on Education for Health and Well-Being: Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, health and education are mutually reinforcing: healthy learners learn better, and better-educated learners are healthier.

“They are also mutually dependent – without the right to education we cannot truly fulfil the right to health,” Ms. Azoulay continued, stressing that in a world where young people – especially girls and young women – bear a disproportionate burden of HIV and AIDS, “we all must recognize that comprehensive sexuality education is central to their right to health, and to the health of all societies.”

Picking up that thread in her message, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Executive Director of UN Women, said that according to UNAIDS, every four minutes, three young women become infected with HIV.

“They are [clearly not enjoying their right to health](#), nor will they, until we are able to reverse the inequalities and discrimination that fuel HIV spread. Those whose health and future are currently least prioritized must become our focus, if we are to achieve the changes we seek,” she said.

As such, leaving no woman or girl behind in the HIV response means ensuring their meaningful participation and engagement in designing that response, improving access to services and demanding their right to health.

“To do that, we foster women’s voices and leadership and support their place at decision-making tables,” Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka continued, adding that in 2016, UN Women supported networks of women living with HIV in 31 countries to increase their engagement in the national HIV responses. “This World AIDS Day, UN Women calls for a commitment to prioritize and reach all the women and girls being left behind in the HIV response: every last woman and girl.”

Threat of complacency

Meanwhile, according to the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)), in 2016, 120,000 children under age 14 died of AIDS-related causes while hourly, 18 were newly infected.

The 2017 [UNICEF Statistical Update on Children and AIDS](#), launched Friday, projects that if current trends persist, there will be 3.5 million new adolescent HIV infections by 2030.

“It is unacceptable that we continue to see so many children dying from AIDS and so little progress made to protect adolescents from new HIV infections,” said Dr. Chewe Luo, Chief of HIV for UNICEF.

“The AIDS epidemic is not over; it remains a threat to the lives of children and young people and more can and should be done to prevent it,” he added.

A UNICEF analysis of demographic trends and new HIV data reveals that targets set in the [2020 Super-Fast-Track](#) framework developed in 2016 to end AIDS among children, will not be achieved.

While noting that mother-to-child HIV transmissions have declined and two million new infections in children have been averted, UNICEF warns that such progress must not lead to complacency, saying that progress in preventing, testing and treating HIV infections among adolescents has been unacceptably slow.

“To continue at this slow rate of progress is to gamble with the lives of children and commit future generations to a preventable life of HIV and AIDS,” Dr. Luo added. “We must act urgently in order to sustain any gains we have made in the past decade.”

To address HIV-response gaps, UNICEF proposes utilising emerging innovations; scaling-up the response for children; and strengthening governments’ capacity to collect of comprehensive, disaggregated testing and treatment data.

Innovative solutions must be adopted to speed up progress in preventing HIV infection of children and ensuring those living with HIV get the treatment they need.

Read more: [**UNAIDS warns that men are less likely to access HIV treatment and more likely to die of AIDS-related illnesses**](#)

Importance to travel & tourism

If the science proves that fossil fuels are a major contributor to climate change, science also proves that men who have sex with men (MSM) are major contributors to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Promoting gay travel is all very well from a revenue-generation and anti-discrimination perspective, but gay travel forums also need to show what is being done to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. At the moment, they are sweeping it under the carpet. That will only worsen the situation.

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



SDG 4: 'All of UN' approach urged to stop destruction, smuggling of cultural heritage





Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO briefs the Security Council meeting on Maintenance of international peace and security, destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas



SDG 4: 'All of UN' approach urged to stop destruction, smuggling of cultural heritage

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 30 November 2017 – The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday focused its attention on global efforts to stop the traffic in and destruction of cultural property, with the head of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) laying out steps to protect cultural heritage and ensure that it can serve “as a source of belonging and peace for all people in times of conflict.”

In her briefing, newly-appointed UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay, spotlighted the Secretary-General’s first report on the adoption by the Council of resolution 2347 (2017), which, among others, condemned destruction of cultural heritage and the looting of cultural property.

The landmark text also encouraged Member States to take preventive measures to safeguard cultural property in the context of armed conflict and “take appropriate steps to prevent and counter the illicit trade and trafficking in cultural property and other items of archaeological, historical, cultural, rare scientific, and religious importance originating from armed conflict areas, notably from terrorist groups.”

“The adoption of [resolution 2347 \(2017\)](#) represents a major breakthrough, and it testifies to a new awareness on the importance of culture to respond to conflicts, to prevent radicalization and fight violent extremism,” Ms. Azoulay told the Council, noting that she has been encouraged by Member States’ strong actions to implement it and other Council measures that together provide key aspects responding against terror and hatred.

“In a very short span of time, 29 Member States shared information on new actions taken to protect cultural heritage, strengthening tools and training of specialized personnel, reinforcing international cooperation and information sharing,” she stated, mentioning some notable initiatives underway in several countries

While calling these “positive signals of deep change,” Ms. Azoulay added: “We need to do more.”

The UN cultural agency chief pointed out that of the 82 UNESCO [World Heritage](#) sites in the Arab region, 17 are on the [List of World Heritage in Danger](#) due to armed conflict.

“Over 100 cultural heritage sites across Iraq have been damaged,” she explained. “All six Syrian World Heritage sites have been severely affected, including [Palmyra](#), and the fabled city of Aleppo, one of the oldest cities in the world, now reduced to rubble.”

Ms. Azoulay underscored that the UN response must step up efforts in several key areas that encompassed raising awareness of the resolution to strengthen its implementation by all Member States; facilitating data collection and information sharing, on trafficking routes, on damage assessment; and training peacekeepers in the protection of cultural heritage and integrate this issue into peacekeeping mandates and missions.

“In all this, I pledge today once again UNESCO’s determination to support Member States with the necessary tools and policy advice,” she concluded.

For his part, Vladimir Voronkov, the Under-Secretary-General of the UN Counter-Terrorism Office, explained how terrorists, particularly in armed conflict situations, destroy not only lives and property but in targeting World Heritage Sites, they attack historical roots and cultural diversity.

“The goal is obvious – to undermine national identity and international law,” he said. “Because heritage constitutes a source of identity and cohesion not only for particular communities but the world community as such.”

He also linked the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural objects with the financing of terrorism, noting a number of resolutions and legal frameworks to address these crimes.

“Protecting our cultural heritage requires us to make every effort to implement this international legal and normative framework by strengthening international cooperation,” he asserted, suggesting the ‘All of UN’ approach as being key for an effective action.

He advocated for a stronger focus on investigation, cross-border cooperation and exchange of information, and for including private and public-sector partners to promote supply chain integrity and stop the illicit sale of cultural property.

“We can and must do more,” he stated.



*Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office briefs the Security Council meeting on Maintenance of international peace and security.
UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe*

Via video link from Vienna, Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) told the Council that countries must be helped detect stolen cultural property as part of the work to dismantle criminal networks.

“We must take the opportunity to further strengthen efforts to better safeguard vulnerable cultural property in various areas of conflict, as well as pursue longer-term measures to prevent terrorists and criminals profiting from trafficking,” he said.

He said there was a need to help countries detect stolen cultural property and improve international cooperation in the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of cases related to trafficking in cultural property.

“Only in this way can we protect precious cultural heritage from being lost forever,” he said.

The meeting also heard from Jürgen Stock, Secretary-General of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), and Alessandro Bianchi, Project Leader of Cultural Heritage Protection in Italy’s Ministry of Culture.

Importance to travel & tourism

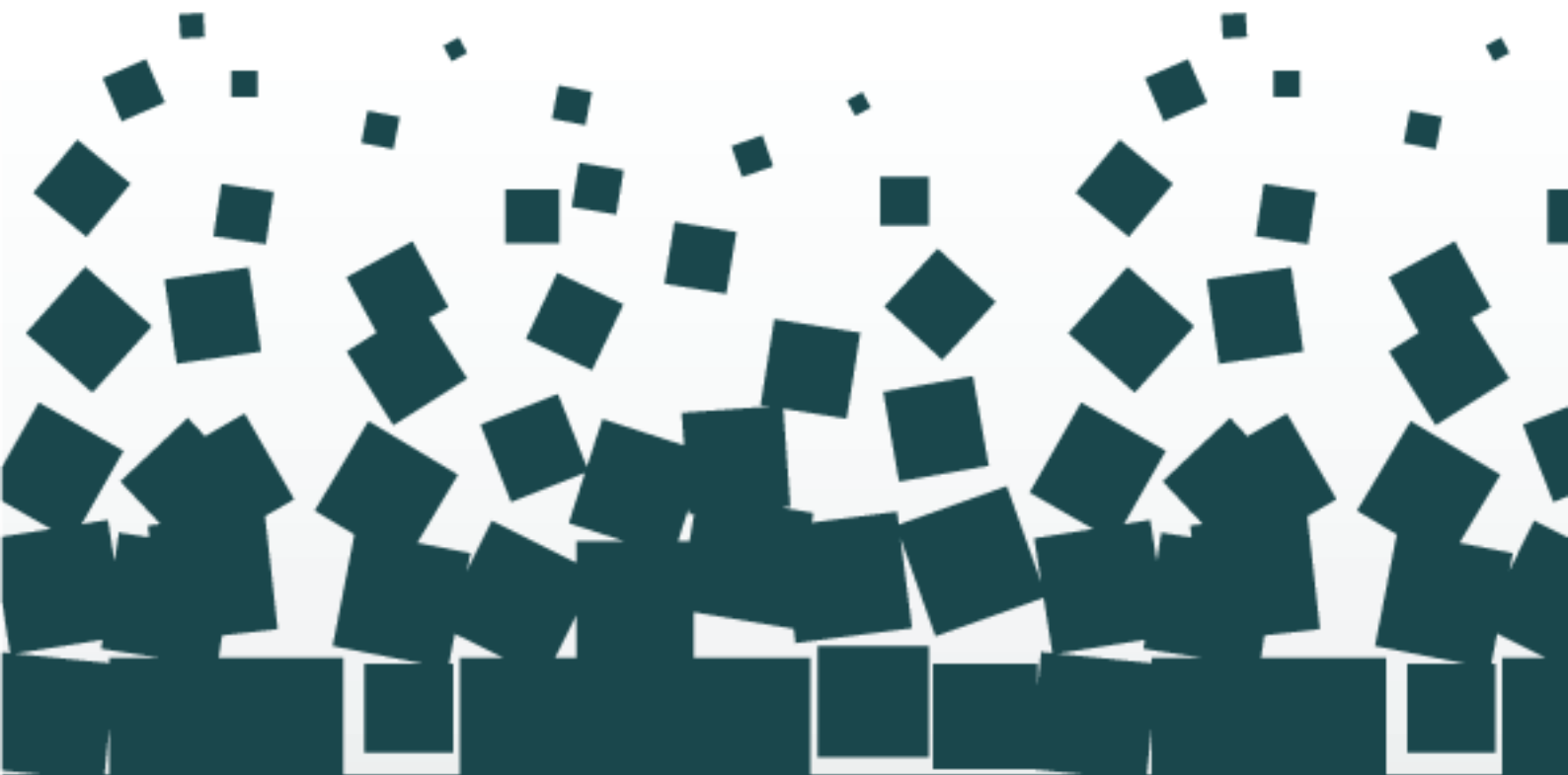
Another agenda item that is rarely discussed at travel & tourism forums. Most of the cultural artifacts are stolen from the developing countries across Asia, Africa and the Middle East to land up in the auction houses, mansions and museums of the developed countries. How and why this happens would be well worth shedding some light on, especially in terms of the cost to the developing countries themselves.

8

**DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH**

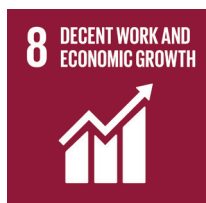


SDG 8: Lack of quality opportunities stalling young people's quest for decent work





Young people monitor the transmission quality at a television broadcasting company in Nepal.
Photo: ILO/Pradip Shakya



SDG 8: Lack of quality opportunities stalling young people's quest for decent work

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 21 November 2017 – Overall economic growth remains disconnected from employment generation, the United Nations International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) has warned, noting that young people continue to suffer from persistent unemployment and lack of quality job opportunities.

“Addressing these persistent labour market and social challenges faced by young women and men is crucial, not only for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth but also for the future of work and societal cohesion,” said Deborah Greenfield, the ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy, [in a news release](#) announcing the agency's latest report on youth employment trends.

According to the [Global Employment Trends for Youth](#), while the estimated 70.9 million unemployed youth in 2017 is an important improvement from the crisis peak of 76.7 million in 2009, but that figure is expected to rise by about 200,000 in 2018, reaching a total of 71.1 million.

Furthermore, about 39 per cent of young workers in the emerging and developing world – 160.8 million youth – are living in moderate or extreme poverty (less than \$3.10 a day), and more than two in every five young people in today's workforce are unemployed or are working but poor, a striking reality that is impacting society across the world.

Worst affected are young women in the workforce, whose presence in the labour force lags behind by about 16.6 per cent compared to their male counterparts. Unemployment rates of young women are also significantly higher than those of young men, and the gender gap in the rate of young people not in employment, education or training is even wider, stated ILO.

Changing dynamics in the world of work

The ILO report also revealed changing dynamics in the employment sector with an increasing number of young jobseekers and young entrepreneurs taking to the internet to find new and diverse

forms of employment, such as crowd work, which offer flexibility and expand income earning opportunities.

However, there are grave risks too, such as low incomes, no guarantee of job or income continuity, and lack of access to work-related benefits.

“Young people often start their working lives in temporary employment with the knowledge that they may never attain ‘job security’. They are more likely to transition to stable and satisfactory

employment in developed and emerging economies than in developing countries,” noted ILO, calling for greater investments in quality education and skills development.

At the same time, policies must take into account the fast changing world of work now driven by technology to enable young women and men be ahead of the curve, added the report.

Importance to travel & tourism

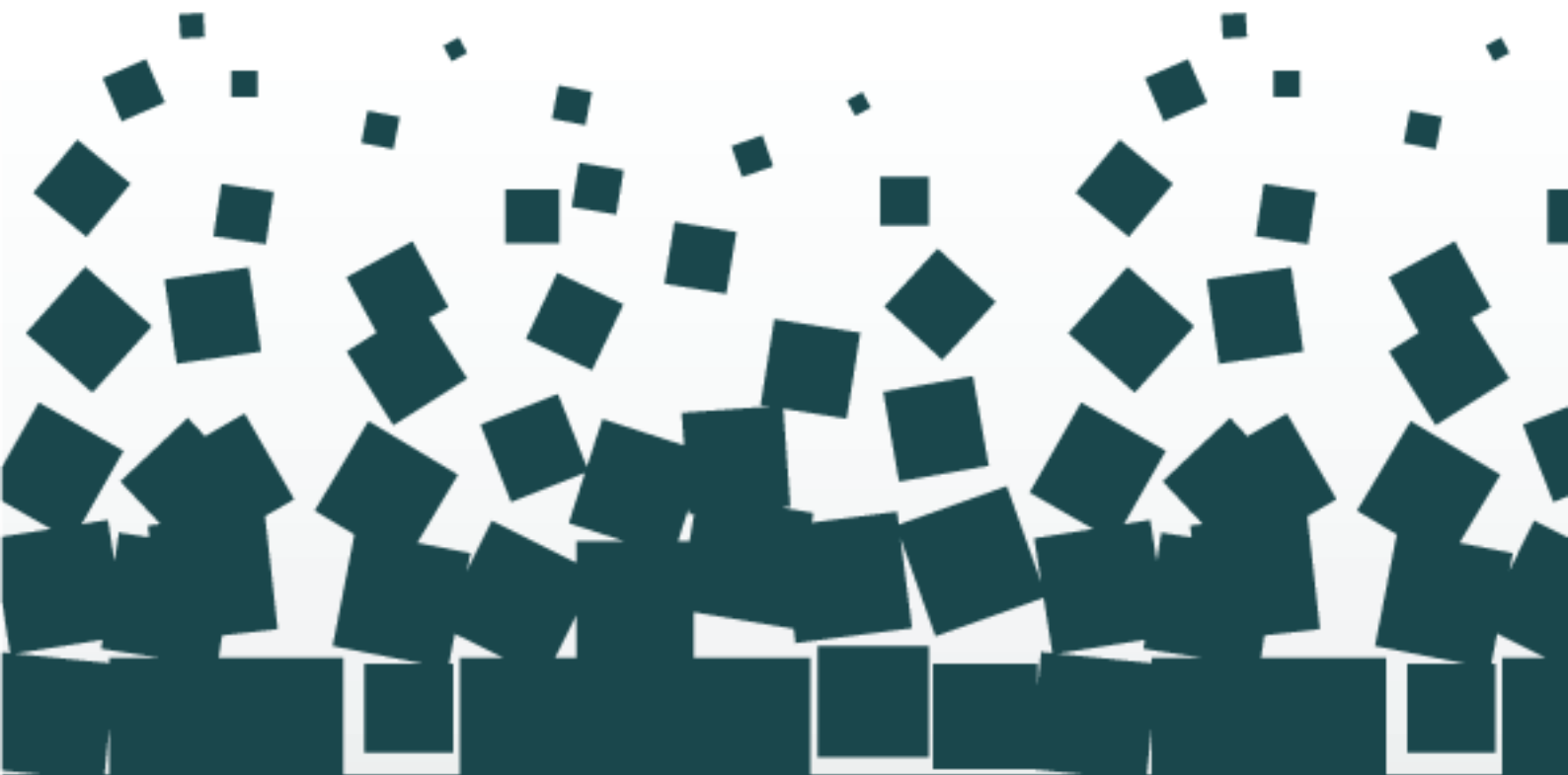
This is another issue that needs to be considered alongside all the excitement about robotics and “Artificial Intelligence”. Joblessness is a precursor of political and social crises. Travel & tourism is seen as a major beneficiary of the robotics revolution, which means it will not be creating as many human jobs as it once claimed to. What happens then to the millions of young people graduating from global universities, especially in the developing countries?

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**DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH**

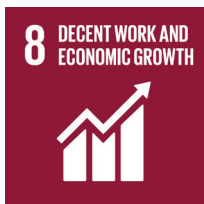


SDG 8: Europe seeks to improve transparency and predictability of working conditions





A protest against pension reform in France. Photo credit: ILO.



SDG 8: Europe seeks to improve transparency and predictability of working conditions

Brussels, 21 December 2017, European Commission - Press release - As part of the follow-up to the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European Commission has adopted today a proposal for a [new Directive for more transparent and predictable working conditions across the EU](#).

The Commission's proposal complements and modernises existing obligations to inform each worker of his or her working conditions. In addition, the proposal creates new minimum standards to ensure that all workers, including those on atypical contracts, benefit from more predictability and clarity as regards their working conditions.

Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President responsible for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union said: "The consultations of social partners confirmed the need for more transparent and predictable working conditions in the EU.

This proposal respects the compromise of more secure employment in current and future types of working arrangements, allowing for flexibility, and ensuring a level playing field. This proposal fully respects national social dialogue practises, by allowing social partners to implement the new minimum requirements relating to working conditions through collective agreements."

Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, added: "With today's proposal we are taking action to improve transparency and predictability of working conditions. The world of work is changing fast with a growing number of non-standard jobs and contracts. This means that more and more people are at risk of not being covered by basic rights anymore, starting from the right to know the terms under which they work. Increased transparency and predictability will benefit to both workers and businesses."

The Commission estimates that 2 to 3 million additional workers on atypical contracts will be covered and protected by the proposal compared to existing legislation. At the same time, the proposal also puts measures in place to avoid administrative burden on employers, for instance by giving them the possibility to provide the requested information electronically. The new rules will also create a level-playing field for companies, so that employers will benefit from fairer competition in the internal market, with fewer loopholes. More transparent and predictable working conditions are also important for a more motivated and productive workforce.

More concretely, the Commission aims to reduce the risk of insufficient protection of workers by:

- Aligning the notion of worker to the case-law of the European Court of Justice. Under current rules, the definitions may vary and certain categories of workers end up being excluded. By using the definition of worker from the case-law of the Court, this Directive would ensure that the same broad categories of workers will be covered.
- Bringing within the scope of the Directive forms of employment that are now often excluded. This includes domestic workers, marginal part-time workers or workers on very short contracts, and extending it to new forms of employment, such as on-demand workers, voucher-based workers and platform workers.
- Ensuring that workers are provided with an updated and extended information package directly at the start of employment from day one, instead of two months following the starting date as is currently the case.
- Creating new minimum rights, such as the right to greater predictability of work for those working mostly with a variable schedule, the possibility to request transition to a more stable form of employment and receive a reply in writing, or the right to mandatory training without deduction from salary.
- Reinforcing the means of enforcement and redress as a last resort to resolve possible disagreements, should dialogue not suffice.

The proposed Directive would need to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, and be implemented by the Member States, either through legislation or by social partners' collective agreements. Fully recognising the importance of social dialogue, social partners would be able to modulate the minimum rights proposed by the Directive as long as its overall level of protection is respected.

This initiative is one of the Commission's actions to implement the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), which was proclaimed at the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017. More specifically, the Directive contributes to implementing Principle 5 on 'Secure and Adaptable Employment' and Principle 7 on 'Information about Employment Conditions and Protection in case of Dismissals'.

Background

The Commission's proposal for a Directive on "Predictable and Transparent Working Conditions" updates and replaces the 1991 [Written Statement Directive \(91/533/EEC\)](#), which gives employees starting a new job the right to be notified in writing of the essential aspects of their employment relationship. After more than 25 years, this Directive does not no longer capture changing labour market realities, in particular the new forms of work that have developed in recent years. Increased labour market flexibility and a growing diversity of forms of work have created new jobs and allowed more people to become professionally active. But it also exposed some gaps in the protection of workers and, in some cases involving vulnerable workers, contributed to new forms of precariousness.

The initiative was announced in April 2017 together with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#). It is part of the 2018 [Commission Work Programme](#) and followed a two-stage consultation of social partners. The social partners did not enter into negotiations to propose their own agreement. Therefore the Commission decided to take action in line with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

The initiative also responds to the Resolutions of the European Parliament of 19 January 2017 on a European Pillar of the Social Rights, requesting a framework Directive on decent working conditions in all forms of employment, and of 4 July 2017 on working conditions and precarious employment, calling for a revision of the 1991 Directive to take account of new forms of employment.

The European Council of 14-15 December called upon the EU legislator to progress swiftly on pending social files at EU level referring also to the initiatives announced by the Commission in its Work Programme, which includes this Directive.

The proposed Directive was prepared on the basis of a dedicated public consultation and an extensive evaluation of the existing legislation, the results of which are summarised in the impact assessment.

Next steps

In accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, this proposal will now be examined by the European Parliament and the Council.

For more information

[MEMO: Commission's proposal to increase transparency and predictability of working conditions - Questions and Answers](#)

Importance to travel & tourism

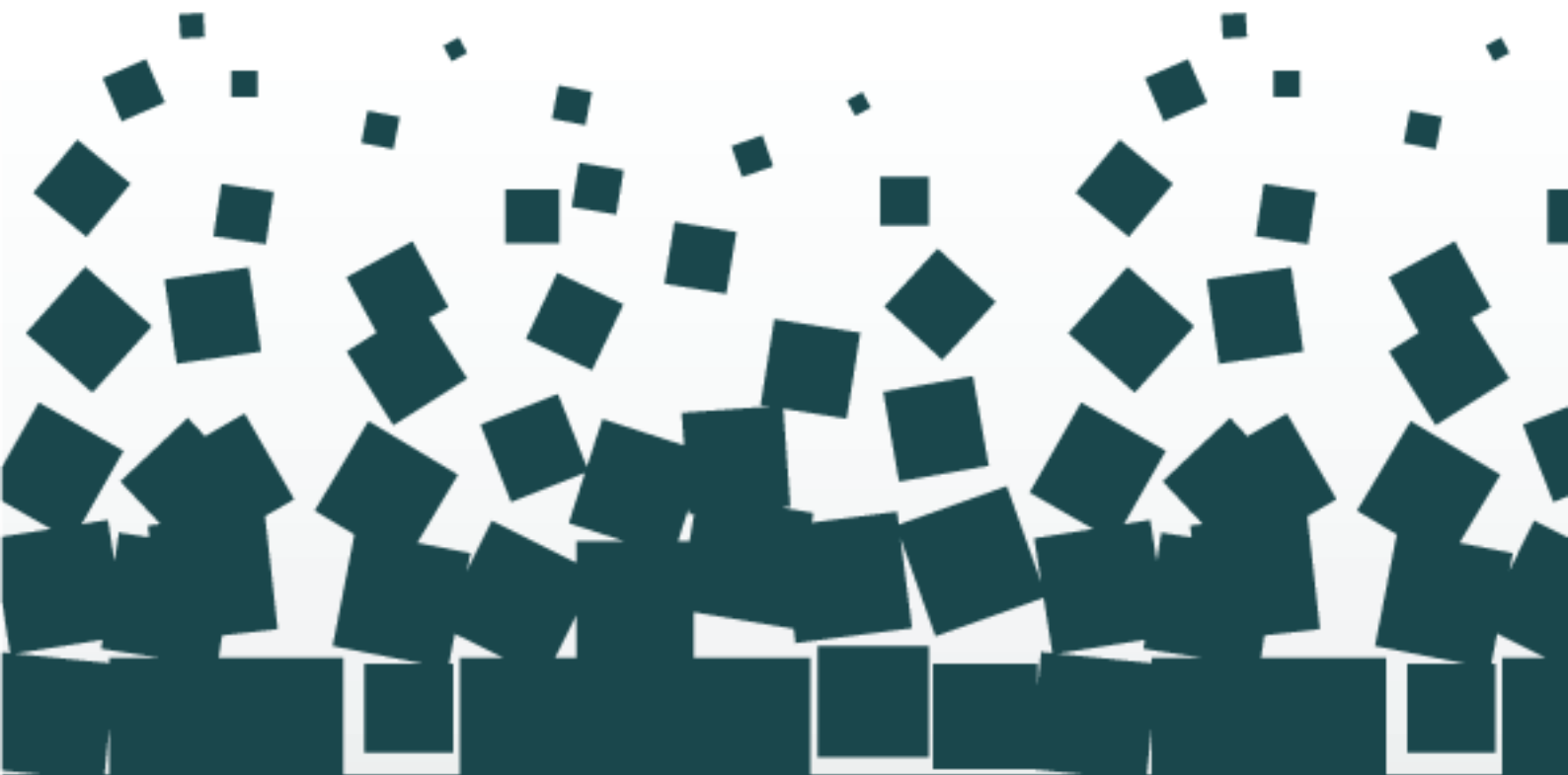
This is another issue of immense social importance. Poor working conditions are one factor contributing to strikes and labour unrest. Employers and investors may find it tempting to adopt technological solutions rather than enhance the rights and working conditions of employees. But reducing costs may involve paying a much heavier price later.

8

**DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH**



SDG 8: Four billion people have no social security protection





Ronda (right), who has been living in the open, washes clothes in the UN Protection of Civilians Site that houses thousands of displaced people in Wau, South Sudan. Photo: UNICEF/Ohanesian (file)



SDG 8: Four billion people have no social security protection

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 29 November 2017 – More than half of the global population – some four billion people – have no social security protection, UN labour experts said on Wednesday.

In the World Social Protection Report 2017-2019, [entitled Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals](#), the UN International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) highlights how this protection gap is an obstacle to reaching globally-agreed targets on promoting growth and development, and protecting the planet.

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said that although many countries had improved social protection for their citizens in recent decades, much more investment and political is needed to extend coverage.

“The lack of social protection [leaves people vulnerable](#) to ill-health, poverty, inequality and social exclusion throughout their lifecycle. Denying this human right to four billion people worldwide

is a significant obstacle to economic and social development,” he warned.

Indeed, speaking to journalists in Geneva, he said that social security protection is a basic human right, and “when people don’t have it, governments reap the benefits.” Today however, Mr. Ryder explained that only 45 per cent of the global population have access to at least one social benefit, and only 29 per cent have comprehensive protection.

“In 2017, this global lack of social protection, I think, should be regarded as being completely unacceptable [...] and that means that the aggregate level of public expenditure on social protection needs to be increased to extend social protection coverage particularly in Africa, in Asia and the Arab countries where marked under-investment in social protection prevails,” he said.

Despite a slight improvement in welfare coverage since 2015 around the world, much more

investment by governments will be needed to extend protection to all; not least the 1.3 billion children who have no cover whatsoever.

ILO says this is particularly true in rural areas, where 56 per cent of people lack health coverage, compared to 22 per cent in towns and cities.

Some countries are already tackling the problem by offering simplified tax returns to workers previously in the informal sector.

Once on the government's books, contributions from these workers help pay for maternity leave, job-seekers' allowance, disabilities benefit and care for senior citizens. The evolving world of work and technology has also provided new opportunities to extend social protection, ILO said.

In Uruguay, for example, e-taxi provider Uber's drivers can download a phone application which automatically deducts their social security charges. Elsewhere, ILO warned that progress in welfare protection risks being pushed back – the result of fiscal savings put in place after the global economic crisis.

This is likely to be the case in Europe, the agency's Isabel Ortiz warned, where pensioners in 19 countries face lower benefits by 2060.

"You have to balance equity with sustainability," she told journalists.

Importance to travel & tourism

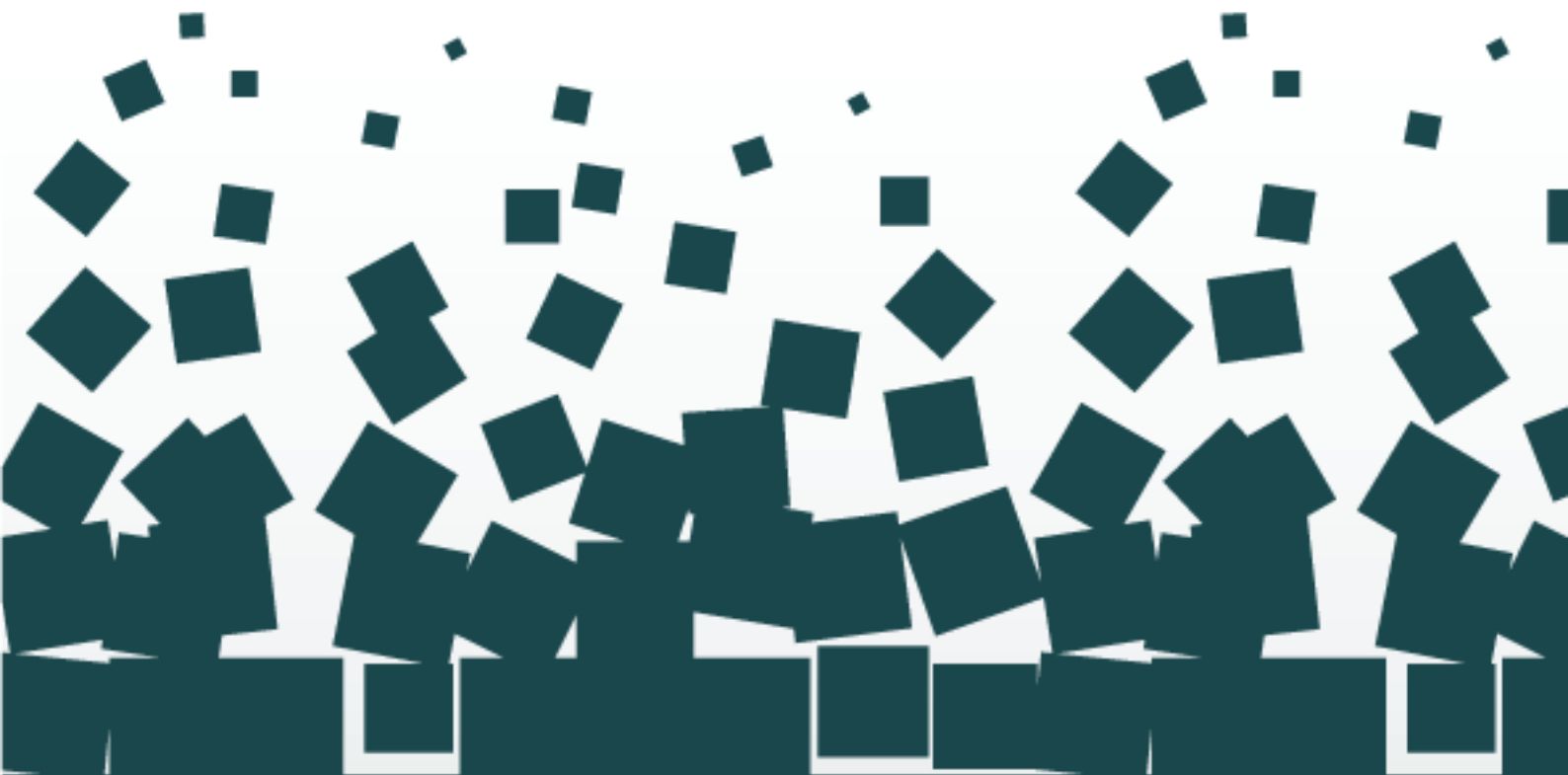
What is the status of social protection in travel & tourism, one of the world's greatest job-creating machines? Following on from the previous items on SDG 8 in this edition of The Olive Tree, the future of jobs in travel & tourism is well worth closer study in a much more comprehensive, holistic context covering all the technological, economic and geopolitical changes under way. This ILO report makes a good starting point.

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**DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH**

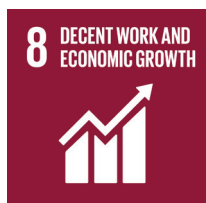


SDG 8: Media coverage frames public thinking on migrants and migration





Migrants in Lesbos. Photo: IOM 2016/Amanda Nero



SDG 8: Media coverage frames public thinking on migrants and migration

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 1 December 2017 – Changes in traditional media and growing use of social media are offering new avenues for “migrant-led” media and journalism as well as a unique opportunity for migrants to highlight their concerns and contributions – in their own words – the United Nations International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) has said.

“Ranging from films and newspapers to tweets, [media] coverage may have portrayed migration in one way or another, or simply raised it as a topical issue,” said the UN agency in the latest edition of its flagship report, the [World Migration Report](#).

“Migration coverage is not only positive or negative, but also presents a variety of different issues, narratives and viewpoints [...] identifying how matters are framed is important because [...] media frames affect how people think about migration,” it added.

In the report, IOM argues that while much research evidence, around the world, points to media associating migrants with “bad news,” such negativity is not necessarily unique to migration coverage, as journalists “generally tend to emphasize problems across most topics.”

However, there has been movement towards more positive – or at least more neutral – coverage of migration issues across several destination and origin countries that does not seem to be attributable to any particular event, it notes.

At the same time, rapid multiplication and diversification of social and online media brings potential for good but also pitfalls – in particular, “fake” news.

Citing examples from numerous country, IOM expresses that such news items likely represent only the tip of the “fake news iceberg.”

Migration coverage is not only positive or negative, but also presents a variety of different issues, narratives and viewpoints [...] identifying how matters are framed is important because [...] media frames affect how people think about migrationIOM

“Social media make it easy to approach specific audiences with political messages and materials, in ways that can be hard to detect and scrutinize. Such microtargeting of persuadable audiences, identified and contacted through their social media activity, is a growing phenomenon,” it warns.

Moving ahead, the UN agency has urged the need for more research into the role of media in transit and origin countries – and particularly migrants’ own use of, and preferences for, different types of media.

“This is especially important for understanding how and to what extent information sources shape perceptions,” it says, stressing that greater evidence on whether and how different types of messages and emotions shape public perceptions and policy activity on mobility would be valuable both within and beyond the world of research.

IOM also calls for more attention to different media systems and how they may or may not produce different kinds of content regarding migration, highlighting that the presence of highly differentiated experiences around the world suggests that greater levels of public debate about the appropriate role of media in specific contexts will move forward the conversations already happening in policy, civil society and research.

“Questions such as these will be debated differently across varied local, national and international contexts,” reads the report.

“As a result, both producers and consumers of research should recognize that there is no single, universal way to sum up the role of the media, or to change media coverage of migration.”

The 2018 World Migration Report, the ninth in the series and the first since IOM became a UN agency, [also focuses](#) on themes such as transnational connectivity and violent extremism and social exclusion. It was launched Thursday at the IOM’s 108th Council meeting, in Geneva.

Importance to travel & tourism

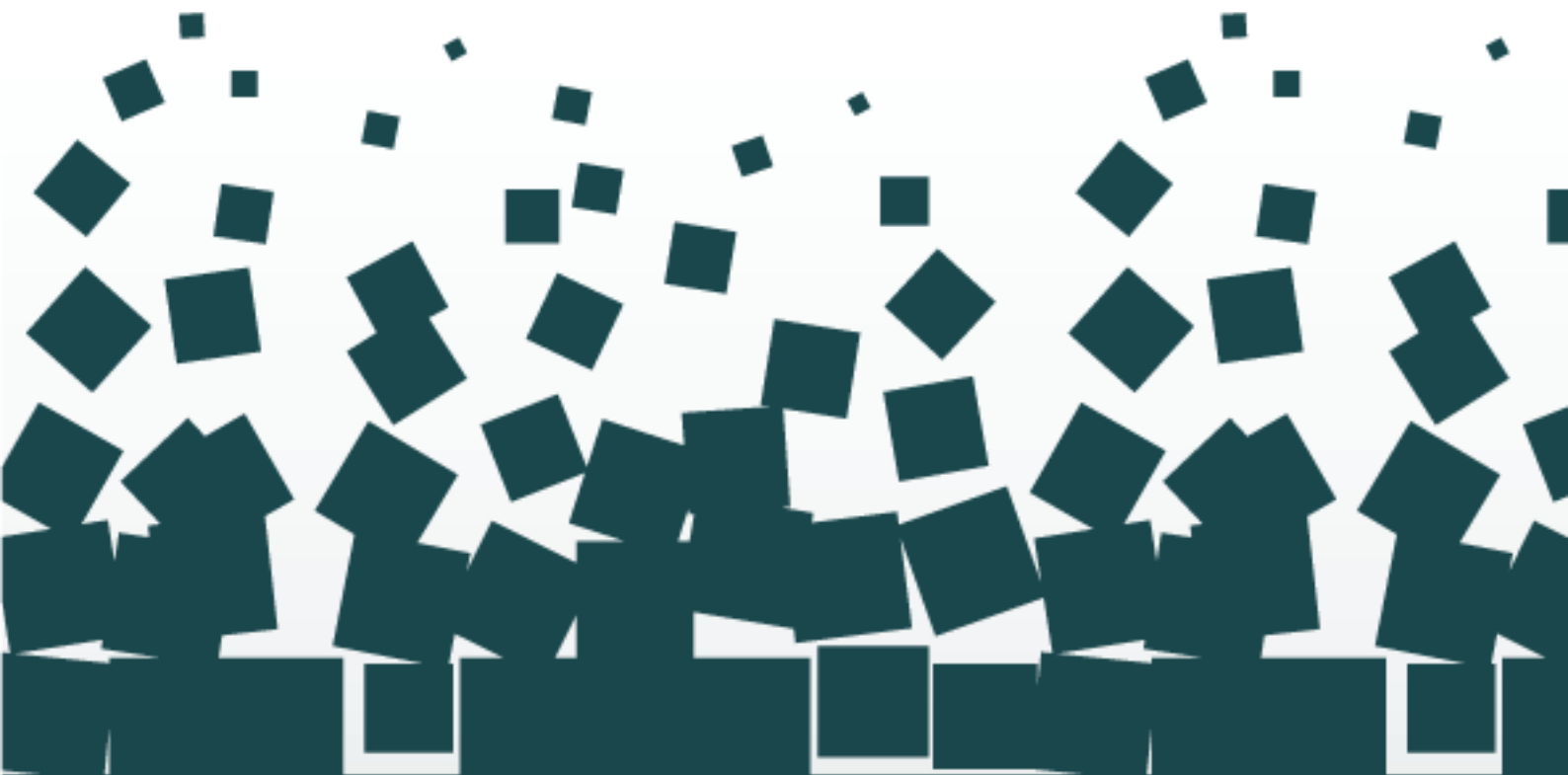
The challenge of migration further muddies the future of jobs in travel & tourism. Many OECD countries today are dependent on migrants to fill low-paying jobs in many economic sectors, but a backlash is setting in, led by the United States. Because it has become a political issue, the travel & tourism sector has adopted its traditional head-in-the-sand attitude. Sad.

8

DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



SDG 8: Call to recognize migration's positive impact, address its challenges





*Special Representative for International Migration, Louise Arbour, addresses the preparatory meeting of the intergovernmental conference to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
Photo: UNIC Mexico/Antonio Nieto*



SDG 8: Call to recognize migration's positive impact, address its challenges

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 4 December 2017 – Noting that the movement of people across borders is a global reality, a senior United Nations official stressed that policy decisions governing migration must be based on fact and not on perception or myth.

“There is a lot of misperception in the migration field that needs to be addressed,” Louise Arbour, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for International Migration, [said](#) at the opening of a stocktaking meeting on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

“The [Global Compact](#) is an opportunity to reorient the often-toxic narrative against migrants towards a more accurate narrative on migration that recognizes its overwhelmingly positive impact and is prepared to address its challenges in a sober, realistic way.”

In her remarks, Ms. Arbour also spoke of the need to be “realistic” about how migration happens and

how migration policies work and stressed that the complex phenomenon should not be reduced to “simple, binary categories” such as refugees or economic migrants; security or human rights; or legal pathways versus returns.

“Nor can we see migrations as being divided on geographical lines, even while respecting the regional particularities that do exist. Migration is a truly global phenomenon, neither a unique gift nor burden on any one set of countries,” she added.

The [stocktaking](#) meeting being held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, follows an intensive preparatory process around the world to inform the development of the global compact. The process saw five regional meetings in Santiago (Chile), Beirut (Lebanon), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Bangkok (Thailand) and Geneva (Switzerland). The process also included two multi-stakeholder hearings, seven regional civil society consultations, and numerous national consultations.

“It is the global nature of migration that brings us here today,” said Ms. Arbour, noting that migration’s inherent international nature necessitates a global response and, at the same time, noted that it does not contradict a State’s sovereign right – subject to international and domestic law – to manage who enters and stays within its borders.

“A successful global compact will need to reflect this: its success will rest on maximum State political and moral buy-in and willingness to enhance cooperation at the regional and international levels,” she said.

On the [agenda](#) for the three-day meeting are discussions on the global, regional, subregional and national perspectives; perspectives from stakeholders; an ‘Idea Lab’ session which includes ‘TED Talks’ on data and evidence, public perceptions and narratives, and migration and identity; and follow-up and implementation.

Importance to travel & tourism

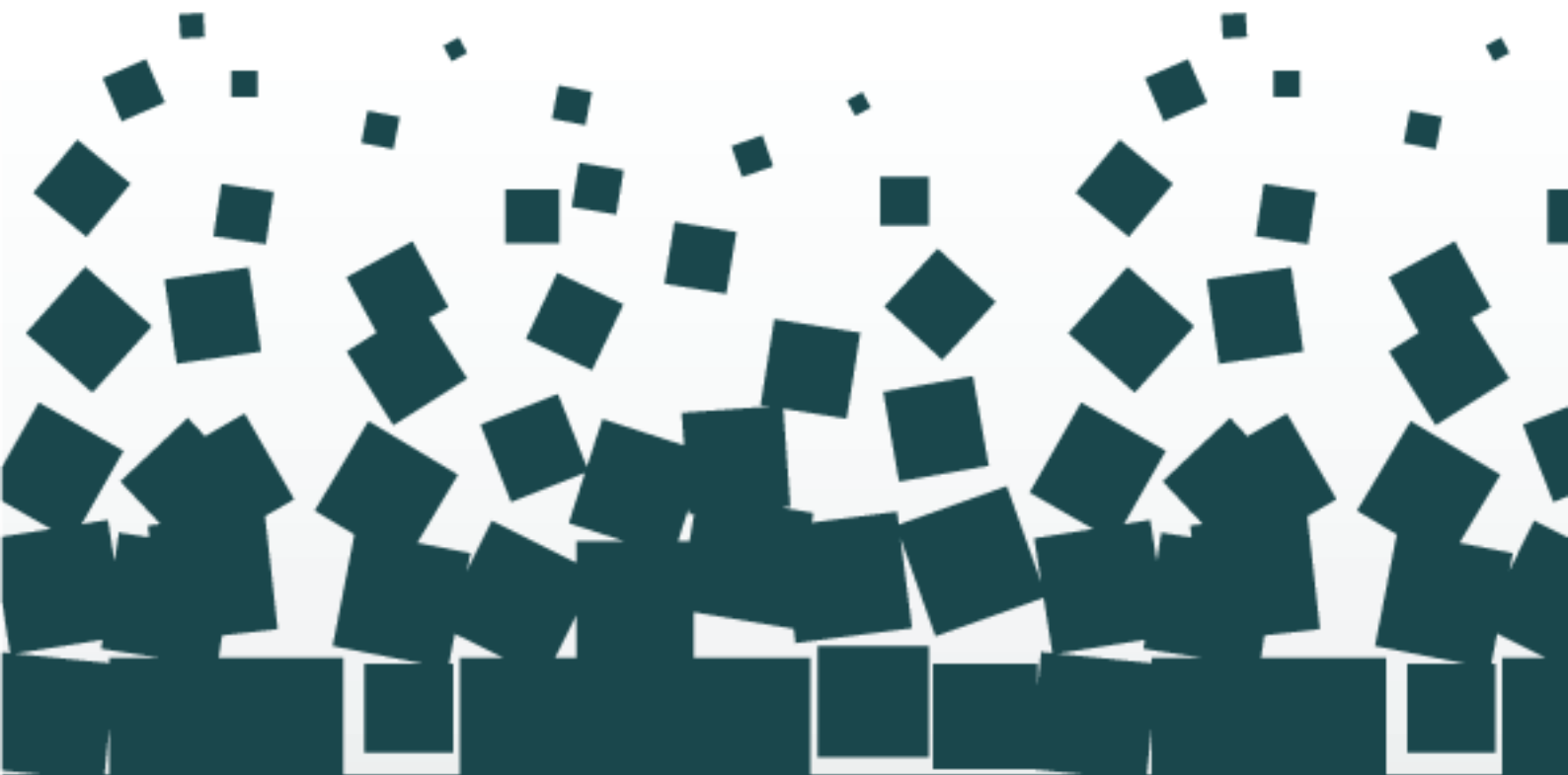
Same comment as the previous item on the same subject: The challenge of migration further muddies the future of jobs in travel & tourism. Many OECD countries today are dependent on migrants to fill low-paying jobs in many economic sectors, but a backlash is setting in, led by the United States. Because it has become a political issue, the travel & tourism sector has adopted its traditional head-in-the-sand attitude. Sad.

8

**DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH**



SDG 8: South-South Expo closes with strengthened cooperation to achieve SDGs





Jorge Chediek, Director of UNOSSC, during the closing ceremony of the Global South-South Development Expo (GSSD). Photo: UN News/Laura Quiñones



SDG 8: South-South Expo closes with strengthened cooperation to achieve SDGs

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 30 November 2017 – The [Global South-South Development Expo 2017](#) wrapped up on Thursday in Antalya, Turkey, with delegations from dozens of countries, key international organizations, and United Nations agencies reaffirming their commitment to strengthen partnerships and cooperation agreements to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“We are extremely happy with the results of the Expo, we organize this event every year to create a space for the countries of the south, partnering institutions and other States including from the global north, to join together and establish new relationships to get more and better South-South cooperation,” underscored Jorge Chediek, the Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation ([UNOSSC](#)).

The 2017 Expo, which opened Monday, was hosted by the Government of Turkey and coordinated by UNOSSC. It focused on solutions ‘for the South, by the South, throughout the week. It drew more than 800 participants from 120 countries, and more than 30 media representatives who engaged in over 37 plenary and side events.

The theme “South-South Cooperation in the Era of Economic, Social and Environmental Transformation: The Road to the 40th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA+40),” aimed to engage stakeholders to scale up concrete solutions from the Global South to achieve the landmark UN [2030 Agenda](#) and its 17 Global Goals.

During the closing ceremony, Mr. Chediek conveyed warm greetings from UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, who attached great importance to South-South cooperation as a key ingredient of the efforts to achieve the [SDGs](#) and to combat climate change.

In his message, the UN chief thanked Expo participants for their commitment to sharing the knowledge, best practices and successes of the South.

“Many of the achievements of the expo are not reflected in these very impressive numbers themselves, they are reflected in the partnerships that are being established, in institutional friendships and agreements that have been developed and that will certainly generate results,” stressed Mr. Chediek.

Six publications were launched during the Expo, and over 90 institutional and individual partners expressed interest in nine initiatives covering issues that range from youth empowerment to rural development

Earlier today, the first Steering Committee meeting of the South-South Global Thinkers initiative took place at the Expo launching a brand new online platform that will connect think tank networks from across all regions to exchange, share knowledge and collaborate on joint research.

A High-Level Forum of National Directors-General for Development Cooperation was also held today, to discuss insights and proposals for the preparatory process of the Second UN High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be hosted by the Government of Argentina in March 2019, marking 40 years of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.

Importance to travel & tourism

South-South cooperation has been mulled for many decades to help bring more “southern” solutions and perspectives to global problems. Although the movement has gained limited traction, that may be changing in the light of current geopolitical and economic realities. As a major contributing factor to South-South Development, it is clearly an opportunity for travel & tourism to play a contributory role.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



SDG 9: China tops patent, trademark and design filings in 2016





SDG 9: China tops patent, trademark and design filings in 2016

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 6 December 2017 – Worldwide filings for patents, trademarks and industrial designs reached record heights in 2016 amid soaring demand in China, which received more patent applications than the combined total of applications received by the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the European Patent Office, the United Nations intellectual property agency said Wednesday.

Innovators around the world filed [3.1 million patent applications](#) in 2016, up 8.3 per cent for a seventh straight yearly increase, according to the World Intellectual Property Office's annual report.

China accounted for 98 per cent of total growth, receiving about 236,600 of the nearly 240,600 additional patent filings.

Trademark applications jumped by 16.4 per cent to about seven million, and worldwide industrial design applications grew by 10.4 per cent to almost one million – both also driven by growth in China.

“The latest figures charting a rise in demand for intellectual property rights confirm a decade-long trend, where developments in China increasingly leave their mark on the worldwide totals,” said WIPO Director General Francis Gurry. “China is increasingly amongst the leaders in global innovation and branding.”

Patents

China's State Intellectual Property Office received the highest number of patent applications in 2016, a record total of 1.3 million. It was followed by the US Patent and Trademark Office at 605,571, the Japan Patent Office at 318,381, the Korean Intellectual Property Office at 208,830 and the European Patent Office at 159,358.

On a per-capita basis, patent filings in China ranked behind those in Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US.

Asia's share of all applications filed worldwide has increased from 49.7 per cent in 2006 to 64.6 per cent in 2016, primarily driven by strong growth in filings in China. Offices located in Asia received just over 2 million applications.

Trademarks

An estimated 7 million trademark applications covering 9.77 million classes were filed worldwide in 2016, 16.4 per cent more applications than in 2015, marking the seventh consecutive year of growth.

"The number of trademarks being sought around the world has increased three-fold since 2001, reflecting the importance of protecting branding assets in today's business environment," said Mr. Gurry.

The office of China had the highest volume of filing activity with a class count of around 3.7 million, followed by the US at 545,587, Japan at 451,320, the European Union at 369,970 and India at 313,623.

Industrial designs

Global industrial design filing activity in 2016 grew by 10.4 per cent to an estimated 963,100 applications containing 1.2 million designs. Design counts worldwide grew by 8.3 per cent, driven primarily by strong growth in China.

The office of China received applications containing 650,344 designs in 2016, corresponding to 52 per cent of the world total, followed by the EU at 104,522, the Republic of Korea at 69,120, Germany at 56,188 and Turkey at 46,305.

Among the top 20 offices, the fastest growth in design counts occurred in Iran, a 34.8 per cent increase, followed by Ukraine's 17.4 per cent growth, China's 14.3 per cent increase and the US's 12.1 per cent growth.

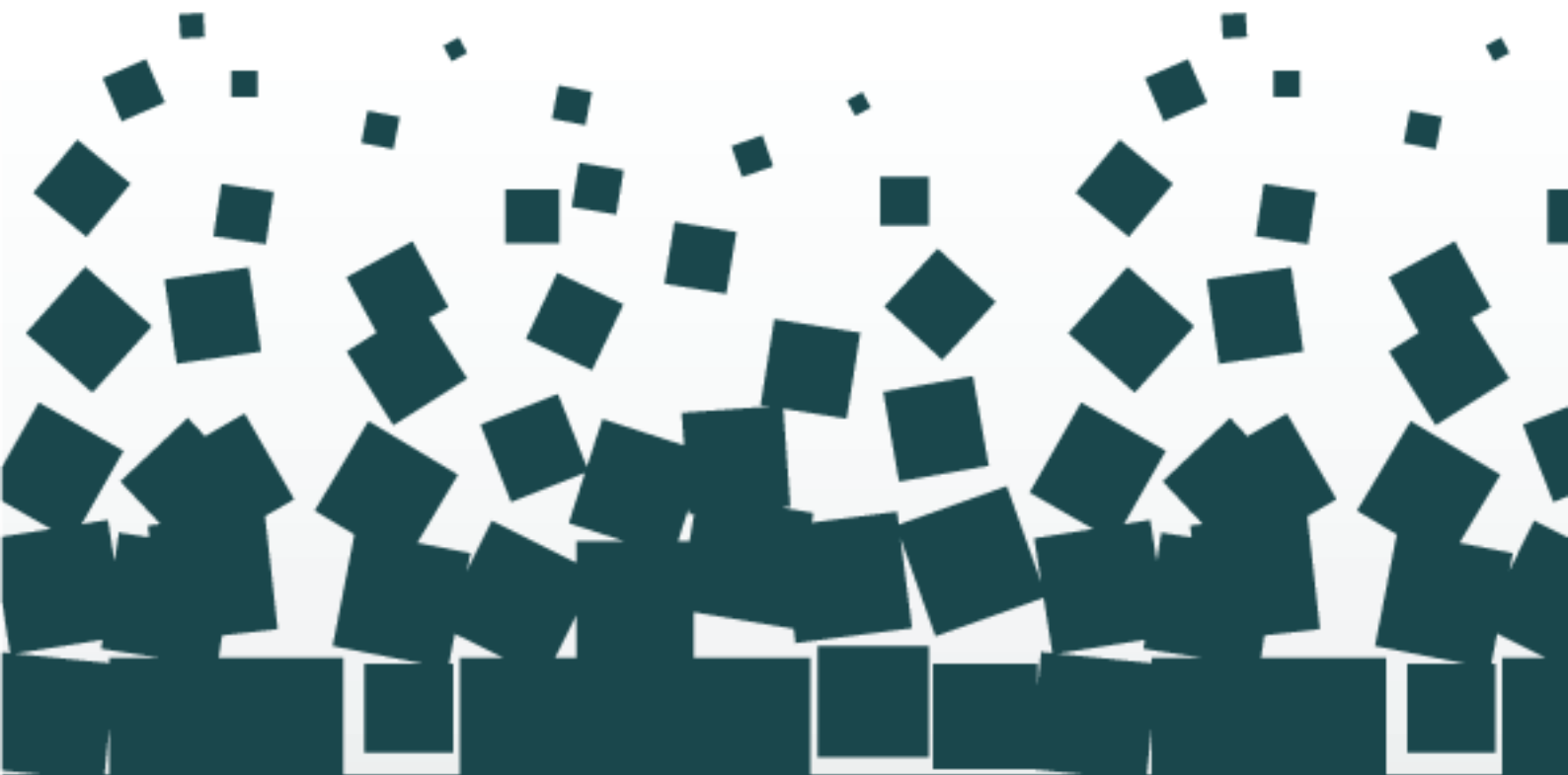
Importance to travel & tourism

Patents are a clear indicator of innovation and travel & tourism is a major beneficiary. The rise of Chinese creativity is a clear sign of changing times, especially the shift in the global balance of power. Many historic global inventions and scientific discoveries can be traced back to China. This report is also worth scrutinising in detail for other trends, such as the number patent applications by developing countries in general.

10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



SDG 10: Lift in global economy opens door to tackle deep- rooted development issues





A worker sorts a green leaf tea before it reaches the main processing floor at the Kitabi Tea Processing Facility in Rwanda. Photo: A'Melody Lee / World Bank

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



SDG 10: Lift in global economy opens door to tackle deep-rooted development issues

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 December 2017 – A three per cent upturn in the global economy has paved the way to readjust policy towards longer-term issues, such as addressing climate change, tackling existing inequalities and removing institutional obstacles to development, according to a new United Nations report on global economic prospects.

Launched in New York on Monday, among other things, the [World Economic Situation and Prospects \(WESP\) 2018](#) offers policy imperatives that include tackling inequality and delinking economic growth from environmental degradation.

“The World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018 demonstrates that current macroeconomic conditions offer policy-makers greater scope to address some of the deep-rooted issues that continue to hamper progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals,” stated UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in the Foreword.

According to the report, 2017 global economic growth had reached three per cent – its highest since 2011 – as crisis-related fragilities and the adverse effects of other recent shocks have subsided.

The improvement is widespread. Roughly two-thirds of the world’s countries have experienced stronger growth in 2017 than in the previous year, and movement is expected to remain steady at three per cent in 2018 and 2019.

Noting that the recent pickup in global growth stems predominantly from firmer growth in several developed economies, the report states that East and South Asia remain the world most dynamic regions.

Despite the improved short-term outlook, the global economy continues to face longer-term challenges, including trade policy changes and rising geopolitical tensions.

The report highlighted that the improved macroeconomic situation has opened a door for reorienting policies, including to increase economic diversification; reduce inequality; support long-term investment; and tackle institutional deficiencies. It noted that addressing these challenges can generate stronger investment and productivity, higher job creation and more sustainable medium-term economic growth.

Uneven Growth

However, the recent economic improvements have been unevenly distributed across countries and regions.

Through 2019, negligible per capita income growth is expected in several parts of Africa, Western Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean – underscoring the urgent need to foster an environment that will both accelerate medium-term growth prospects and tackle poverty through policies that address income and opportunity inequalities.

The report also found that – hindered by institutional deficiencies, inadequate basic infrastructure and greater exposure levels to natural disasters, along with challenges to security and political instability – very few least developed countries ([LDCs](#)) are expected to reach the [Sustainable Development Goal](#) target for GDP growth of “at least 7 per cent” (SDG 8.1) in the near term.

In addition to mobilizing financial resources to meet LDC investment needs, policies must also focus on conflict prevention and removing barriers that continue to hinder more rapid progress.

After remaining flat for three consecutive years, preliminary estimates suggest that 2017 global energy-related CO2 emissions increased, according to WESP.

“While the upturn in global growth is a welcome sign of a healthier economy, it is important to remember that this may come at an environmental cost,” said Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin.

As the frequency of weather-related shocks continues to rise, the urgent need to build resilience against climate change and prioritize environmental protection is becoming more prevalent.

International shipping and aviation emission policies, which do not fall under the purview of the [Paris Agreement](#), must be strengthened as their emissions continue to grow faster than those from road transport.

“This calls for stronger efforts to delink economic growth and environmental degradation – as also emphasized by the UN [Climate Change Conference](#) in Bonn last month,” stressed Mr. Liu.

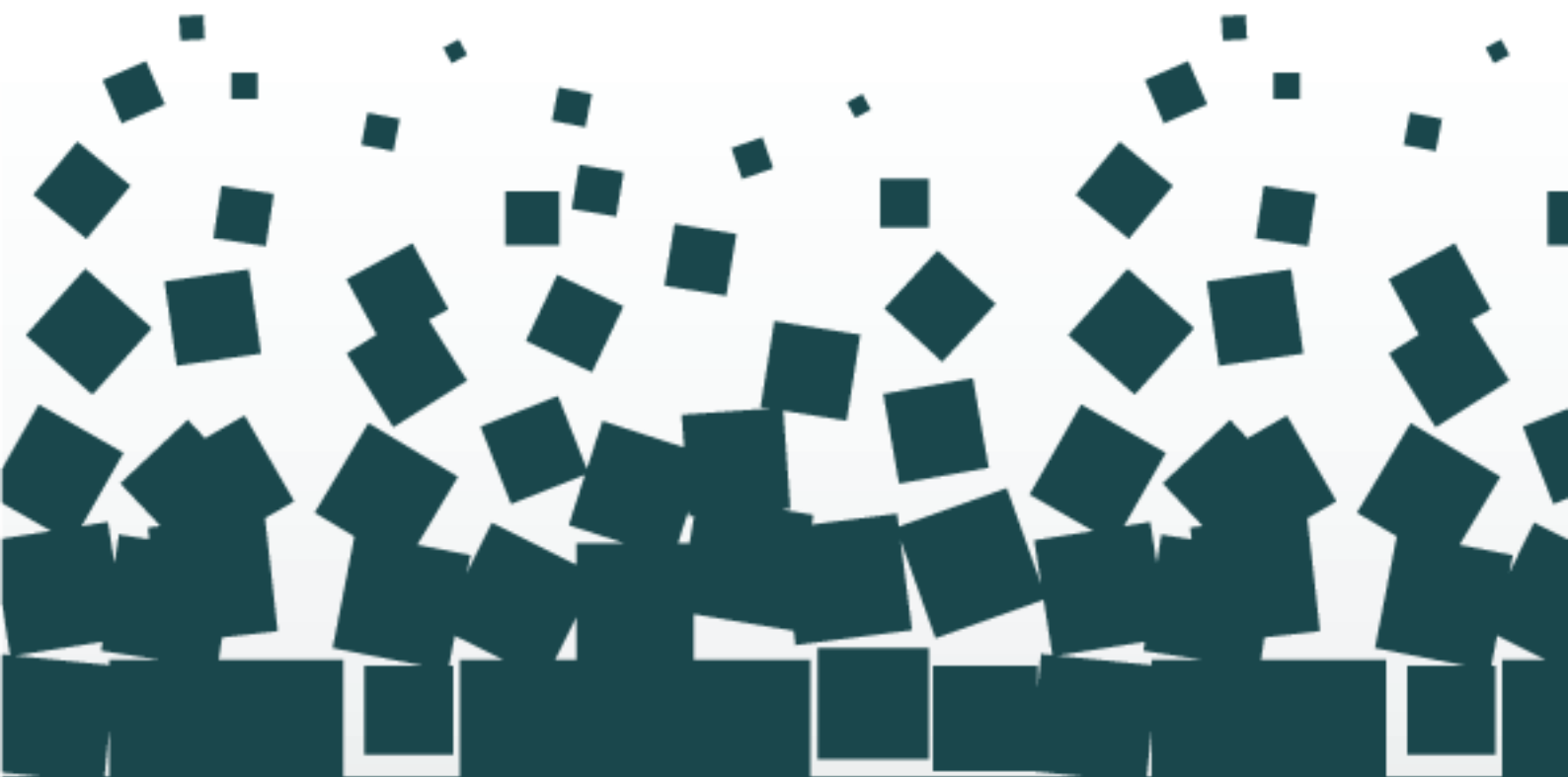
Importance to travel & tourism

South-South cooperation has been mulled for many decades to help bring more “southern” solutions and perspectives to global problems. Although the movement has gained limited traction, that may be changing in the light of current geopolitical and economic realities. As a major contributing factor to South-South Development, it is clearly an opportunity for travel & tourism to play a contributory role.

10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



SDG 10: UNICEF report probes impact of digital technology on children's lives





Children at St. Columba's School, Delhi, India, use a mobile phone Photo: Ashutosh Sharma/UNICEF

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



SDG 10: UNICEF report probes impact of digital technology on children's lives

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 December 2017 – Governments and the private sector have not kept up with the game-changing pace of digital technologies, exposing children to new risks and harms – both on and offline – and leaving millions of the most disadvantaged behind, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said Monday in a new report.

Pointing out that one in three Internet users worldwide is a child, the agency in its State of the World's Children 2017: [Children in a Digital World](#) report, highlights digital divides and explores current debates about the impact of the Internet and social media on children's safety and well-being.

"For better and for worse, digital technology is now an irreversible fact of our lives," said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. "In a digital world, our dual challenge is how to mitigate the harms while maximizing the benefits of the internet for every child."

The report presents UNICEF's first comprehensive look at the various ways in which digital technology is affecting children's lives and life chances – identifying dangers as well as opportunities.

It argues that governments and the private sector have not kept up with the pace of change, leaving children exposed to new risks and harms, and leaving behind millions of the most disadvantaged children.

The report explores the benefits that digital technology can offer the most disadvantaged children, including by increasing their access to information; building skills for the digital workplace; and giving them a platform to connect and communicate their views.

"The Internet was designed for adults, but it is increasingly used by children and young people – and digital technology increasingly affects their lives and futures," maintained Mr. Lake.

However, the report shows that millions of children are missing out. Around one third of the world's youth, or 346 million young people, are not online – exacerbating inequities and reducing children's ability to participate in an increasingly digital economy.

The report also examines how the internet increases children's vulnerability to risks and harms, including by misusing their private information, accessing harmful content, and cyberbullying.

The report notes that the ubiquitous presence of mobile devices has made online access for many children less supervised – and potentially more dangerous.

Moreover, digital networks, like the 'Dark Web' and cryptocurrencies, are enabling the worst forms of exploitation and abuse, such as trafficking and 'made to order' online child sexual abuse.

The report presents current data and analysis about: children's online usage; the impact of digital technology on their wellbeing; digital "addiction" and the possible effect of screen time on brain development.

According to the report, young people are the most connected age group. Worldwide, they have a 71 per cent presence online compared with 48 per cent of the total population.

However, African youth are the least connected, with around three out of five not online, compared to just one in 25 in Europe.

Approximately 56 per cent of all websites are in English and many children cannot find content they understand or that is culturally relevant.

It also reveals that more than nine in 10 child sexual abuse URLs are hosted in Canada, France, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation and the United States.

The report says that only collective action by governments, the private sector, families and children themselves can help level the digital playing field and make the internet safer and more accessible for children.

Practical recommendations include safeguarding children's privacy and identities online and putting children at the centre of digital policy.

"Digital policies, practices, and products should better reflect children's needs, children's perspectives and children's voices," Mr. Lake concluded.

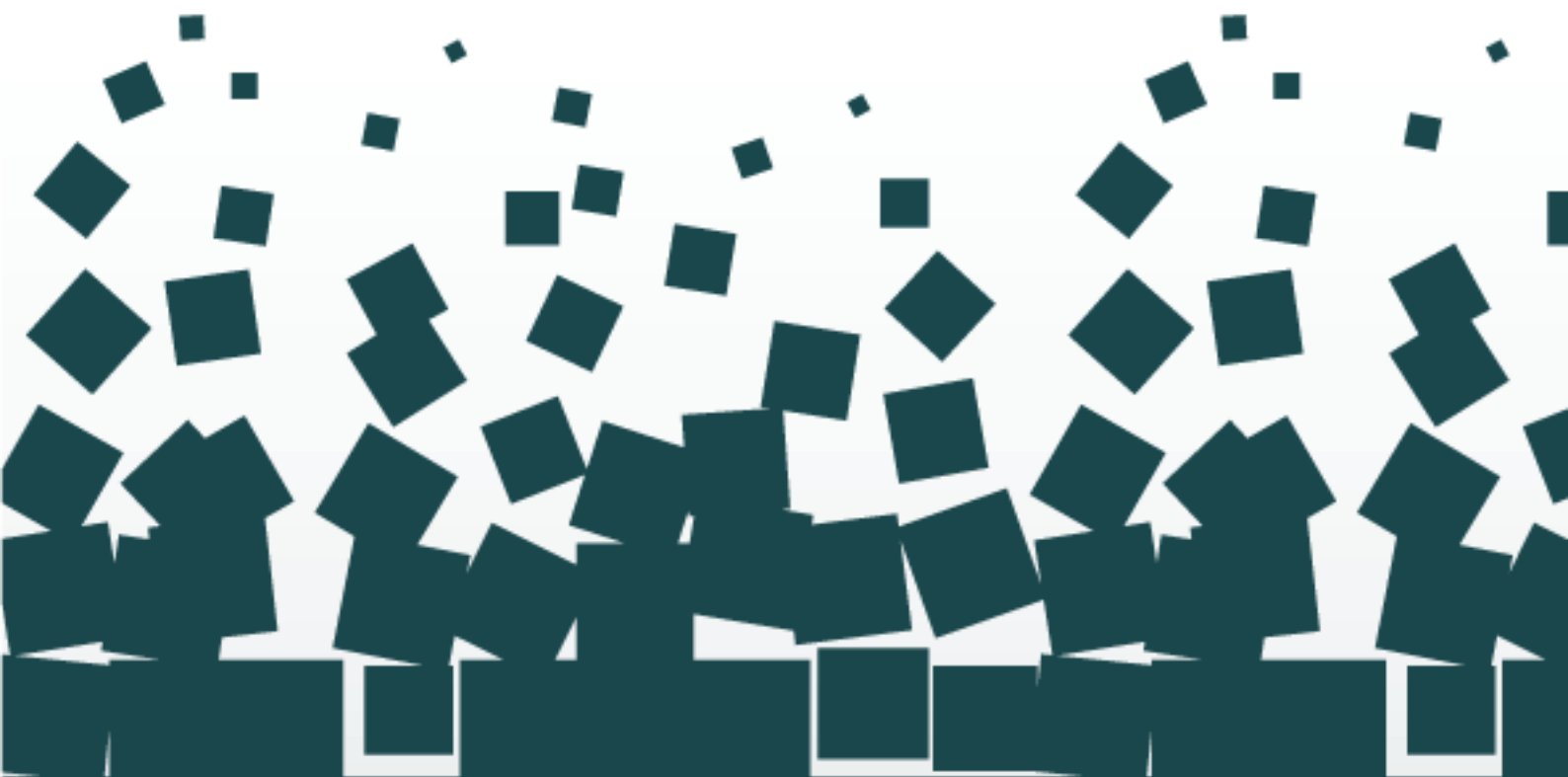
Importance to travel & tourism

Similar to the Lead Story and the challenge of e-waste disposal cited elsewhere in this edition of The Olive Tree, this is another downside of the technological revolution never discussed at travel & tourism forums. It should be. Constantly providing sunny-side-up perspectives that focus only on economic impact and revenue generation, without looking at the potential downsides, is grossly irresponsible. This UNICEF report offers leads for taking a more comprehensive look at the challenge.

10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



SDG 10: Fiscal stability can bolster inclusive, sustainable development in Asia-Pacific





*A train passing a 'trolley' - a makeshift rail cart made with wood or bamboo - in Manila, the Philippines.
Photo: ESCAP/Anthony Into*

10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



SDG 10: Fiscal stability can bolster inclusive, sustainable development in Asia-Pacific

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 6 December 2017 – Countries in the Asia-Pacific region should make the most of the prevailing stable economic conditions to orient their economies towards a more socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable path, the United Nations development wing in the region has urged.

“Unless economic growth is accompanied by an expansion of decent jobs and strengthening of social safety nets, the region will continue to see a rise in inequality and little progress in eliminating poverty,” [said](#) Shamshad Akhtar, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)).

“Without concerted efforts, economic growth will continue to come at a significant, and often irreversible, environmental cost,” she added, unveiling the [year-end update](#) to the Commission’s flagship publication, the [Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific](#).

The report highlights that fiscal sustainability is not a concern in most countries but overcoming the wide financing gap – difference between public investments required to effectively pursue sustainable development and the prevailing trends – requires fiscal space to be enlarged, including through the mobilization of resources, broadening private sector participation and strengthening capital markets. It also states that countries can improve governance and fiscal management through effective leverage of technology.

“Through the use of technology, Governments can improve tax administration and compliance and the implementation of direct benefit transfers while improving public expenditure efficiency,” reads the year-end update.

Regional economic outlook for 2018 ‘broadly stable’ but private investment remains weak

The report also cautions that while the regional economic outlook for 2018 is “broadly stable,” private investment remains weak in most countries, partly as a result of overcapacity and debt overhang in the corporate and banking sectors of some major economies.

To achieve a stable and sustained economic growth momentum, higher wages supported by productivity gains and revival of private investment will be needed, it urges.

The Economic and Social Survey for Asia and the Pacific (published until 1973 as the Economic Survey of Asia and the Far East) has been [issued annually](#) by ESCAP since 1947. It is one of the longest, continuously running reports in the UN system, monitoring progress on and analysing emerging socioeconomic issues in the region and providing policy advice to the decision makers.

Importance to travel & tourism

This follows on from the previous item in this edition of The Olive Tree. If the global economy is picking up, the Asia-Pacific region is a major contributor, and so is the travel & tourism sector. Again, the same solutions apply. If travel & tourism can re-engineer itself to become a more socially-inclusive and environmentally-responsible part of the solution, it can go a long way towards making the world a better place.



SDG 13: European Commission unveils Action Plan for the Planet





We only have
One Planet

#OnePlanetSummit #investEU

13 CLIMATE ACTION



SDG 13: European Commission unveils Action Plan for the Planet

Paris, 12 December 2017 European Commission Press release -- Two years after the Paris Agreement, the EU is firmly in the lead in fighting climate change. To that end the Commission announced a series of initiatives for a modern and clean economy at the One Planet Summit in Paris today.

The Commission participated in the “[One Planet Summit](#)”, hosted by the French President Emmanuel Macron, in Paris today. At the Summit the Commission presented its new Action Plan for the Planet, which includes 10 transformative initiatives for a modern economy and a fair society. They are all reflected under the 10 political priorities of the Juncker Commission.

The Paris Agreement sends a clear signal to capital markets and investors - public and private - that the global transition to clean energy is here to stay. Recognising that the Paris Agreement is a key element for the modernisation of the European industry and economy the Commission sees it as an opportunity for EU businesses to maintain and exploit their first mover advantage when fostering renewable energy, energy efficiency, and competing on the development of the clean technology market globally.

The EU is leading by example and is creating an enabling environment that accelerates public and private investment in innovation and modernisation in all key sectors. We are making this transition to a modern and clean economy taking account of the differences in the energy mix and economic structures across the EU. Beyond updating and strengthening its energy and climate legislation, the EU aims at developing enabling measures that will stimulate investment, create jobs, empower and innovate industries and ensure that no citizen, worker or region is left behind in this process.

President Jean-Claude Juncker said: “The time has now come to raise our game and set all the wheels in motion — regulatory, financial and other — to enable us to meet the ambitious targets we have set ourselves. This is a necessity dictated by our current living conditions as well as those of future generations. This is the time that we must act together for the planet. Tomorrow will be too late.”

Vice-President responsible for the Energy Union, Maroš Šefčovič said: “The global transition to a clean and modern economy requires true

leadership, which two years after the historic Paris Agreement, the European Commission continues to provide. By intensifying work at the city level where a large part of the low carbon transition happens. By driving innovation and research in technologies of the future. By empowering European youngsters so they master the skills to shape their own climate-fit future. And by making sure that no region in Europe, and no country in the world is left behind. Let's invest in our planet.”

Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Financial Stability and Financial Services Valdis Dombrovskis said: “Europe needs around €180 billion in additional yearly investment to power the transition to clean energy and reach our 2030 Paris agreement targets. This effort will require both public and private investors to fully play their part. Europe's financial sector should be given the opportunity to lead this effort worldwide. To do that we are ready to put in place the foundations for sustainable and green finance to reach its true potential.”

Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete said: “The Paris Agreement is a global pledge to hand over a healthier planet to future generations. Now, the time has come to show we will honour this pledge. Europe's commitment to this Agreement is irreversible and non-negotiable. We played a leading role in brokering the deal exactly two years ago. And we continue to lead through ambitious, enabling climate policies and increased support the most vulnerable. From innovative green financing to new partnerships with other countries, investors, cities, states and regions and civil society, Europe is showing the way when it comes to turning the Paris Agreement into action.”

The initiative for today's Summit came from French President Emmanuel Macron at the G20 Summit in Hamburg in July 2017, following the announcement by the United States administration that it would be pulling out of the Paris Agreement. France has organised the Summit together with UN Secretary

General António Guterres and World Bank President Jim Yong Kim. The European Commission was one of the key partners.

The Summit brought together actors who are engaged in making the modern and clean economy a reality, and those who have the capacity to financing climate action. Over 1000 delegates participated the Summit, which will continue on Wednesday with various side-events.

Ten Initiatives for a Modern and Clean Economy (click on title for more information):

1. [Putting the Financial Sector at the Service of the Climate](#)
2. [EU External investment Plan - Opportunities for Africa and the EU Neighbourhood region](#)
3. [Urban Investment Support for European Cities](#)
4. [Clean Energy for Islands Initiative](#)
5. [Structural Support Action for Coal and Carbon Intensive Regions](#)
6. [European Youth for Climate Action](#)
7. [Smart Finance for Smart Buildings Investment Facility](#)
8. [EU Rulebook for Investment in Energy Performance of Buildings](#)
9. [Investing in Clean Industrial Technologies](#)
10. [Clean, Connected and Competitive Mobility](#)

Further information:

EU Invests in the Planet: Ten Initiatives for a Modern and Clean Economy: [EN](#), [FR](#).

FILM: [This Juncker Commission's contribution to the One Planet Summit](#)

MEMO: [Questions and answers on EU and Climate finance](#)

[Commission's One Planet webpage](#)

“Greening finance for sustainable business” – [SPEECH](#) by Vice-President for the Euro and Social Dialogue, Financial Stability and Financial Services Valdis Dombrovskis

[EU External Investment Plan: climate-smart investments worth €9bn unveiled at ‘One Planet Summit’](#)

“Accelerating local and regional climate action” – [SPEECH](#) by the Vice-President responsible for the Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič

[Support for research and innovation in agriculture with a EUR 500 million pledge over the next three years](#)

“Scaling-up finance for climate action” – [SPEECH](#) by Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete

[Commission gives new support to help industrial transition regions build resilient and low-carbon economies](#)

[Communication “Road from Paris”](#)

Importance to travel & tourism

All these initiatives outlined in the One Planet Summit are free-of-charge, readymade templates for the travel & tourism sector to follow in its quest to become part of the solution. That is the core objective of The Olive Tree – to help the travel & tourism industry access the phenomenal volume of technical and financial resources available in the public domain, without reinventing the wheel.

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



SDG 13: Construction sector can do more to cut energy use, meet climate goals





Construction workers on the Panama Canal expansion project. Photo: World Bank/Gerardo Pesantez

13 CLIMATE ACTION



SDG 13: Construction sector can do more to cut energy use, meet climate goals

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 12 December 2017 – The clock is ticking on efforts to reform the buildings and construction sector’s energy performance and keep the [Paris Agreement](#) on track, new United Nations-backed research revealed on Tuesday.

The Global Status Report 2017, from the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction – first launched by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) and France at the 21st Climate Change Conference – finds that the sector continues to grow, with the energy intensity per square meter of buildings needing to improve 30 per cent by 2030.

“Over the next 40 years, the world is expected to build 230 billion square metres in new construction – adding the equivalent of Paris to the planet every single week,” said Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, at a side event of the One Planet Summit in Paris.

“This rapid growth is not without consequences,” he warned.

In 2016, an estimated 235 billion square metres (m²) of total floor area was reached. Over the next 40 years, an additional 230 billion m² buildings will be constructed – the equivalent of adding the floor area of Japan to the planet every year to 2060.

When upstream power generation is included, buildings and construction account for 39 per cent of energy-related CO₂ emissions.

According to the IAEA-prepared, UNEP-coordinated report, the clock is ticking in part because more than half of building constructions expected by 2060 will be done in the next 20 years – two-thirds in countries that lack mandatory building energy codes.

However, the report highlights many opportunities to deploy energy-efficient and low-carbon solutions, and points to a number of global examples showing how the goals can be met with clear and concerted efforts.

To date, Paris Agreement pledges have fallen short – with CO2 emissions from buildings and construction having risen by nearly one per cent annually between 2010 and 2016, releasing 76 gigatonnes of Carbon Dioxide in cumulative emissions.

“Ambitious action is needed without delay to avoid locking in long-lived, inefficient buildings assets for decades to come,” he stressed.

Buildings with near-zero energy, zero-emissions need to become the global construction standard within the next decade for two per cent energy performance improvements to 2030, according to the report.

The rate of building energy renovations also needs to improve three per cent in the coming decade, particularly important in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, where roughly 65 per cent of the total expected 2060 buildings stock is already built today.

“Similar to many areas linked to the Paris Agreement, the building sector is seeing some progress in cutting its emissions, but it is too little, too slowly,” underscored Erik Solheim, UNEP Executive Director.

An energy savings potential from improved building envelope performance can be huge. Globally, high-performance construction and deep energy renovations of existing building envelopes represent a savings potential of more than all the final energy consumed by the G20 countries in 2015.

“Realizing the potential of the buildings and construction sector needs all hands-on deck – in particular to address rapid growth in inefficient and carbon-intensive building investments,” said Mr. Solheim.

Importance to travel & tourism

How many airports, convention centres, hotels, cruise terminals, etc., are built every year? How sustainable are they? Are they built by environmentally-friendly construction companies? More grist for the mill for travel & tourism, one of the biggest contributors to the global construction sector.



SDG 13: Green business key to winning war on climate change





Secretary-General António Guterres (on screen) addresses the One Planet Summit in Paris. Photo: OSSG

13 CLIMATE ACTION



SDG 13: Green business key to winning war on climate change

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 12 December 2017 – Those who fail to bet on a green economy will be living in a grey future, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres warned Tuesday, calling for greater ambition by governments, civil society, the private sector and finance partners to help tackle the global climate challenge.

“[Green business is good business](#),” the UN chief said, speaking at the opening of the One Planet Summit, in Paris, alongside French President Emmanuel Macron and Jim Yong Kim, the President of World Bank.

“Renewables are now cheaper than coal-powered energy in dozens of developed and developing countries [...] we need to invest in the future, not the past,” he added.

The Summit, taking place on 12 December, the anniversary of the adoption of the historic [Paris Agreement](#), is providing an opportunity to fast-forward action on climate change.

In his remarks, Mr. Guterres pointed to the large under-utilized global financial resources and called for ensuring that financing – which by its nature if forward-looking – is used future of people and the planet in addition to being used for profit.

“It is a fact that fossil fuels remain heavily subsidized – meaning we are investing in our own doom,” he emphasized, noting cities, regions, states and territories across the globe along with thousands of private enterprises – including major oil and gas companies – are already taking climate action, resulting in new industries and markets as well as in healthier environments and more jobs.

“I have heard it said that the stone age did not end because we ran out of stones. We don’t have to wait to run out of coal and oil to end the age of fossil fuels,” he stated, adding: “The message is simple: those who fail to bet on a green economy will be living in a grey future.”

The UN chief stressed that it is not funds but trust that is lacking. “We need to fix it. This means, first and foremost, ensuring that rich countries honor their commitment and provide \$100 billion a year through 2020 for developing countries.”

It also means that the [Green Climate Fund](#) must become an effective and flexible instrument, especially for the most vulnerable countries such as small island States and least developed countries. “These two conditions are essential for trust between developed and developing countries,” he emphasized.

“We need to build trust and reduce risk, make the best use of available resources, and find innovative ways of financing, such as green bonds whose viability and success are already realities,” the Secretary-General said.

Also at the summit, Jim Yong Kim, the President of the World Bank Group, [announced](#) that the Group will no longer finance upstream oil and gas after 2019 and that it would be mobilizing finance for climate change impact mitigation and resilience.

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) a subsidiary of the World Bank Group will invest up to \$325 million in the Green Cornerstone Bond Fund, a partnership with the asset management company, Amundi, to create the largest ever green-bond fund dedicated to emerging markets.

“This is a \$2 billion initiative aiming to deepen local capital markets, and expand and unlock private funding for climate-related projects. The fund is already subscribed at over \$1 billion,” read the announcement.

Importance to travel & tourism

Some really powerful quotes from the UN Secretary-General: The world needs to “build trust and reduce risk”. As an industry of peace, travel & tourism can and should be doing more to facilitate both. That won’t happen until it starts changing the mediocre and short-term-gain driven agendas of its global forums.

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



**SDG 13: 12.6 million deaths
a year due to environmental
causes**





*Birds scavenging for food amidst the debris at the landfill in Danbury, Connecticut in the United States.
UN Photo/Evan Schneider (file photo)*

13 CLIMATE ACTION



SDG 13: 12.6 million deaths a year due to environmental causes

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 17 November 2017 – Every part of the planet and every person is affected by pollution – the world’s largest killer – and while solutions are within reach, new policies, enhanced public and private sector leadership, redirected investments and massive funding are all desperately needed, the United Nations Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) has said.

Pollution has significant negative impacts on human health and ecosystems, according to UNEP’s most comprehensive assessment ever, which urges political leadership at all levels, high-level champions and commitments to achieve a pollution-free planet.

The 2017 [Executive Director’s Report: Towards a Pollution-Free Planet](#), presented Thursday by UNEP Executive Director Erik Solheim, analyzes impacts on human health and ecosystems brought on by air, land, freshwater, marine, chemical and waste pollution.

“It provides a clearer picture than ever before of the scale of the pollution menace – and the scale of action that will be needed,” he said, stressing: “None of us is now safe, so now all of us have to act.”

The report highlights that nearly a quarter of all deaths worldwide – or 12.6 million people a year – are due to environmental causes.

The health effects are stark, with air pollution alone killing some 6.5 million annually, affecting mostly poor and vulnerable people, according to the report.

Meanwhile, ecosystems are also greatly damaged by coastal, wastewater and soil pollution. The vast majority of the world's wastewater is released untreated, affecting drinking water to 300 million people.

The report lists implementation, knowledge, infrastructure, limited financial and industry leadership, pricing and fiscal, and behavioural as five main gaps that limit the effective actions.

“What makes this report different is the breadth of its analysis and the new ambition of its solutions,” explained Mr. Solheim.

The report's five key messages to advance towards the goal of a pollution-free planet are:

- Political leadership and partnerships at all levels, mobilizing the industry and finance sectors;
- Action on the worst pollutants and better enforcement of environmental laws;
- Sustainable consumption and production, through improved resource efficiency and lifestyle changes, better waste prevention and management;
- Investment in cleaner production and consumption to counter pollution, alongside increased funding for pollution monitoring and infrastructure to control pollution; and
- Advocacy to inform and inspire people worldwide.

Environmental governance, also spotlighted in the report, is a key enabler to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“The only answer to the question of how we can all survive on this one planet with our health and dignity intact is to radically change the way we produce, consume and live our lives,” said Ligia Noronha, one of UNEP's coordinators for the Report.

In this regard, UNEP will convene the third [UN Environment Assembly](#) from 4-6 December in Nairobi, Kenya, where UNEP is headquartered.

As the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, the Assembly aims at engaging high-level participation to tackle the global threat of pollution.

Importance to travel & tourism

If pollution is the biggest killer, does anyone know what is travel & tourism's contribution? If not, why not? The UNEP report calls for a “radical change in the way we produce, consume and live our lives.” Is travel & tourism ready to make this “radical change”? If not, why not?

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



SDG 13: Rapid, large-scale, coordinated action needed to beat pollution





Photo: UNEP

13 CLIMATE ACTION



SDG 13: Rapid, large-scale, coordinated action needed to beat pollution

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 4 December 2017 – Noting the severity of the threats posed by pollution to both people and the planet, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres highlighted the need for rapid, large-scale and coordinated action by all actors to make the world pollution-free.

“We already have much of the knowledge and technical solutions we need to prevent, mitigate and manage pollution,” said the Secretary-General, in a [message](#) to the UN Environment Assembly, currently in Nairobi, Kenya.

“Beating pollution will help reduce poverty, improve public health, create decent jobs, address climate change and protect life on land and sea,” he added.

Being held from 4 to 6 December, the UN Environment Assembly brings together Governments, entrepreneurs, activists and others to share ideas and commit to action to protect on environment.

In his remarks, Mr. Guterres noted the assembly’s focus this year on tackling pollution and said that important successes have been achieved towards that target, including the entry into force of the [Minamata Convention on Mercury](#) (a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury), as well as the announcement that the [Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer](#) will enter into force on in January 2019, having obtained the required threshold of 20 ratifications.

“Making our planet pollution-free is a long-term necessary endeavour. The world counts on this Assembly to show strong leadership by sounding the alarm and calling on all Governments to act to beat pollution,” he said.

Discussions at the Environment Assembly are focused on a new UN Environment Programme (UNEP) report, [Towards a Pollution-Free Planet](#), that urges greater political leadership

and partnerships at all levels; strengthened environmental governance ; improved resource efficiency and lifestyle changes; low-carbon tech investments; and advocacy to combat pollution in all its forms.

[According](#) to UNEP, environmental degradation causes nearly one in four of all deaths worldwide, or 12.6 million people a year, and the widespread destruction of key ecosystems.

In addition to the impact on health and environment, pollution also extracts a high economic cost – estimated at over \$4.6 trillion (equivalent to 6.2 per cent of global economic output) each year in welfare losses due to pollution.

“Given the grim statistics on how we are poisoning ourselves and our planet, bold decisions from the UN Environment Assembly are critical,” said Erik Solheim, the Executive Director of UNEP.

“That is as true for threats like pollution as it is for climate change and the many other environmental threats we face,” he added, noting that all global processes linked to the environment, such as the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change distil to one simple message, “we must take care of people and planet.”



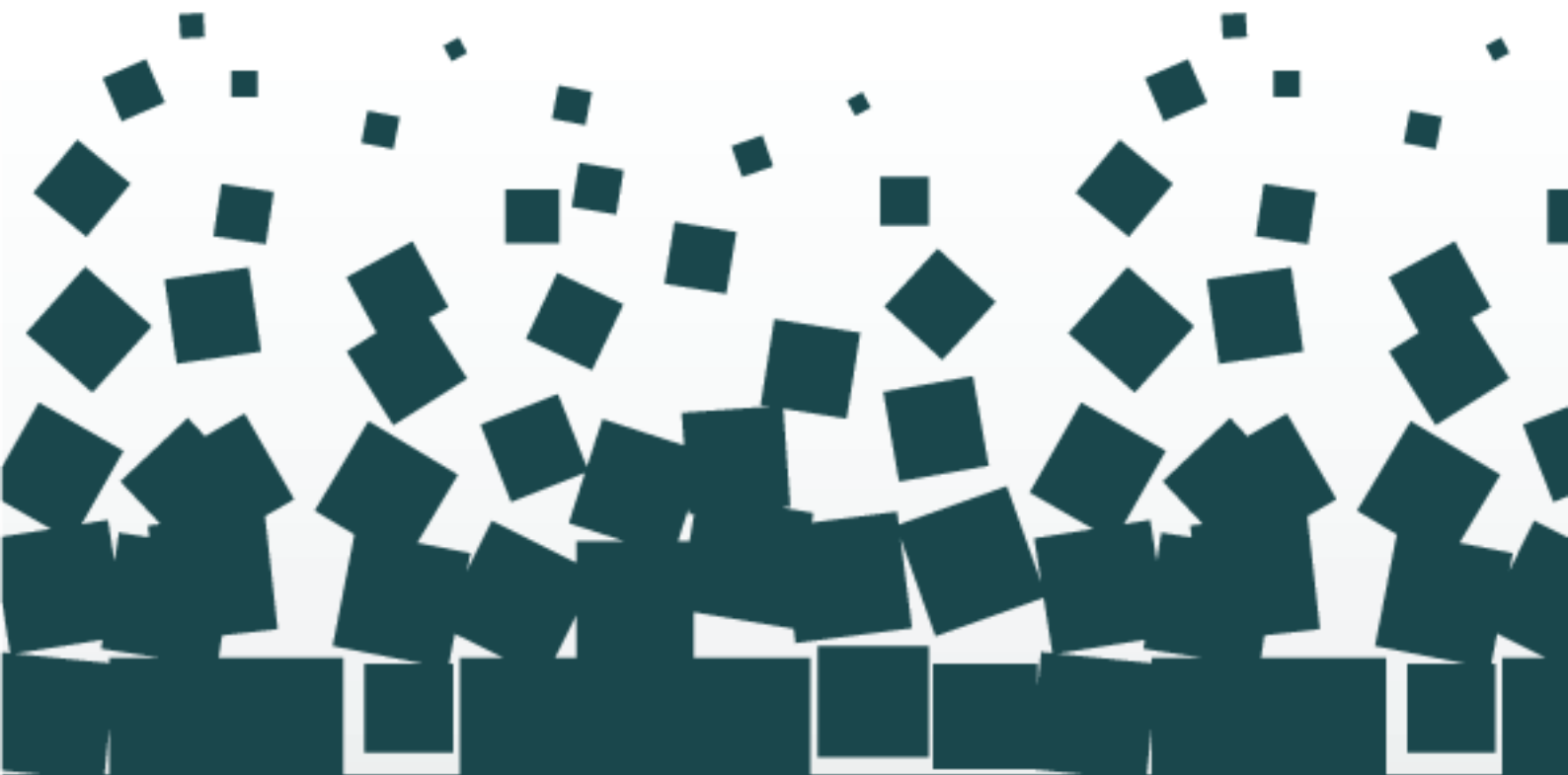
*Opening of the plenary of
the third United Nations Environment Assembly.
Photo: UNEP/Natalia Mroz*

Importance to travel & tourism

This follows on from the previous item in this edition of The Olive Tree. The sobering stats on the world we are leaving behind for our children should help accelerate the search for solutions. As Lead Story 2 urges, the kids of today do need to speak up.



SDG 15: Caring for the planet starts with 'the ground we walk on;' World Soil Day message





Women of the Batwa community tilling the soil with hoes in preparation for planting potatoes, in Gashikanwa, Burundi. Photo: FAO/Giulio Napolitano

15 LIFE
ON LAND



SDG 15: Caring for the planet starts with ‘the ground we walk on;’ World Soil Day message

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 5 December 2017 – Soil is a major carbon storage system, essential for sustainable agriculture and climate change mitigation, the United Nations agriculture agency said Tuesday, launching on [World Soil Day](#) a comprehensive global map showing the amount of carbon stocks contained in soil.

“[Soil is the foundation of agriculture](#), it is where food begins,” said Maria Helena Semedo, Deputy Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)).

“Maintaining the soil’s important functions and ecosystem services to support food production and increase resilience to a changing climate calls for sustainable soil management practices,” she added.

Soil organic matter, with carbon as its main component, is crucial to soil health and fertility, water infiltration and retention as well as food production.

The world’s soils act as the largest terrestrial carbon sink, reducing greenhouse gases. Intensifying its role could significantly offset the rapid rise of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

In an historic decision on agriculture, the 2017 UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn ([COP23](#)) recognized the need for improved soil carbon, soil health and soil fertility. The [Global Soil Organic Carbon Map](#), the most comprehensive to date, illustrates the amount of organic carbon stock in the first 30 cm of soil – revealing natural areas with high carbon storage that require conservation along with regions where further sequestration would be possible.

This information can prove a powerful tool to guide decision-making on practices aimed to preserve and increase the current soil carbon stocks – helping win the fight against climate change.

The map shows that globally the first 30 cm of soil contains around 680 billion tons of carbon – almost double the amount present in our atmosphere.

The degradation of one third of the world’s soils has already prompted an enormous release of carbon into the atmosphere. Restoring these soils can remove up to 63 billion tons of carbon, significantly reducing the effects of climate change.

FAO’s [Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils](#) supported the map’s development, including by putting together the national carbon maps of more than 100 countries, making a concrete contribution towards Sustainable Development Goal ([SDG](#)) 15, Life on Earth.

The next step is for countries to monitor their national soil information systems for organic carbon levels to make evidence-based decisions on how to manage and monitor their soils.

Importance to travel & tourism

In the business world, it’s known as “Back to Basics”. That’s what this World Soil Day message is all about. The global movement towards more organic food is part of this accelerating trend. And yes, travel & tourism can be a major part of the solution.



SDG 16: UN pledge to advance human dignity, equality and rights





A UN Human Rights Officer from the peacekeeping mission in Mali (MINUSMA) visiting the Sevare jail, in central Mali, to monitor the rights situation there. Photo: MINUSMA/Sylvain Liechti



SDG 16: UN pledge to advance human dignity, equality and rights

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 11 December 2017 – Top United Nations officials on Monday urged everyone to raise their voices and stand up for the rights of others, while celebrating the launch of a year-long campaign on the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“Over seven decades, this mighty document has helped to profoundly change our world,” [said Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Monday, at a special UN Headquarters event to commemorate [Human Rights Day](#), observed annually on 10 December.

“[The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)] establishes the equality and dignity of every human being. It stipulates that every government has a duty to enable all people to enjoy their inalienable rights and freedoms. And it establishes that these rights are universal,” he added.

Mr. Guterres highlighted the progress achieved by humankind since the adoption of the Universal

Declaration, including advancing and protecting the rights of women, children and victims of discrimination as well as in holding accountable perpetrators of gross human rights violations and abuses.

However, he also called for taking a stock in areas where progress has not been achieved.

“In practice, recognition of the inherent dignity and equal rights of human beings is still far from universal,” he said, noting that millions around the world continue to suffer human rights violations and abuses. “And human rights defenders still face persecution, reprisals are rising and the space for civil society action is shrinking in very many nations,” added Mr. Guterres.

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

Underscoring the need for all sections of the society to “speak out and take a stand” for human rights, the UN chief announced his own pledge that

he will respect the rights of others regardless of who they are, and will uphold their rights even when he disagrees with them.

“When anyone’s human rights are denied, everyone’s rights are undermined, so I will stand up. I will raise my voice. I will take action. I will use my rights to stand up for your rights,” he committed.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly highlighted that the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was not only a milestone for the General Assembly, but was also one for humanity.

“But [the Universal Declaration] did not create human rights. They existed before this. Not on paper - but in people. In fact, human rights are an inherent part of humanity. And they always will be,” he said, adding that while the rights can be denied, they cannot be taken away – neither by law nor policy or action.

Recalling the efforts, that ultimately led to the adoption of the Universal Declaration in 1948, he called on everyone use the seminal document to inspire themselves and help protect and promote everyone’s human rights.

“Stand up taller – and speak up louder – for human rights,” he urged.

Also speaking today were Liu Zhenmin, the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs; as well as Louise Arbour and Navi Pillay, former High Commissioners of Human Rights. The [campaign](#) was officially [launched](#) by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein at Palais de Chaillot in Paris on Sunday.

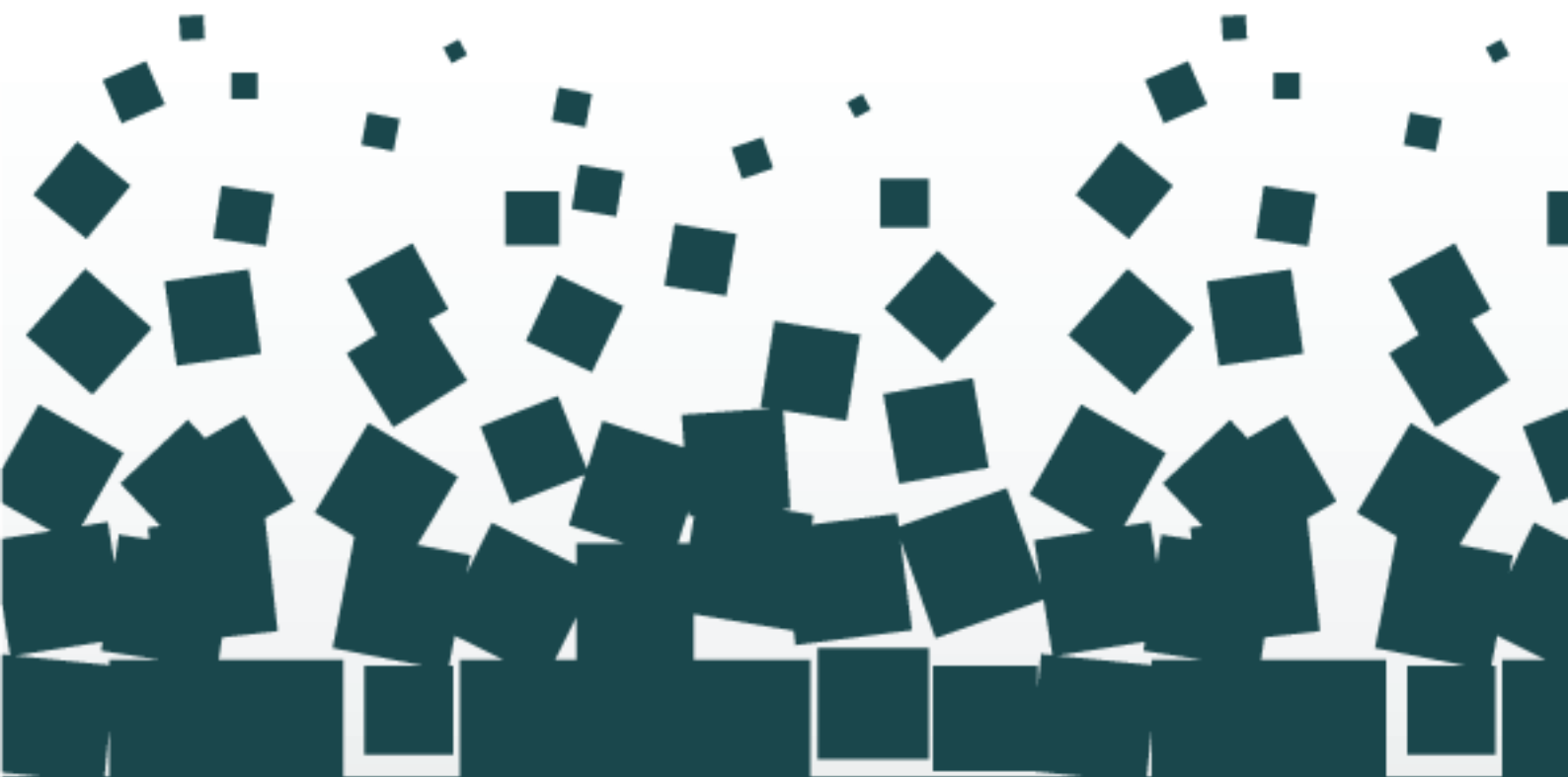
Importance to travel & tourism

Creating good working conditions, providing jobs for People with Disabilities, enhancing sustainability, promoting a culture of peace, etc., are all contributors to both the SDGs and human rights. All the items included in this and previous editions of The Olive Tree are part of the same inter-connected equation.

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: ‘Discrimination against one is discrimination against all,’ says UNESCO on Day for Tolerance





Two children in a Bronx, New York, school solidifying their friendship with a spontaneous expression of mutual understanding. UN Photo/Marcia Weistein

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: ‘Discrimination against one is discrimination against all,’ says UNESCO on Day for Tolerance

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 16 November 2017 – Marking the [International Day for Tolerance](#), the head of the United Nations cultural agency underscored how tolerance must be nurtured to celebrate the diversity that makes us strong and the values that bring us together.

“[Tolerance is respect](#), acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human,” said Audrey Azoulay, the newly-appointed Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), in her message on the International Day.

“Discrimination against one is discrimination against all,” she continued.

Ms. Azoulay pointed out that as globalization is accelerating across the world, societies are undergoing deep transformations, which open vast opportunities for dialogue and exchange as well as raise new challenges – sharpened by inequality and poverty, enduring conflicts and movements of people.

“We see today the rise of exclusive politics and discourses of division. We see diversity being rejected as a source of weakness,” she said.

Ms. Azoulay maintained that fuelled by ignorance and sometimes hatred, myths of “pure” lore cultures are being gloried while scapegoating and repressing people.

Also citing “barbaric terrorist attacks designed to weaken the fabric of ‘living together,’” she spotlighted the need that tolerance be more than the indifferent, passive acceptance of others.

“Tolerance must be seen as an act of liberation, whereby the differences of others are accepted as the same as our own,” stressed Ms. Azoulay.

The UN official said that that meant respecting the diversity of humanity on the basis of human rights; reaching out to others with dialogue; and standing up to all forms of racism, hatred and discrimination. Noting that all cultures are different, she emphasized that “humanity is a single community, sharing values, a past and future.”

“There are seven billion ways of ‘being human,’ but we stand together as members of the same family, all different, all equally seeking respect for rights and dignity,” she underscored.

Ms. Azoulay termed tolerance “a struggle for peace” that calls for new policies that respect diversity and pluralism on the basis of human rights.

“Most of all,” she added, “this calls on each of us, women and men across the world, to act for tolerance in our own lives, in seeking to understand others, in rejecting all racism and hatred, including anti-Semitism.”

The UNESCO chief said its role is “to deepen the binds of a single humanity, through understanding, dialogue and knowledge,” which is why the UN agency defend humanity’s cultural diversity and heritage from pillaging and attacks.

“This is why we seek to prevent violent extremism through education, freedom of expression and media literacy, to empower young women and men. This is why we work to strengthen dialogue between cultures and religions, spearheading the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures,” she said, adding that it was also why “UNESCO’s International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities works to fight racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion.”

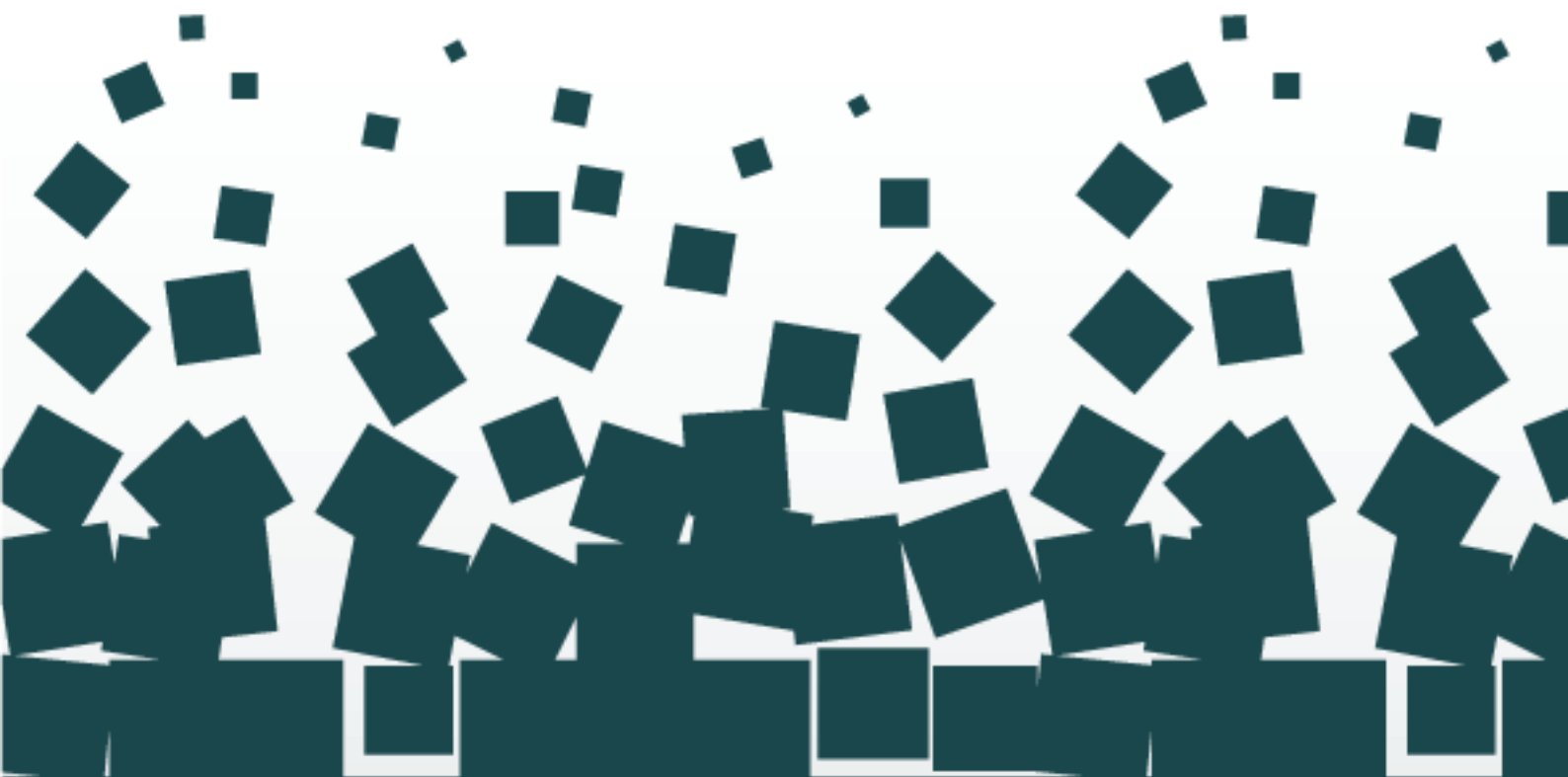
Importance to travel & tourism

Another noteworthy warning about “the rise of exclusive politics and discourses of division”, both of which violate all the fundamental values travel & tourism supposedly holds dear. Has this ever been discussed at travel & tourism forums? If not, why not? How long can the industry continue to sweep these critical issues under the carpet? Does the Nelson Mandela birth centenary year offer an opportunity to plug this deficit in the context of the South African experience?

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: Integrating entertainment with philanthropy, UN shines a spotlight on World TV Day





*A view of UNTV's Control Room at UN Headquarters in New York.
Photo: UN News Centre/Andrew Z. Giacalone*

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: Integrating entertainment with philanthropy, UN shines a spotlight on World TV Day

United Nations, (UN News Centre) 21 November 2017 – On World TV Day, the United Nations put its spotlight on the key role television plays in focusing the world's attention on a wide array of issues – ranging from the environment to conflicts and other pressing economic and social issues.

At a panel discussion event on Tuesday, the UN showcased collaborations between the TV industry and international organizations on various ways to educate people in an entertaining fashion.

Blending the goals of her activism with her work on the American drama series *Graceland*, Serinda Swan spoke about how she was able to infiltrate entertainment with philanthropy, spotlighting her work on human trafficking.

She had her character sold into a sex trafficking ring, “so that our viewers get to see what really happens to these girls.”

And it worked. Ms. Swan has had people tell her that they have made life-altering changes because of watching the show.

Also on the panel, Raeshem Nijhon, the producer of MTV's *Rebel Music* and the upcoming *Girly TV* series has turned her attention to women's issues. Pointing out how timely *Girly* is, she noted the importance of going “beyond the idea of perfection for women and girls” and instead focus on “women who are whole and flawed.”

Ms. Nijhon underscored that real people could watch the TV show, connect with a character, and become invested in what that character goes through – using the spotlight on pop culture to wrap important issues in.

For his part, producer Neal Weinberg's has created half-hour episodes of *ASPIREist*, which encourage millennials to look at relevant issues.

One example is an episode on 'Stop Sucking' that inspires audiences to break the habit of using plastic straws, showing the damage they do to the environment. The shows will also be clipped for easy social sharing and feature a call to action for viewers.

Importance to travel & tourism

Although social media is on the rise, TV retains its importance. CNN and BBC presenters are regular participants in travel & tourism forums. Travel & tourism is one of TV's biggest advertisers. How can these resources be better harnessed in pursuit of a greater good?

