

Edition 18 Mar - Apr 2020

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

THE FOUR HORSEMEN THREATENING OUR GLOBAL FUTURE



พระเจ้าทรงเป็นนิรันดร์

FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS

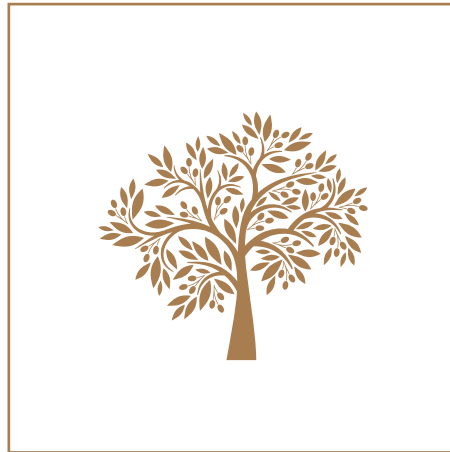
ศาสตร์ของพระราชากับการพัฒนาที่ยั่งยืน His Majesty's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for SDGs

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

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



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



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EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Imtiaz Muqbil



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

THE OLIVE TREE

Design & Layout: Nusreen Ekachon

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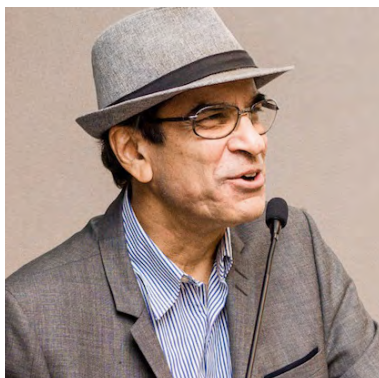
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Message from EXECUTIVE EDITOR

IMTIAZ MUQBIL

As this 18th edition of The Olive Tree went to press, the Covid-19 virus was raging in China and just beginning to spread beyond. The first two months of the Third Decade of the 21st century were clearly off to a bad start. The third and fourth months appear set to be even worse.

The chances of attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals by the end of this “Decade of Delivery” are looking bleak. History is repeating itself. The first half of the 20th century was overshadowed by the two World Wars. The first half of 21st century is being similarly overshadowed by different kinds of wars – trade, technology, the environment, poverty, religious extremism, migration, e.

As none of them augur well for Travel & Tourism, the over-arching challenge facing the industry is: Can it pluck up the courage to confront them? If so, what can it do? And how?

This edition of The Olive Tree offers some guidelines, all based on early-warnings sounded by the United Nations itself.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has identified these looming threats to human progress: Surging Geopolitical Tensions, the Climate Crisis, Global Mistrust and the Downsides of Technology. He called them “The Four Horsemen”, a reference to the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” (Death, Famine, War, and Conquest) depicted in the 1887 painting by Viktor Vasnetsov on the cover of this edition.

On Page 97, the World Social Report 2020, published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, identifies four powerful megatrends which it says are exacerbating global inequality: Technological Innovation, Climate Change, Urbanization and International Migration.

All are inter-related. But the UN also has solutions. Mr. Guterres says the best start would be to give the world respite from conflict. His four-point message for global leaders: “Stop escalation. Exercise maximum restraint. Re-start dialogue. Renew international cooperation.”

On Page 73, UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay complements all the above messages by calling for a total focus on “the four Ps on which our future depends: People, Prosperity, The Planet and Peace.”

These early-warnings and solutions offer clear pointers on how Travel & Tourism can play a lead and exemplary role in crafting a new Magna Carta for the post-Covid-19 era. No reinvention of the wheel is necessary, just a realignment of targets and the means of attaining them.

Marking its 75th anniversary, the UN was set up in the aftermath of the devastating two wars to heal wounds and bring peace. Sadly, Mr. Guterres is again reminding the world that the threat posed by the “Four Horsemen” is still very much alive.

The Covid-19 crisis is now a Fifth Horseman. Collectively, they give the world an opportunity to start afresh. As Travel & Tourism is one of the worst affected economic sectors, it can take the lead in redefining and rebuilding its own future, as well as that of humanity at large.

SECTION 1



LEAD STORY 1:

UN chief outlines solutions to defeat ‘four horsemen’ threatening our global future



UN Photo/Mark Garten Secretary-General António Guterres (left) briefs the General Assembly meeting on his Priorities for 2020 and the Work of the Organization.

United Nations, 22 January 2020, UN News - The start of the New Year finds the world facing four looming threats to human progress: surging geopolitical tensions, the climate crisis, global mistrust and the downsides of technology, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said on Wednesday.

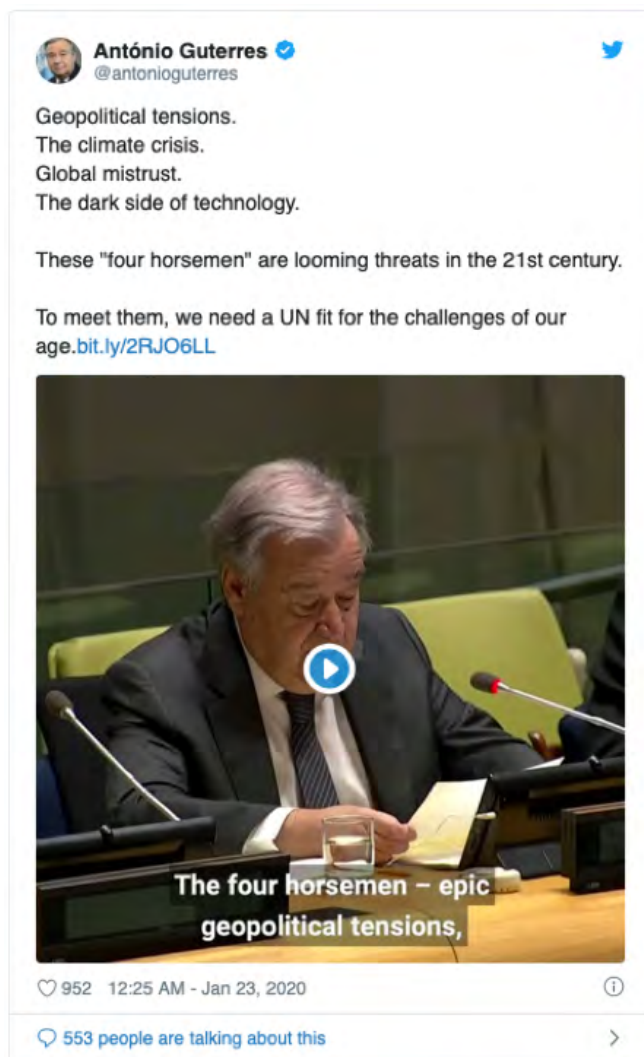
In a wide-ranging [speech](#) to the General Assembly, the UN chief outlined strategies to address what he called the “four horsemen in our midst”, and he urged countries to take advantage of the UN’s 75th anniversary year to secure a peaceful future for all people.

“These four horsemen...can jeopardize every aspect of our shared future”, Mr. Guterres warned. “That is why commemorating the 75th anniversary with nice speeches won’t do. We must address these four 21st-century challenges with four 21st-century solutions.”

Global tensions mounting

For the Secretary-General, global tensions are at their highest level in years, making the risk of fracture real. Although developments such as the formation of the Constitutional Committee in Syria and the recent Berlin conference on Libya are signs of hope, he stressed that “we have our work cut out for us”.

Mr. Guterres underlined the central role of prevention in UN engagement in the peace and security dimension, and emphasized the need to focus on the root causes of crisis and upheaval.



“We must strengthen our mediation capacity and our tools for sustaining peace, leading to long-term development”, he added. “We need to create the conditions for effective peace enforcement and counter-terrorism operations by our regional partners, under chapter VII of the Charter and with predictable funding. This is especially true in Africa, from the Sahel to Lake Chad.”

Our planet is burning

On climate change, the science is clear, Mr. Guterres stated.

“Rising temperatures continue to melt records. The past decade was the hottest on record. Scientists tell us that ocean temperatures are now rising at the equivalent of five Hiroshima bombs a second. One million species are in near-term danger of extinction. Our planet is burning”, he told ambassadors.

Yet, in the midst of the crisis, some leaders “continue to fiddle”, he said, as evidenced by the outcome of the last UN climate conference, known as COP25, held in Madrid in December.

But the Secretary-General is adamant that the climate battle can be won as people everywhere “get it”, while the overwhelming majority of scientists are clear there is still time to act.

“At the next climate conference - COP26 in Glasgow - governments must deliver the transformational change our world needs and that people demand, with much stronger ambition – ambition on mitigation, ambition on adaptation, and ambition on finance,” he stated.

A call for fair globalization

The third horseman—deep and growing global mistrust—can be defeated through fair globalization, boosting economic growth and preventing conflict.

Back in 2015, world leaders adopted an agenda to bring about a more just and fair planet for all. This year, the UN has launched a [Decade of Action](#) to achieve the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) by the 2030 deadline.

“Throughout the Decade of Action, we must invest in the eradication of poverty, in social protection, in health and fighting pandemics, in education, energy, water and sanitation, in sustainable transport and infrastructure and in internet access”, said the Secretary-General.

“We must improve governance, tackle illicit financial flows, stamp out corruption and develop effective, common sense and fair taxation systems. We must build economies for the future and



ensure decent work for all, especially young people. And we must put a special focus on women and girls because it benefits us all.”

The Secretary-General also encouraged leaders to work to rebuild trust, including through listening to their citizens and harnessing ideas for change and other constructive solutions put forward by youth.

Taming the ‘Wild West of cyberspace’



Bringing light to the dark side of the digital world will require action on several fronts, including in the labour market as automation will displace tens of millions of jobs in the next decade.

The UN chief recommended that education systems be redesigned to address this reality by teaching people how to learn across the course of their entire lives.

“We also must usher in order to the Wild West of cyberspace,” he said.

“Terrorists, white supremacists and others who sow hate are exploiting the internet and social media. Bots are spreading disinformation, fueling polarization and undermining democracies. Next year, cybercrime will cost \$6 trillion.”

Mr. Guterres highlighted the UN as the platform to bring together governments, the private sector, civil society and others to counter what he called “digital fragmentation” through global cooperation.

The “alarming possibilities” of artificial intelligence also must be addressed, and he appealed to countries to immediately ban lethal autonomous weapons, also known as killer robots. Lethal autonomous weapons - machines with the power to kill on their own, without human judgement and accountability - are bringing us into unacceptable moral and political territory”, he warned.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Each of the “Four Horsemen” impact Travel & Tourism in one way or another. They comprise the “operating environment” in which industry functions. As the industry learns time and again, if the neighbourhood is burning down, the business goes down with it. Hence, keeping the neighbourhood safe and secure is even more important to the survival of the business than its own management and operational policies. Putting them on the agendas of Travel & Tourism conferences will become imperative if the industry is to take control of its destiny.

LEAD STORY 2:

Geopolitical tensions reach ‘highest level this century’



UN Photo/Mark Garten The UN Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the media at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

United Nations, 6 January 2020, UN News - The UN Secretary-General [António Guterres](#) called on world leaders to de-escalate geopolitical tensions on Monday, which [he described](#) as being “at their highest level this century” as the new decade dawns.

The New Year has begun with our world in turmoil. We are living in dangerous times”, said the UN chief, noting that turbulence is only escalating.

“Even nuclear non-proliferation can no longer be taken for granted” he added, without specifically referencing the events of recent days following the targeted killing by a United States drone, of Iran’s most influential general, Qasem Soleimani, in Iraq last Friday.

Iran has vowed to avenge the killing of the elite Quds Force commander, and on Sunday it signified it would no longer be bound by the restrictions on its nuclear programme, outlined in the 2015 deal known as the [Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action](#), or JCPOA. The deal was debated in the Security Council [just last month](#).



‘Cauldron of tensions’

On 1 January, Mr. Guterres also expressed his deep concern at the announcement by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly known as North Korea, that it was ending its self-imposed moratorium on nuclear missile testing.

On Sunday, the Iraqi parliament also passed a non-binding resolution calling for US troops to leave the country, in a clear response to the killing of the Iranian general on their soil. In response, President Trump has threatened Iraq with sanctions if forced to withdraw its forces, and also threatened on Twitter, to destroy multiple sites of “cultural” significance within Iran, if there are reprisal attacks against Americans.

Mr. Guterres told the noon stakeout for correspondents at UN Headquarters in New York, that a “cauldron of tensions is leading more and more countries to take unpredicted decisions with unpredictable consequences and a profound risk of miscalculation.

At the same time, we see trade and technological conflicts that fracture world markets, undermine growth and widen

inequalities”, he added.

‘Climate crisis rages on’

Furthermore, said the UN chief, “our planet is on fire. The climate crisis rages on. In many parts of the world, we see many people frustrated and angry. We see increased social unrest and growing extremism, nationalism and radicalization, with a dangerous advance of terrorism, notably in Africa.

He said it was clear that “this situation cannot go on. I have been following the recent rise in global tensions with great concern. I am in constant contact with leading officials around the world.

Four key action points

The UN chief had a clear four-point message for what needs to happen now, in capitals across the world: “Stop escalation. Exercise maximum restraint. Re-start dialogue. Renew international cooperation.”

“Let us not forget the terrible human suffering caused by war,” he concluded. “As always, ordinary people pay the highest price. It is our common duty to avoid it.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Lead Story 1 identified the Four Horsemen Threatening the Global Future. One of those horsemen is “War and Conflict”. Here, the UN Chief outlines the four solutions: “Stop escalation. Exercise maximum restraint. Re-start dialogue. Renew international cooperation.” Which of those words do global leaders not understand? Why is it so difficult to abide by them? What can Travel & Tourism do to pressure global leaders to abide by those four solutions?

LEAD STORY 3 :

2020's 'wind of madness' indicates growing instability



UN Photo/Mark Garten Secretary-General António Guterres briefs journalists on his priorities for 2020 and on the work of the organization.

United Nations, 4 February 2020, UN News - Rising instability and unpredictable geopolitical tensions have led to a “wind of madness” across the world, Secretary-General António Guterres said on Tuesday during his main annual press conference for journalists at UN Headquarters in New York.

Following recent flare-ups in some hotspots, the UN chief observed that although de-escalation efforts indicated progress, the situation has now changed.

“I have spoken about winds of hope. But today a wind of madness is sweeping the globe. From Libya to Yemen to Syria and beyond — escalation is back. Arms are flowing. Offensives are increasing”, he said.

Security Council resolutions ‘disrespected’

“All situations are different but there is a feeling of growing instability and hair-trigger tensions, which makes everything far more unpredictable and uncontrollable, with a heightened risk of miscalculation. Meanwhile, Security Council resolutions are being disrespected even before the ink is even dry.”

In laying out this and other “vicious circles” operating, the Secretary-General underscored the need for multilateral institutions like the UN to be more attuned to the global challenges of the 21st century.

“In the year ahead I will press to break the vicious circles of suffering and conflict and push for a strong surge of diplomacy for peace,” he said.

Coal addiction ‘dangerously strong’

Mr. Guterres continued his push for climate action, as rising ocean temperatures and subsequent ice melt are worsening the crisis.

With carbon dioxide concentrations set to reach new highs, he called on “the big emitters” to lead the way forward in adaptation, mitigation and financing.

“We need a price on carbon, and an end to subsidies for fossil fuels. We are still seeing too many plans for coal plants – the addiction to coal remains dangerously strong,” he said.

The vicious cycle of poverty and inequality also must be broken, and Mr. Guterres reminded journalists that the UN this year kicked off a [Decade of Action](#) to deliver the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).

The 17 goals include ending hunger and poverty, providing quality education for all children, and achieving gender equality.

Said the Secretary-General: “We know that progress on one Goal can generate progress on all – the virtuous circle we know is possible and that can point the way toward growth and prosperity for all.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

“In the year ahead I will press to break the vicious circles of suffering and conflict and push for a strong surge of diplomacy for peace.” So says the UN Secretary General. Funnily enough, tourism is also supposed to an industry of peace. Unfortunately, not much peace these days. Worth exploring whether Travel & Tourism still deserves to be thus anointed.

LEAD STORY 4:

Call for global participation in UN75 dialogues



UNFPA Youth from the Senegalese group Afriyan take a stand for teenage empowerment, following their meeting with UNFPA Regional Director, Mabingué Ngom Mabingué Ngom.

United Nations, 2 January 2020, UN News - The United Nations on Wednesday [launched](#) the biggest global conversation on the world's future: the UN75 dialogues. Views and ideas gathered throughout the year will be shared at a high-level event in September to mark the Organization's 75th anniversary.

The UN75 initiative is described as a “global reality check” to spark conversations around building a better future for all.

Four innovative data streams will capture discussions across the world, and in diverse settings, to build the first-ever repository of crowd-sourced solutions to major global challenges.

The UN75 dialogues – together with a ‘One-minute Survey’, opinion polling in 50 countries, and an artificial intelligence sentiment analysis of traditional and social media in 70 countries – will generate compelling data to inform national and international policies and debate.

UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) will present the views and ideas that are generated to world leaders and senior UN officials at a high-level event on 21 September to mark the Organization's 75th anniversary.

Recalling that “no country, no community, is able to solve the complex problems of our world alone”, the UN chief called for participation in the process.

“We need to come together, not only to talk, but to listen”, he said. “It is absolutely essential that you all join the conversation. We need your opinion, your strategies and your ideas for us to be able to deliver better for the people of the world that we must serve.”

To engage constituencies across borders, sectors and generations, the UN75 team is collaborating with a wide multi-sector network, including UN Resident Coordinators throughout the countries of the world to convene dialogues with a diverse and global reach.



With an emphasis on youth and groups not already engaged with the UN, the UN75 initiative aims to better understand the expectations of international cooperation in the context of pressing global challenges.

To inspire and inform the dialogues, the UN is also partnering with Vox Media's brand studio, Vox Creative, to create a video informed by interviews with 38 people from around the world, sharing their experiences and opinions related to important global issues, to be launched on 6 January.

Everyone is encouraged to be a part of the conversation by joining [here](#).

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travel & Tourism could do with a global version of this dialogue. Enough of those boring top-down events with the usual gang of suspects from the same old multinational companies spewing the same old advertorial messages. Some fresh perspectives are long overdue.

LEAD STORY 5:

We need to give voice to ‘We the Peoples’



UN Photo/Jean Marc Ferre Secretary-General António Guterres (center) sits down for a dialogue during a UN75 event with youth at the Graduate Institute in Geneva.

United Nations, 25 February 2020, UN News - For an Organization that is seen as all too ready to give advice, the United Nations welcomed a major role reversal on Tuesday: young people from all over the world were gathered in Switzerland to voice their concerns, outline their vision for a better future, and give Secretary-General [António Guterres](#) their advice on steering the world body through today's turbulent waters.

“This globalization that has created so much wealth around the world has been leaving people behind, has been squeezing middle classes in different parts of the world and is creating also the feeling that it is not working for all,” the UN chief told an audience of more than 600 people gathered in an auditorium at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva.

The discussion is one of the spotlight events taking place in the context of the UN [Human Rights Council's 43rd session](#), which is under way in the Swiss city through 20 March.

The heartfelt and sometimes blunt feedback to the UN leadership came as part of a series of conversations being held over the coming year for the [UN75](#) campaign, marking the 75th anniversary of the [UN Charter](#) and which aims to listen to people's hopes and fears – as well as their expectations of the UN – in a rapidly changing world.

The Secretary-General set the stage for today's discussion saying: “So, the UN, in a situation like this, needs to ask itself: ‘Are we doing what we should be doing? Are we responding to the anxieties and to the aspirations of the peoples of the world? Or do we need to change, do we need to adapt to this new world?’”



‘Open up’ and create an ‘Everyone’s UN’

“You need to make the UN more democratic and more participatory, and open it up to the public, and create something like ‘Everyone’s UN,’” said Martin Ostermaier, a young professional from Germany who currently works with the international Labour Organization (ILO) and was one of six panelist on stage with Mr. Guterres.

“This dialogue is a great first start, but it shouldn’t happen every 75 years. I should happen more often,” he added, drawing laughter from the audience.

Marie Claire Graf, a Youth Parliamentarian and student at the University of Zurich, told the Secretary-General: “Open up decision-making, be bold, be

unprecedented but also really give ownership to the people. Because we can’t just hide in our ivory towers, and think people will trust us.”

The notion of opening the UN up to more democratic participation and processes, as well as to the inclusion of young and marginalized people and groups, including refugees, found a very loud echo among the participants.



UN Photo/Jean Marc Ferre Young people pose questions to Secretary-General António Guterres questions during a UN75 event with youth at the Graduate Institute in Geneva.

“My advice would be not just to listen to us, but to listen to people who have small voices or who have no voice at all,” said Adiba Quasim, a young Yazidi survivor and refugee from Iraq who is currently studying in Switzerland.

“I lost everything some years ago and because I have [faced] death so many times, and because I have [tried] everything to find a future for me, and today, in 2020, we see women getting raped, slavery and killing because of our identity, because of our religions, because of our colour, she said, “So what I want to see in 2045 is that people can live in peace, people can live really with dignity.”

“I would like to see a non-patriarchal world, because I believe that the patriarchy...cuts across all instances, not just gender, it cuts across race, it cuts across social classes. I’d like to see world that is non-racist world, as well,” said Jasmine Pokuaa Oduro, a dual citizen of Ghana and the UK, who later issued a very direct piece of advice to the UN for its use of stereotyped images on income inequalities.

“One thing that I’d like the UN to start to prioritize now, and I think they could start doing it from now, is to stop using black and brown children in their publications to represent poverty.”

‘Declare a planetary emergency’

Many who took the floor expressed their desire for transformative policies that would broaden opportunities both within and across societies.

The need to address distortions and injustices brought about by severe disparities in wealth was a common thread running through the discussion – with several speakers highlighting the need to hold hyper-wealthy individuals and transnational corporations to greater account.

“I want to like to see that multinational corporations are held accountable for their actions,” said Jan Harvey Parfina, a student from the Philippines. “Especially if they already violating human rights, as well as degrading the environment.

“ This is the beginning of new dynamic of relationships between the UN and ‘We the Peoples’, and this relationship will hopefully be able to shape a new kind of multilateralism – UN chief Guterres ”

Equally pervasive was the concern about the future of the planet in the context of climate change.

“As we are facing the extinction of humanity, my advice is to declare a planetary emergency – right now,” Ms. Graf urged the Secretary-General.

She stressed: “We can’t solve this crisis with small fixes; we can’t just adjust ;somewhere, we cannot just put solar panels on the roof and think that this is going to solve the climate crisis. We must go much bigger.”

Mr. Guterres summed up by conceding that that, as the United Nations, “we need to be humble, to recognize our failures and to be able to understand that we need to give the voice to ‘[We the peoples](#)’ that we are supposed to represent as the UN.”

The important thing, he continued is that “we have a lot to change in order to be able to respond. We need to adapt to be able to respond to the will of the people ... and to be trusted by the people, which means giving the people a very strong influence in what we do.”

“That’s a very clear message I got from everybody here,” said the UN chief.

Tackle the spread of ‘fake news’, misinformation

In addition to broad aspirational goals and transformative policies, some speakers also made very concrete suggestions for areas in which the UN could concentrate in a more targeted way – on emerging technological threats, for example, and in investing in programmes that can foster youth leadership.

“I’d like to see a global concerted effort to tackle the issue of fake news and the spread of misinformation. Because one of the most horrifying scenarios that I can imagine is a world where you cannot tell anymore what is real and what is false, and that’s becoming increasingly likely,” said Marwan al Chazli, an engineering student from Egypt.

He said: “I would advise a focus on youth programmes that empower young people to become changemakers. Give young people the resource to do amazing things, and they will.”

Capping off his two-days in Geneva, Mr. Guterres told the young people gathered at the Graduate Institute that the conversation represented a new beginning for the UN.

“This is the beginning of new dynamic of relationships between the UN and ‘We the Peoples’, and this relationship will hopefully be able to shape a new kind of multilateralism – a multilateralism that is inclusive, in which not only the governments, but also civil society, academia, and local communities have a voice and have influence, he said, and added: “If we are able to do that, I think it will be a big change.”

“There will be a lot of resistance. I count on you to overcome that resistance.”



IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Great comment by the UN Secretary General: “Are we doing what we should be doing? Are we responding to the anxieties and to the aspirations of the peoples of the world? Or do we need to change, do we need to adapt to this new world?” Travel & Tourism should be asking itself those very questions. In fact, this article is full of candid comments that deserve to go mainstream across the Travel & Tourism spectrum.

LEAD STORY 6:

With human rights under attack, blueprint unveiled for positive change



UN Photo/Violaine Martin UN Secretary-General António Guterres attends the High Level Segment of the 43rd Regular Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

United Nations, 24 February 2020, UN News - People's basic human rights – their birth-right – are “under assault”, UN Secretary-General [António Guterres](#) said on Monday, as he launched a Call to Action aimed at boosting equality and reducing suffering everywhere.

“Human rights are our ultimate tool to help societies grow in freedom,” he [told](#) Member States on the [opening day](#) of the UN [Human Rights Council](#)’s [43rd session](#) in Geneva.

“To ensure equality for women and girls. To advance sustainable development. To prevent conflict, reduce human suffering and build a just and equitable world.

In his speech to the top UN right body, in which he detailed a seven-point blueprint for positive change, Mr. Guterres issued an appeal for solidarity.

“People across the world want to know we are on their side,” he said.

“Whether robbed of their dignity by war, repression of poverty, or simply dreaming of a better future, they rely on their irreducible rights – and they look to us to help uphold them.”

Echoing the call for change, High Commissioner for Human Rights [Michelle Bachelet](#) said that although threats to human rights, development and peace were on the rise, so were the practical, actionable [solutions](#) to these issues.

In his pledge to utilize the full weight of his office and the UN family to fulfil the Call to Action, Mr. Guterres highlighted the enduring value of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

"Human rights are about the dignity & worth of the human person. They expand the horizons of hope, enlarge the boundaries of the possible & unleash the best of ourselves & our world."

-- @antonioguterres at the Human Rights Council.
bit.ly/3c90zC7



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This cornerstone of understanding between UN Member States was proclaimed in 1948, out of the ashes of the Second World War – and a desire to prevent such suffering from ever happening again.

Ms. Bachelet stressed that the human rights agenda offers guidance to resolve grievances and conflicts, improve lives, and create greater justice, more peace and more sustainable development.

"I ask you to harness these solutions, and the power of cooperative action, to ensure a more equitable and sustainable world – for all of us; for today's youth; and for tomorrow," she told Member States.

Sovereignty 'no defence for rights violations'

Highlighting the document's proclamation that human rights are 'humanity's highest aspiration', Mr. Guterres insisted that all States

had a responsibility to protect and promote people's "dignity and worth".

National sovereignty "cannot be a pretext for violating human rights", Mr. Guterres insisted, while also maintaining that greater equality "strengthens States and societies, thereby reinforcing sovereignty".

Positive change is possible, the UN chief insisted, recalling his own experience living under dictatorship in Portugal, which finally gave way to a democratic movement when he was 24 years old.

Other "human rights struggles and successes inspired us", the UN chief said, noting how these had secured the end of apartheid in South Africa and colonial rule.

One billion people have also been lifted out of poverty in a generation, he continued, and there have also been major advances in improving access to drinking water, along with big declines in child mortality.

Despite this, in the 75 years that the UN has strived for peace, security and development, myriad challenges persist, Mr. Guterres explained.

People bombed and starved



Chief among these challenges are several protracted, unresolved conflicts that have left families trapped in war-torn enclaves, "starved and bombed in clear violation of international law", he said.

Human trafficking also affects "every region of the world", the UN chief noted, leaving women and girls "enslaved, exploited and abused", unable to realise their potential.

Journalists and civil society are also under threat, with activists jailed, religious groups

and minorities – including indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and the LGBTI community – persecuted under “overly broad definitions of national security”.

Megatrends responsible for growing anxiety

Global hunger is also increasing, Mr. Guterres said, before highlighting a series of 21st century issues linked to huge problems that affect all countries: the climate crisis, population growth, urbanization and the dark underbelly of technological progress.

“People are being left behind. Fears are growing. Divisions are widening,” he said. “Some leaders are exploiting anxieties to broaden those gaps to breaking point.”

Introducing his Call to Action blueprint, Mr. Guterres explained that its aim was to “transform the ambitions of the Universal Declaration into real-world change on the ground”.

Sustainable development at core of rights blueprint

Heading the seven-point protocol is a call to put human rights at the core of sustainable development – a reference to the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), agreed to by the international community in 2015 under the Agenda 2030 banner.

“The vast majority of the goals and targets correspond to legally binding human rights commitments made by every Member State,” Mr. Guterres said.

“When we help lift people out of abject poverty...we are enabling [them] to claim their rights and upholding the core pledge of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind – UN chief António Guterres”

“When we help lift people out of abject poverty – when we ensure education for all, notably girls – when we guarantee universal healthcare...we are enabling people to claim

their rights and upholding the core pledge of the 2030 Agenda to leave nobody behind.”

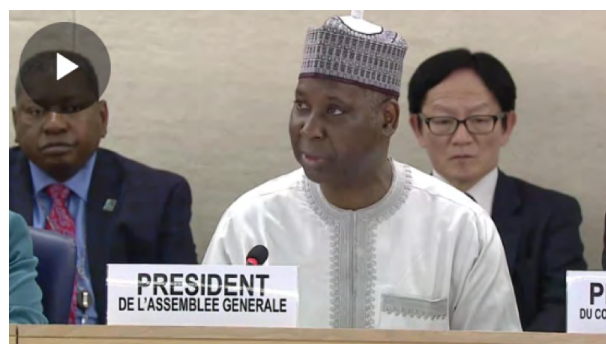
Violence against women must end

Among the other priorities, the UN Secretary-General highlighted that much more needs to be done to prevent violence against women.

“Violence against women is the world’s most pervasive human rights abuse,” he said, in a call to “every country” to support policies that promote gender equality, repeal discriminatory laws...ensure sexual and reproductive health and rights, and strive for women’s equal representation.

Underscoring the need for sustainable growth, President of the UN [General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande](#) also [underlined](#) the importance of gender equality, calling for its streamlining in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

“When it comes to human rights, there are no exceptions to those whom are protected under the Universal Declaration,” he continued, stressing that it is therefore important to strengthen partnerships to ensure that human rights can be upheld for all, and “we rid the world of abuse, exploitation, marginalization, racism, torture and all exclusion.”



Climate crisis is biggest threat

Turning to 21st century challenges, Mr. Guterres reiterated that the climate crisis was “the biggest threat to our survival”.

It has already threatened human rights around the world and would continue to do so in future, he noted, before underscoring people’s right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable planet that the Call to Action is designed to achieve.

Young people will be empowered to participate in this process, the UN chief insisted, so that they do “not simply speak, but to participate and shape decisions that will affect their future”.

Online risks mar potential for progress

Finally, on the challenges posed to human rights by new technology, Mr. Guterres explained that progress in this field “are

too often used to violate rights and privacy through surveillance, repression and online harassment and hate”.

Facial recognition and robotics should never be used to deepen inequality, he insisted, while also reiterating his call for online-ready human rights norms such as the Internet Governance Forum.

At the same time, the UN chief also repeated his call for a global ban on lethal autonomous weapon systems.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

A long list of human rights violations, all relevant to Travel & Tourism, but never included on any industry conference programme content, nor the subject of any report. When will that change? As the UN Secretary General said, “People across the world want to know we are on their side. Whether robbed of their dignity by war, repression of poverty, or simply dreaming of a better future, they rely on their irreducible rights – and they look to us to help uphold them.” What can Travel & Tourism do to uphold human rights?

LEAD STORY 7:

On World Social Justice Day, UN labour agency says ‘put people and planet first’



World Bank/Eric Miller Worker doing maintenance in Mozambique.

United Nations, 20 February 2020, UN News - Reduce inequality around the world, the United Nations labour agency urged on Thursday, [World Social Justice Day](#).

The gap between the rich and the poor is larger than previously thought. Globally, the poorest 20 per cent of any given country needs an average of more than 11 years to earn what the richest earns in one, according to the International Labor Organization ([ILO](#)).

And in lower-income countries, the situation is even worse. According to [ILO](#), someone in the poorest 20 per cent of the population needs over 26 years to earn what the richest 20 per cent does in one.

This is because in lower-income countries, the rich earn a much larger share of income than in the rest of the world, which comes at the expense of everyone else, especially the poorest.

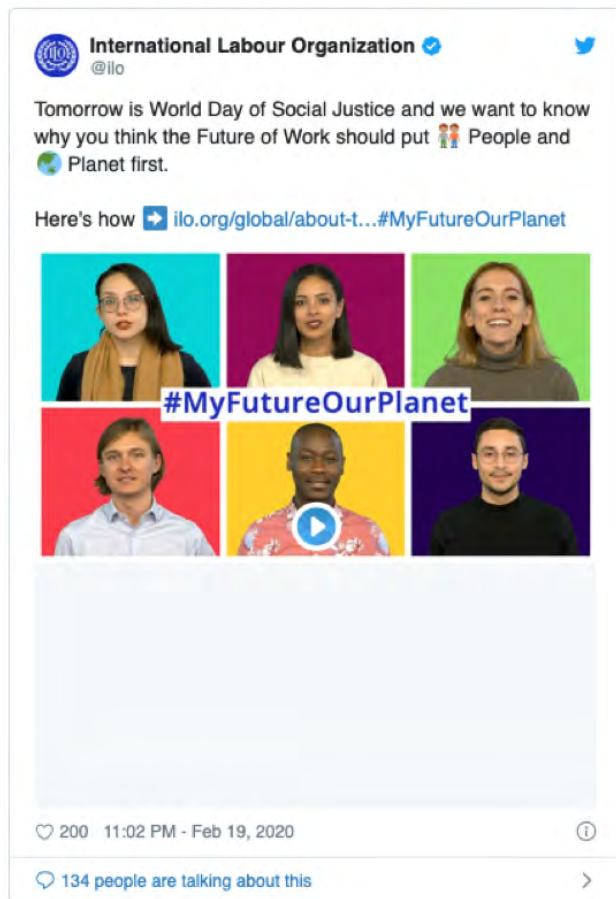
Inequality in lower-income countries is particularly dangerous as large sections of the population live in extremely vulnerable conditions. So, by underestimating inequality, the world risks failing key challenges in its poorest nations.

Social justice is a fundamental condition for people to coexist in peace and prosperity, within and between nations. It is also at the heart of the Organization’s global mission for development and human dignity.

What is social justice?

Social justice is based on equal rights for all peoples and the possibility for everyone, without discrimination, to benefit from economic and social progress around the world.

Promoting social justice is not just about increasing income and creating jobs, it spotlights human



rights, dignity and freedom of expression for workers, along with economic, social and political autonomy.

Everyone can contribute to social justice by defending gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants.

Social justice flourishes when gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability barriers are struck down.

Closing inequality gaps

At UN Headquarters in New York, ILO commemorated the Day with a special event dedicated to closing the inequalities gap to achieve social justice.

ILO Senior Programme Officer Amber Barth chaired a discussion, in which she painted a picture of a decline in labour income, an uptick in global unemployment, slowing economic growth and a lack of new jobs being created.

“While work remains one of the best ways to get out and stay out of poverty...it is

becoming increasingly difficult for people to find jobs”, she said, affirming the need for a new development trajectory.

The meeting highlighted that policies were needed to reduce inequalities.

For her part, the UN Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mirgul Moldoisaeva, stressed that social justice was an “essential condition” for achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

She called 2020 “a landmark year” as it marks the 10th anniversary of the [2030 Development Agenda](#) and maintained the social justice issues today are “more relevant than ever before”.

Ms. Moldoisaeva said the year provides new incentives to implement “outlying plans for sustainable development, including social justice”.

‘Make your voice heard’

The UN labour agency believes that the only way to achieve social justice is to put people and the planet first, fight inequality, reduce poverty and tackle climate change.

So, on World Social Justice Day 2020, ILO launched a global campaign to ask everyone to make their voice heard.

To do this, the UN agency is asking everyone to share their thoughts on social justice by posting a ten-second video with the hashtag #MyFutureOurPlanet and tagging three people so they too can share their views.

ILO maintains that this is a platform to showcase everyone’s voices.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

“The UN labour agency believes that the only way to achieve social justice is to put people and the planet first.” That’s the order in which the famous slogan “People, Planet, Profits” prioritises the agenda. Unfortunately, it has been implemented in reverse order.

LEAD STORY 8:

Latin America and Caribbean region deadliest for journalists in 2019



UN Photo/Rick Bajornas
Journalists at the UN (file)

United Nations, 20 January 2020, UN News - Twenty-two journalists were reported killed in the Latin America and Caribbean region in 2019, making it the deadliest part of the world for the press, followed by 15 in Asia-Pacific, and 10 in Arab States.

The [figures](#) come from the Observatory of Killed Journalists database, which is maintained by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)). It shows that, over the last decade, 894 journalists were murdered, an average of almost 90 per year: journalist killings in 2019 dropped by almost half compared to 2018 (from 99 to 56), but members of the press still face extreme risks, in all regions of the world.

Local coverage more dangerous than war reporting

The UNESCO data shows that targeting local affairs, such as politics, corruption and crime, is more dangerous for journalists than covering

war zones. Last year, almost two-thirds of cases occurred in countries not experiencing armed conflict, and the vast majority involved reporters covering their local patch.

In November 2019, on the International Day to End Impunity Against Journalists, UNESCO launched a campaign, #KeepTruthAlive, to draw attention to the dangers faced by journalists close to their homes, highlighting the fact that 93 per cent of those killed worked locally. The campaign featured an interactive map, providing a vivid demonstration of the scale and breadth of the dangers faced by journalists worldwide.

An attempt to silence criticism

In a statement released on Monday, UNESCO declared that attacks on journalists are an attempt to silence critical voices and restrict public access to information.

Aside from the risk of murder, journalists increasingly experience verbal and physical

attacks in connection with their work. Over recent years, there has been a marked rise in imprisonment, kidnapping and physical violence, amid widespread rhetoric hostile to the media and journalists.

Women in the media are particular targets, says UNESCO: they are often targets of online harassment, and face threats of gender-based violence.

UNESCO is committed to improving the safety of journalists worldwide and ensure that crimes against them do not go unpunished.

A [report](#) published by the agency in November 2019 showed that only 10 per cent of attacks are prosecuted, and less than one in eight cases recorded by UNESCO since 2006 have been resolved.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Independent, trustworthy journalism has become an exception rather than the rule. Note this comment: “Attacks on journalists are an attempt to silence critical voices and restrict public access to information. Aside from the risk of murder, journalists increasingly experience verbal and physical attacks in connection with their work.” Why should this matter to the Travel & Tourism industry? Take a deep breath and think about it. Is the quality of travel journalism up to the mark? What can be done to improve it?

LEAD STORY 9:

Investing in health workers yields ‘triple dividend’



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

United Nations, 2 January 2020, UN News - At the start of the new year and new decade, the head of the United Nations health agency thanked “the brave health workers” around the globe and asked that the world do better in supporting them.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The value of this investment is now becoming more than apparent due to the Covid-19 crisis. We all realise now what an important, dangerous and life-threatening responsibility health workers shoulder. Health is wealth, goes the family saying. Sick societies can never be productive societies. In the post-Covid19 era, health workers will become more important to society than soldiers.

LEAD STORY 10:

Sustainable urban mobility must come first: So how do you get people out of their cars?



Brussels, 27 January 2020, European Committee of the Regions News - As operators and designers of public transport services, local and regional authorities and policy makers have the opportunity to shape and structure urban spaces. The best way to make the most positive impact on people's living conditions, and to influence their daily mobility choices, is to offer the very best options for movement.

During the joint conference, UITP and the [European Committee of the Regions](#) asked one of the most provocative questions in urban mobility: **How do you get people out of their cars?** But what practical solutions have proven to be successful for getting citizens on to public transport? Shared experiences and transferrable ideas were on offer when UITP and the ECoR joined forces to bring together more 160 international participants for [this topical Conference](#).

Opened by **UITP Europe Senior Director Thomas Avanzata** and **Chair of the CoR COTER Commission Isabelle Boudineau**, the gathering brought sustainable urban mobility to the agenda.

In Europe, the road transport sector is responsible for over half of all NOx emissions and accounts for 72% of the 27% of the EU's total GHG emissions, which are attributable to transport. This is resulting in irreversible damage to our natural environment, with a detrimental impact on quality of life and the health of citizens in our towns and cities (air pollution, urban congestion, noise emissions, and more.)

"Emissions from the transport sector continue to rise. The European Union cannot succeed in its Green Deal if regions and cities are not at the forefront of efforts to provide an efficient and clean public-transport service. They are the actors most capable of proposing innovative solutions that make it possible to stop using private cars", said **Isabelle Boudineau**, Chair of the European Committee of the Regions Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER).

[The European Green Deal](#) highlights the need for transport to become drastically less polluting in urban areas in particular, and emphasises the importance of a combination of measures

aimed at reducing emissions, mitigating urban congestion and improving public transport options. Therefore the need to move as many people as possible to shared modes is vital, said UITP President **Pere Calvet**.

“At UITP, we’re convinced that a shift from private cars to public transport and active modes, cycling and walking, is the best way to decarbonise people’s daily mobility, so UITBP President **Calvet**.

“The Green Deal is a game changer, it’s an opportunity. Its ambitious objectives in terms of climate neutrality and more generally in terms of sustainability will not be met if public transport and a modal shift to sustainable daily mobility are not given priority. A number one priority. It’s the bus that takes kids to school, the tram that takes me to the office and the metro that takes you to the movies which makes a difference”, said **Thomas Avanzata**, UITP Europe Senior Director.

The Conference began with a discussion on how cars have shaped our cities and why a modal split is needed as well as how Europeans travel and how can mobility choices can be influenced.

In the context of the new European Green Deal, which calls for a 90% reduction in transport emissions by 2050, **Sylvie Landrieve** and **Susan Grant-Muller** of Forum vies mobiles and the University of Leeds presented their examples and implementations for improving mobility in cities: Behavioural change, incentivisation and understanding the different measures required for various locations should always be considered.

The Conference also featured two Urban Mobility Toolbox sessions.

Part one presented a range of best practices and experiences with several aspects of urban mobility, in particular aspects of seamless travel, urban access regulations and offer and demand management. BKK Budapest, RATP, Arriva and the Land Transport Authority, Singapore participated in the discussion on discouraging the use of cars and answering urban mobility needs.

The **second urban mobility toolbox** session focused on the practical experiences in relation to fare policy and multimodality, including pedestrianised areas, as well as access restrictions and zero emission zones. Participating in the discussion were SSB, Stuttgart, Wiener Linien, Vienna, the City of Balbao and Krakow Public Transport Authority.

In the **final part** of the Conference a panel of experts discussed on how to achieve a greener, carbon-free urban transport system in Europe and deliver the urban mobility of tomorrow.

Sir Albert Bore, Birmingham City Councillor and CoR member, **Clara De La Torre**, Deputy-Director General, DG CLIMA, **Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg** MEP, Member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, **Miguel Gaspar**, Deputy Mayor for Mobility & Safety, City of Lisbon and **Elke Van den Brandt**, Minister of the Government of Brussels Capital Region responsible for Mobility, Public Works and Road Safety, brought their experience and ideas on how to find the right balance between the urgent need for a long-term paradigm shift and today’s short-term mobility need.

Matthew Baldwin, Deputy-Director General of DG MOVE at the European Commission, concluded the Conference by saying: “To my reading, public transport will become the cornerstone of the new MFF 2021-2027”.

What has been made clear from the joint UITP and European Committee of the Regions Conference is this: There is life without the car. There’s also a demand for further EU support in sustainable urban mobility and the modernisation of public transport in Europe’s metropolitan areas.

Through examples, incentivisation and investment a modal shift can be made to encourage more people to leave the car at home and use the many mobility options available in our cities.

UITP also held [a joint Conference with the European Committee of the Regions and UNIFE](#) last September to advocate for urban rail investment.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

How do you get people out of their cars? It's not too difficult. Travel & Tourism has not been very creative in this department. It is still commonplace for bigwigs and VIPs to roll up in their limos for industry events, or keep everyone waiting while they get stuck in traffic. Maybe some car-free events may set the ball rolling, along with greater use of bicycles. Certainly, more walking streets and car-free days will be a big help.

LEAD STORY 11:

From the Field: Women push for peace



MINUSCA/Hervé Serefio Central African women are making significant strides in the security sector to bridge the gender gap.

United Nations, 26 February 2020, UN News - The “strength, leadership and invaluable contributions in peacekeeping settings” made by women across the world is being highlighted by the United Nations as part of the organization’s ongoing commitment to building global peace.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which recognizes the importance of women’s participation in peace and political processes.

At the community, national and international level, women have been working towards supporting initiatives which have brought peace and stability to countries affected by conflict and instability.

[Read more here](#) about how women are promoting lasting peace as an alternative to conflict.



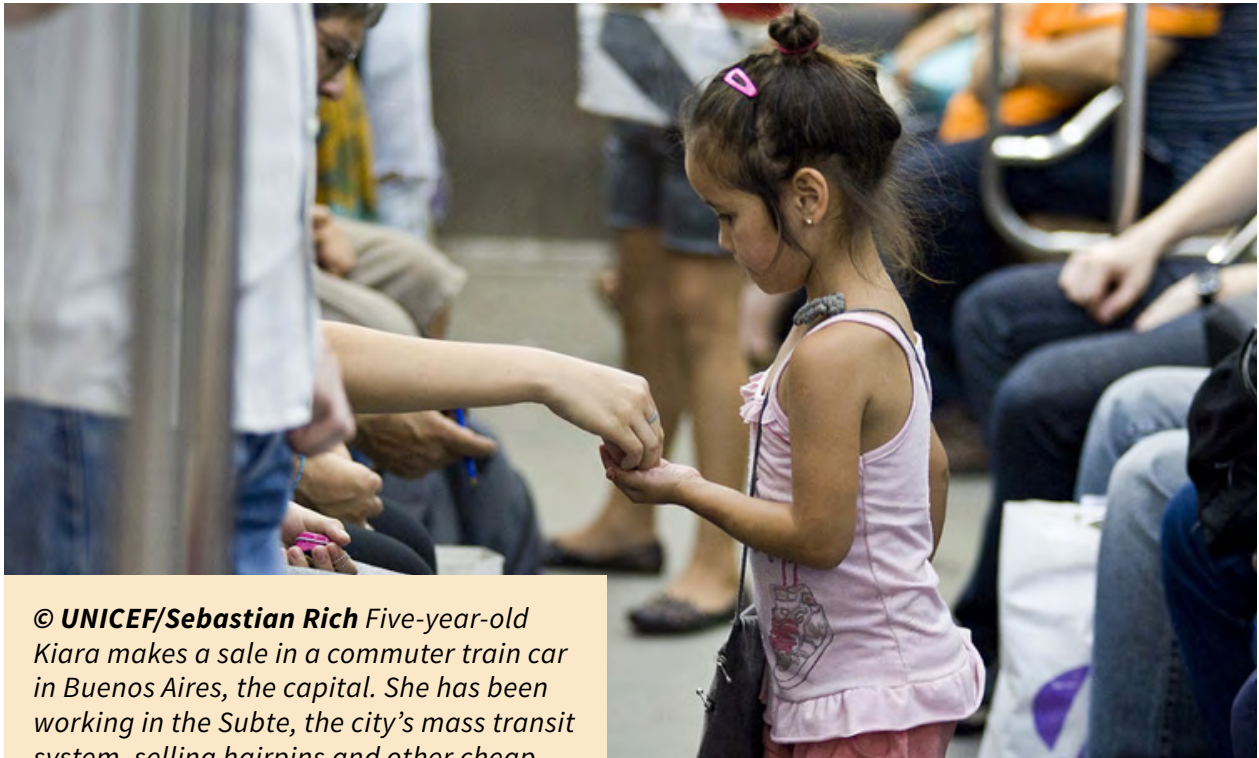
UN Photo/Isaac Billy | Women in South Sudan attend a meeting on focused on their role in supporting peace and security.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

If Travel & Tourism is an industry of peace, and women comprise most of the workforce, the combination becomes a natural force to advance this agenda. Another blind-spot that will need to be addressed in the post-Covid19 era.

LEAD STORY 12:

‘Not a single country’ does enough to help children flourish



© **UNICEF/Sebastian Rich** Five-year-old Kiara makes a sale in a commuter train car in Buenos Aires, the capital. She has been working in the Subte, the city's mass transit system, selling hairpins and other cheap goods, since she was three years old.

United Nations, 19 February 2020, UN News – The world's survival depends on children being able to flourish, but no country is doing enough to give them a sustainable future, dozens of highly respected international health experts said on Wednesday.

In a UN-backed [report](#) assessing the capacity of 180 countries to ensure that their youngsters can survive and thrive, the authors highlight numerous “immediate” threats to their health, environment and opportunities.

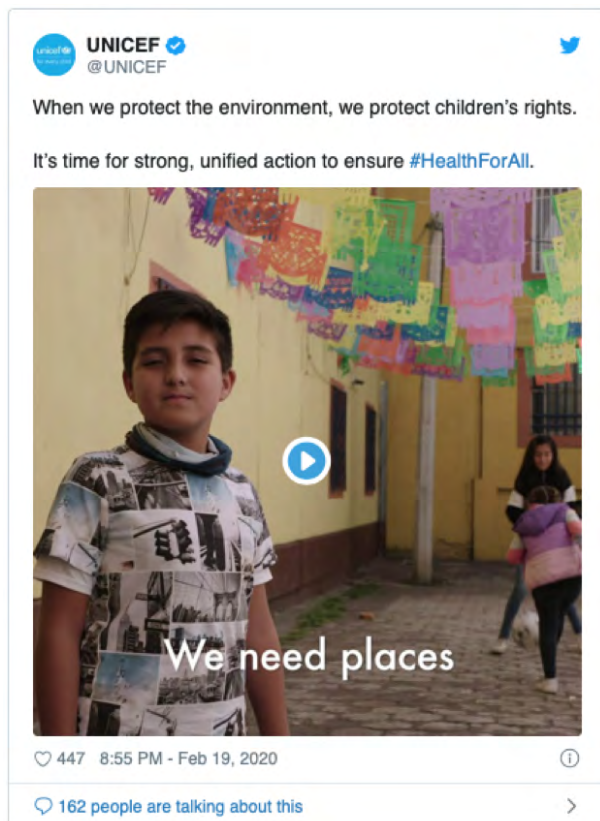
These include runaway greenhouse gas emissions, predatory advertising and deepening inequality in and among countries.

“No country in the world is currently providing the conditions we need to support every

child to grow up and have a healthy future,” said Anthony Costello, Professor of Global Health and Sustainability at University College London, one of the lead authors of the report, commissioned by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), UN Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and The Lancet medical journal.

“Especially, they're under immediate threat from climate change and from commercial marketing, which has grown hugely in the last decade,” Professor Costello – former WHO Director of [Mother, Child and Adolescent health](#) – told journalists.

Growing inequality “in all countries” is also responsible for undermining children's prospects, Professor Costello maintained.



This is the case even in wealthy industrialized nations like the United Kingdom, which had “very serious issues” with child poverty and inequality. The poorest countries have a long way to go to let their children be healthy, but the wealthy countries are threatening the future of all children through these excessive carbon emissions,” he said.

“We agree with Greta Thunberg when she says our world is on fire.”

250 million children under five at risk

An estimated 250 million children under five in low and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their development potential, [said](#) former Prime Minister of New Zealand and Co-Chair of the Commission, Helen Clark.

“But of even greater concern, every child worldwide now faces existential threats from climate change and commercial pressures,” she stressed.

Data for the report – [A Future For The World's Children](#) – was gathered according to criteria that included survival and death rates, educational achievement and nutrition.

National emissions forecasts for 2030 and levels of inequality were also taken into account for the [global index](#):

Norway tops ‘wellbeing’ criteria – but trails on emissions

- Norway leads the table for survival, health, education and nutrition rates - followed by the Republic of Korea and the Netherlands; Central African Republic, Chad and Somalia come bottom.
- However, when taking into account per capita CO2 emissions, these top countries trail behind, with Norway 156th, the Republic of Korea 166th and the Netherlands 160th.
- Each of the three emits 210 per cent more CO2 per capita than their 2030 target, the data shows, while the U.S, Australia, and Saudi Arabia are among the 10 worst emitters.
- The lowest emitters are Burundi, Chad and Somalia.
- According to the report, the only countries on track to beat CO2 emission per capita targets by 2030, while also performing fairly – within the top 70 – on child flourishing measures are: Albania, Armenia, Grenada, Jordan, Moldova, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

Getting tough on harmful advertising



Citing a tenfold rise in child obesity since 1975 – from 11 to 175 million children – Professor Costello maintained that “harmful advertising” encouraged children to buy things that affected their development and health, such as sugary snacks and drinks, fast food, alcohol and cigarettes.

And citing a huge expansion of vaping adverts, he added that in Brazil, China, India and Nigeria, & two-thirds of five and six-year-olds could identify at least one cigarette brand logo.

“We know that advertising preys on children, that in some countries they’re seeing 30,000 TV adverts a year,” he insisted. “In America (the U.S.) for example, a lot of children are seeing over four alcohol adverts a day.”

‘Surveillance capitalism’ the greatest fear

Despite these threats, the biggest fear & among health professionals now is the trend for “surveillance capitalism” that fuels social media advertising, along with “algorithmic targeting”, Professor Costello said.

“I’ve been rather horrified to learn that many of the games that are put out to young children are actually made by advertising companies who then will sell on all the data of those children without permission to major (online) companies,” he said.

Social media should send positive messages

Among the report’s recommendations is the

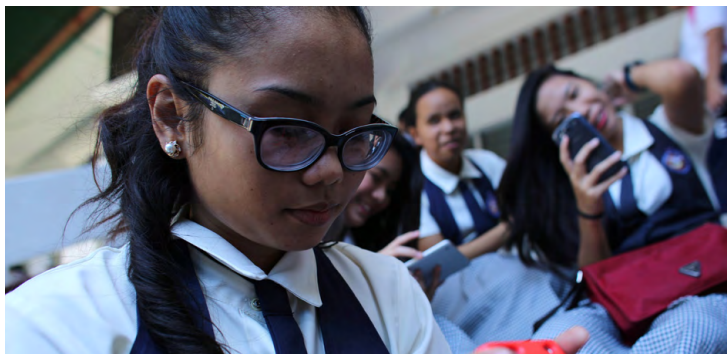
addition of a new optional protocol to the UN [Convention on the Rights](#) of the Child to help countries manage this practice, as well as the need to harness social media to share positive health messages too.

“Children have the right not to be bombarded every day on their phones with advertisements or to have their data stolen,” Professor Costello said.

Among its other recommendations, the report calls for Governments and communities to put children at the centre of investment in primary healthcare, education and universal healthcare, in line with the 17 universally-agreed [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

But even more important than this is meeting carbon emission targets to reduce global temperature increase to below 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, Professor Costello insisted.

“There’s an irrefutable ethical and economic case to invest in children throughout the lifespan and across generations and we should be doing far more to get that across to politicians, because countries that invest in their children are the most successful longer-term,” he added.



© UNICEF/UN014974/Estey Social media is a huge influence in children’s lives and being constantly connected to the Internet also comes with many risks, including online sexual exploitation, of adolescents and children.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Numerous “immediate” threats to children’s future include runaway greenhouse gas emissions, predatory advertising and deepening inequality in and among countries. Dozens of Travel & Tourism attractions and theme parks depend on the family market for survival. Finding ways to address the wider challenges affecting the under-privileged children would be a big help. Perhaps a percentage of their earnings could be contributed to UNICEF.

LEAD STORY 13:

US State of Hawai'i Sets SDGs as Framework for Prosperity, Sustainability



United Nations, 18 February 2020, IISD News - In adopting its 2020 legislative programme, the Hawai'i State Senate stated its commitment to advancing the 17 SDGs as a framework for a prosperous and sustainable Hawaii. It has identified eight SDGs that it will work to further during the 2020 Legislative Session.

According to a Senate brochure, the eight prioritized SDGs are: Goal 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals).

On Goal 3, the Senate will work to reduce youth vaping and repurpose underutilized state facilities. On Goal 4, legislative work will focus on improving teacher recruitment and retention, and increasing revenue sources for secondary education.


On SDG 8 the legislative programme will encourage job creation and developing sustainable business plans to invest in the future of Hawai'i. The focus on SDG 10 will include increasing the minimum wage and requiring paid family leave.

For Goal 11, the Senate says it will work to reduce homelessness, increase local food production to promote food security, and invest in modern transportation. For Goal 13, efforts will focus on promoting carbon neutrality, ocean conservation, sustainable land use and protection of watersheds.

On SDG 16, the Senate plans to explore options for restructuring government, increase Hawai'i's participation at the international level, and increase civic education statewide. On SDG 17, it aims to build on existing initiatives to develop "measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement economic goals."

The 2020 programme also emphasizes addressing areas of need in communities, and continuing momentum towards state-wide implementation of all 17 SDGs.

The Senate notes that its prioritization of the Aloha+ Challenge and the 17 SDGs has led to policy changes and fostered partnerships with organizations including the Hawai'i Green Growth,



The Hawai'i State Senate aims to increase local food production to promote food security, as part of its work to advance SDG 11 in 2020.

the UN's Local2030 Hub and the Hawai'i Community Foundation's CHANGE Framework. It will continue to work with these partners and the public, according to the brochure.

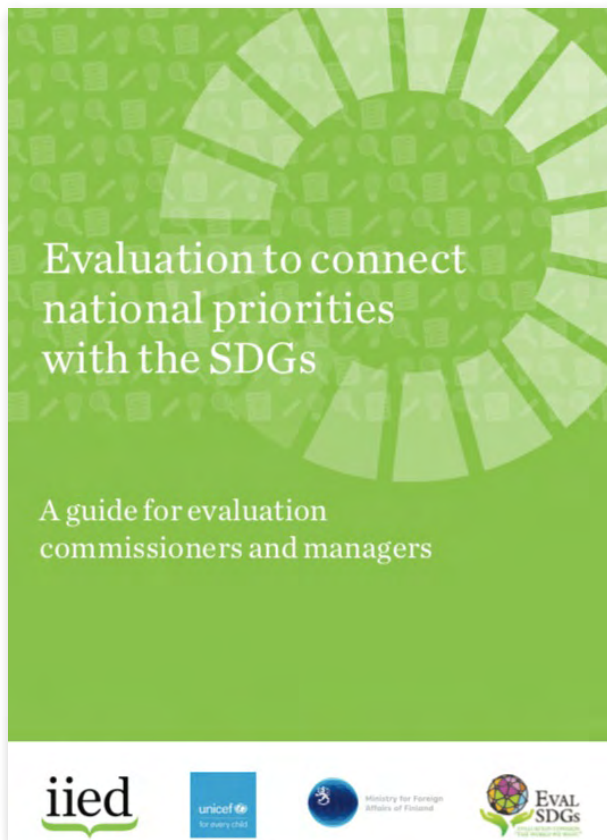
Senate majority leader Kelani English is quoted as saying, "The effects of climate change are upon us now. Together, we can face this uncertain future" by implementing the 17 SDGs. [[Senate brochure on 2020 legislative program](#)]

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

This benchmarking will become the norm in the post-Covid19 era. Changing the measurement indicators of "success" will revolutionise the way the industry thinks, plans and works. Long overdue, but in a way forced upon Travel & Tourism by the Covid19 pandemic.

LEAD STORY 14:

Guide Applies SDG Monitoring and Evaluation to National Contexts



United Nations, 18 February 2020, IISD News - The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the EVALSDGs network, Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) have released a guide to designing SDG evaluation frameworks around existing national contexts. The authors apply their proposed process to the national contexts of Costa Rica, Finland, and Nigeria to illustrate ways to incorporate SDG evaluation throughout the policy planning cycle.

Launched in New York, US on 4 February 2020, the guide titled, 'Evaluation to Connect National Priorities with the SDGs,' argues that a "one-size-fits-all manual" cannot

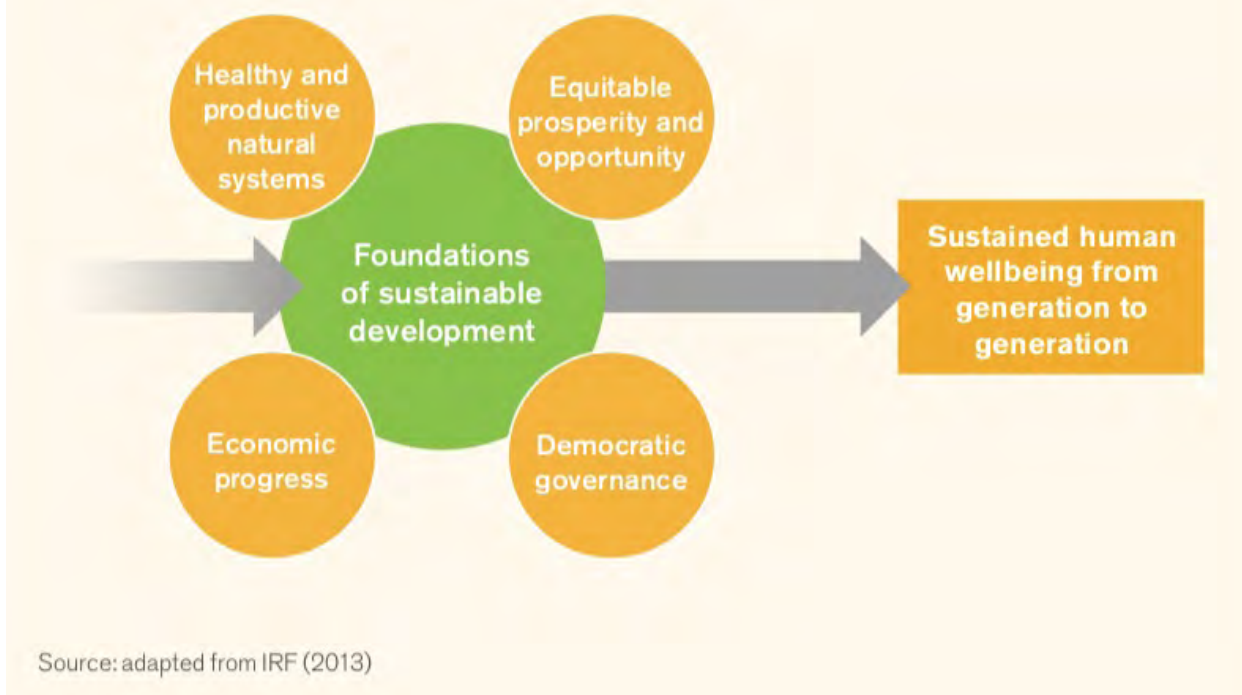
be successful in evaluating success on the SDGs at the national level. The publication reports that a common thread from input provided by 33 government representatives and evaluation specialists from 22 countries is that, if evaluation is to assist in aligning national policy with the 2030 Agenda, it must be bespoke, built around existing political and assessment systems.

SDG evaluation can only make a difference if it is integrated into what countries are already doing. The guide thus outlines four steps of evaluation development and design. They include:

- Identify the overall objective and use of the evaluation, by consulting and engaging with different stakeholder groups (e.g. civil society organizations, parliamentarians);
- Prepare for the evaluation by designing participatory processes, defining the scope and focus of the evaluation, and identifying the policies and plans to be evaluated;
- Use 2030 Agenda principles (e.g. universality, equity, leave no one behind) to inform the evaluative criteria, and use the principles to develop the evaluation questions; and
- Frame the evaluation according to the logic of national policies, develop and cost a communication plan.

The guide offers indicative questions, suggested criteria and decision trees to help practitioners develop robust SDG evaluation plans tailored to their national contexts. Lessons from case studies in Costa Rica, Finland and Nigeria are applied to each of the above steps, demonstrating how the SDG evaluation can be integrated throughout the policy cycle.

Figure 1. The foundations of sustainable development



The guide also highlights the ways in which SDG monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes and results can support national progress on sustainable development, and be integrated into national M&E systems. Early national experiences show that governments can use evaluative tools in: identifying issues that affect sustainable development trajectories and for formulating and adopting policies around those issues; establishing responsibilities to coordinate actions and allocate resources during policy implementation; and assessing the policies' worth in the context of the SDGs and national priorities, to support optimal outcomes in line with key principles.

The guide also highlights methodological considerations to take into account when developing an SDG evaluation. Attributes of sustainable development evaluation include: robust stakeholder engagement—which should occur throughout the four steps—and co-generation of recommendations; mixed approaches to gathering evidence, including both quantitative and qualitative sources; integrative analysis, which reviews

policies or programs from economic, social and environmental perspectives; assessing sustainable development interventions in current their spatial, temporal, socioeconomic and environmental contexts; and recognizing both upstream drivers and downstream effects, as well as impacts beyond national boundaries and across borders.

Acknowledging that there is no single way to monitor and evaluate progress against the Goals, and flagging disparities between countries in terms of their evaluation infrastructure and readiness, the authors emphasize that SDG evaluation can only make a difference if it is integrated into what countries are already doing. The SDGs are not meant to impose an additional layer of policies on top of current ones, but rather to serve as “a compass for aligning countries’ plans with their global commitments.”

The guide also outlines how SDG evaluation can inform countries’ Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented during the annual sessions of the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

The publication was inspired by a workshop on ‘Evaluation to Connect National Priorities with the SDGs’, which convened in Helsinki, Finland, in March 2019 to foster cross-country learning

and understanding on common challenges.
[Publication: [Evaluation to Connect National Priorities with the SDGs](#)] [[IIED Press Release 4 February](#)]

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

SDG evaluation can only make a difference if it is integrated into what countries are already doing. The same applies to Travel & Tourism. As many companies are incorporating the SDGs into their corporate strategies, the same four steps of evaluation development and design can be equally well applied to companies as much as to countries. The homework has been done. Don’t waste money hiring consultants to help.



SECTION 2



SDG 1:

**‘Spectre of poverty’
hangs over tribes
and indigenous
groups**



SDG 1: 'Spectre of poverty' hangs over tribes and indigenous groups



ILO/R. Lord Women walk in the street in La Paz, Bolivia.

United Nations, 3 February 2020, UN News - Indigenous and tribal communities are around three times more likely to face extreme poverty than others with women “consistently at the bottom of all social and economic indicators”, [UN labour experts said](#) on Monday.

Highlighting new data showing that disproportionate numbers of indigenous people live on less than \$1.90 a day – 18.2 per cent versus 6.8 per cent of non-indigenous people - the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) insisted that millions are being held back by a “spectre of poverty”.

The problem warrants global attention because this at-risk population is significantly larger than was previously thought, ILO insists.

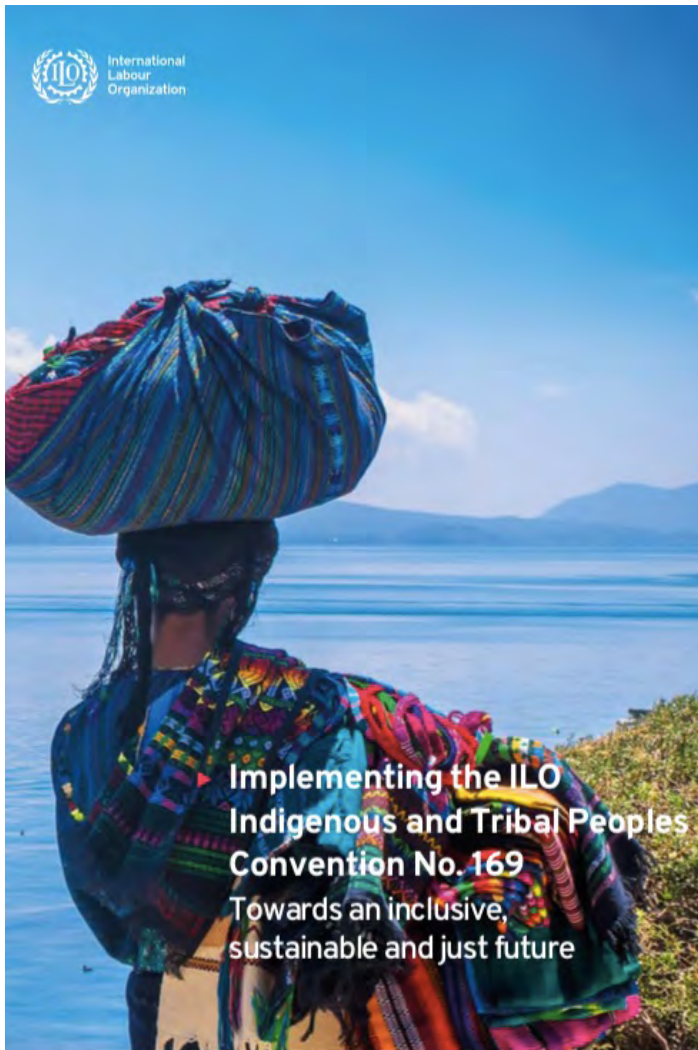
According to the UN organization, there are more than 476 million indigenous people globally, the majority of whom live in relatively prosperous countries.

Lacking support

At the same time, support for the only international treaty that protects their rights - Convention No. 169 - is weak, it maintains.

Only 23 of ILO's 187 Member States have signed the convention on the rights of indigenous peoples in the 30 years since it was adopted.

This means that only around 15 per cent of indigenous peoples stand to benefit from the treaty's focus on implementing policies and legislation designed to combat poverty and unfair treatment and promote equality through inclusive dialogue and best practice.



Focusing on the world of work as a key indicator of the lives of indigenous people, the ILO found that far more of them are active in the informal sector - by 20 per cent - compared with other workers.

And based on data from 23 countries that are home to more than 80 per cent of indigenous people, the ILO report found that indigenous women face the biggest challenges too.

In addition to having the lowest chance of completing basic primary education, only about one in four indigenous women is in salaried work, compared with one in two non-indigenous female workers.

Indigenous earn less

Researchers also noted that even when they are in salaried work, indigenous people earn around 18 per cent less than the wider workforce.

According to the ILO, there are more than 5,000 distinct indigenous communities worldwide, in some 90 countries.

Regionally, Latin America and the Caribbean are home to the highest proportion of indigenous and tribal people, at 8.5 per cent of the total population - far more than the entire population of Colombia.

Data from nine countries in this same region also showed that these indigenous communities constituted almost 30 per cent of the extreme poor – the highest proportion across all global regions.

Mirroring this trend elsewhere, ILO underlined that in Africa, the more than 77 million indigenous people there – six per cent of the wider population – accounted for 24 per cent of the continent's extreme poor.

In Asia and the Pacific, the region's 335 million indigenous people comprised over seven per cent of the total population, and almost 16 per cent of the extreme poor, based on data from five countries.

The trend was also identified to a lesser extent in Northern America, where the over seven million indigenous people constituted over two per cent of the wider population and 3.5 per cent of the poorest members of society.

Let them be heard

ILO believes that indigenous people's views need to be heard in order to put in place sustainable social justice policies that are detailed in Convention No. 169.

These will help to tackle the problems that indigenous people face, including poverty, inequality, conflict and climate change, the UN organization believes.

Nonetheless, although “several countries” have designated agencies for indigenous affairs and have made the “greatest progress” so far, there have been too few opportunities for engagement with minority communities to date, the ILO maintains.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travel & Tourism makes a living out of selling indigenous cultures. So why are they in such poor shape? In many countries, they are seen as a threat. In fact, their cultures and ways of life offer the best possible solutions for today’s unsustainable lifestyles. Problem is that Travel & Tourism happily profits from showcasing indigenous cultures to visitors, but does not actually try to convert those wisdoms into practical solutions.



SDG 2:

UN Agencies Explore Farm-to-Fork Policy Frameworks



SDG 2: UN Agencies Explore Farm-to-Fork Policy Frameworks



United Nations, 20 February 2020, IISD News - An interactive dialogue of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) sought to add impetus to international efforts aimed at achieving SDG 2 (zero hunger), with a focus on strengthening food systems approaches to improve food security and livelihoods for smallholder and family farmers.

UNGA President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande has highlighted targeting hunger as one of the key [priorities](#) of the Assembly's 74th Session. According to the 2019 edition of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) 'State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' report, an estimated 820 million people, primarily in Asia and Africa, suffer from hunger as measured by prevalence of undernutrition measure. Two billion people experience moderate or severe food insecurity on a regular basis.

Addressing the dialogue at UN Headquarters in New York, US, on 12 February 2020, Muhammad-Bande cited the need to link SDG 1 (no poverty) and SDG 2 by focusing on mitigating hunger sustainably, creating jobs, generating incomes and contributing to poverty eradication. He emphasized that "agricultural policies are development policies," and called for the adoption of a "food

systems approach" within the international policy framework for sustainable agriculture by encompassing all the activities involved in bringing food "from farm to fork."

FAO Director-General Qu Dongyu highlighted the launch of the [Hand-in-Hand Initiative](#), which aims to foster the implementation of high-impact and innovative South-South and triangular cooperation projects. He explained that the initiative is designed to identify and target gaps between agricultural potential and actual development, in cases where the gap "is so large that investment can help lift people out of both poverty and hunger."

The interactive dialogue built on the Buenos Aires outcome document of the Second High-Level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation ([BAPA+40](#)). That conference had identified agriculture, food security, nutrition and food safety as areas of mutual learning and coordination for South-South and triangular cooperation, and emphasized the value of leveraging these forms of international cooperation to promote sustainable agriculture and food systems.

During the interactive dialogue, participants called for tailored cooperation arrangements to develop local solutions that can be scaled up and propel farmers' self-reliance, as well

The UNGA President called for a food systems approach, compassing all activities “from farm to fork.”

as fiscal support for the productive as well as social sectors of countries where food insecurity is persistent. As policy interventions to enhance the productivity and resilience of smallholder farmers, discussions highlighted access to finance and weather and risk mitigation instruments, market access and storage facilities, and locally appropriate research and technologies.

Noting that most official development assistance (ODA) focuses on the social sector, the discussions also highlighted the importance of creating “fiscal space” for agricultural investments, such as by mobilizing private finance and foreign direct investment (FDI), and addressing market failures.

A recent initiative in this regard is the launch of the Private Sector Financing Programme by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), following adoption of the Fund’s first-ever [private sector engagement strategy](#) (2019-2024). In April 2019, IFAD launched its USD 60 million Agribusiness

Capital (ABC) Fund, aimed at leveraging an estimated USD 240 million in private investments in small-scale agribusinesses in Africa. The de-risking instrument has received contributions from the European Commission, Luxembourg, the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states, and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

During the 43rd session of the IFAD Governing Council, which convened from 11-12 February 2020, on the theme ‘Investment in a sustainable food system to alleviate hunger by 2030,’ IFAD President Gilbert Houngbo [called](#) on Member States to contribute to the Fund’s 12th replenishment. IFAD aims to double its impact on the lives of the world’s most marginalized people by 2030, with a proposed USD 30 billion programme of work over the next 10 years.

The IFAD Council also approved the election of Indonesia as Chair of Governing Council for the 2020-2022 biennium. [[FAO Press Release](#)] [[UNOSSC Press Release](#)] [IISD Sources]

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Hotel F&B managers, restaurants, catering companies, supermarkets and food delivery services should sign up to these initiatives. Perhaps having one of the U.N. officials give them a briefing would be a good start. Further initiatives can then be explored to promote the agenda.



SDG 3:

**‘No shortcuts to a healthier world’:
WHO sets out health
priorities for the
decade**



SDG 3: ‘No shortcuts to a healthier world’: WHO sets out health priorities for the decade



© **UNICEF/Saleh Bahless** A health worker administers a vaccination against cholera on a young boy in Yemen.

United Nations, 13 January 2020, UN News - The head of the UN health agency, WHO, has set out his urgent global health challenges for the next ten years – designated the “Decade of Action” by the UN General Assembly” – and underscored the importance of investing in public health, in a statement released on Monday.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wrote that the list of challenges is a response to concern that leaders are not committing sufficient resources to health, and are putting “lives, livelihoods and economies in jeopardy”.

Comparing health concerns with peace and security, Mr Ghebreyesus pointed out that many countries are willing to invest in protection against terrorist attacks, but not to allocate money to halting the spread of a virus, even though a pandemic may be far more deadly, and more economically damaging.

From climate to conflict: 13 challenges for the 2020s

The [WHO](#) identified 13 priorities for the decade, covering a wide range of issues affecting people across the planet. The climate crisis, for example, is also a health crisis, exacerbating malnutrition and fuelling the spread of infectious diseases such as malaria.

In addition, air pollution kills some seven million people every year. The agency is developing policy options to enable governments to prevent or reduce the health risks of air pollution.

People in rich countries live, on average, some 18 years longer than those in poorer countries. And, within countries, there is a big health discrepancy between the haves and have-nots. WHO will work to address inequality, providing guidance to countries on ways to make health care fairer.



*A layer of smog can be seen as the sun sets over Chao Phraya River in Bangkok. **Unsplash/Peggy Anke***

The agency recommends that countries spend one per cent of their gross domestic product on primary health care, to give more people access to the quality essential services they need, close to where they live.

Other WHO priorities include expanding access to medicines, stopping infectious diseases, and protecting people from dangerous products. The full list of priorities can be found [here](#).

‘Health security’

Because of the widespread impact that health issues have on development, Mr. Ghebreyesus said that health security should not be a matter for ministries of health alone, and called for more funding to address gaps in health systems, and support for the most vulnerable countries. “There are no shortcuts to a healthier world”, he said. “2030 is fast approaching, and we must hold our leaders accountable for their commitments”.

By the start of the next decade, nations of the world have pledged to reach the ambitious set of goals, at the core of the UN’s [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

What a extraordinarily profound statement: “Many countries are willing to invest in protection against terrorist attacks, but not to allocate money to halting the spread of a virus, even though a pandemic may be far more deadly, and more economically damaging.” Look at the same expenditure patterns within Travel & Tourism and it will become obvious that this comment is 100% accurate. Now that health is proving to be a far greater security threat than terrorism, some reallocation of funds would be very much in order.



SDG 3:

Healthcare is a
human right, not
'a privilege for
the rich'

SDG 3: Healthcare is a human right, not ‘a privilege for the rich’



United Nations, 21 January 2020, UN News - The UN agency devoted to ending AIDS as a public health threat is calling on top politicians and governments across the world to ensure the right to quality healthcare is upheld, and not just a privilege to be enjoyed by the wealthy.

In a press release issued as the World Economic Forum gets fully underway in Davos, Switzerland, on Tuesday, [UNAIDS](#) Executive Director Winnie Byanyima [said that](#) the right to health “is eluding the poor and people trying to lift themselves out of poverty are being crushed by the unacceptably high costs of health care”, with at least half the world’s population unable to access essential health services.

“The richest one per cent benefit from cutting-edge science while the poor struggle to get even basic health care,” she added.

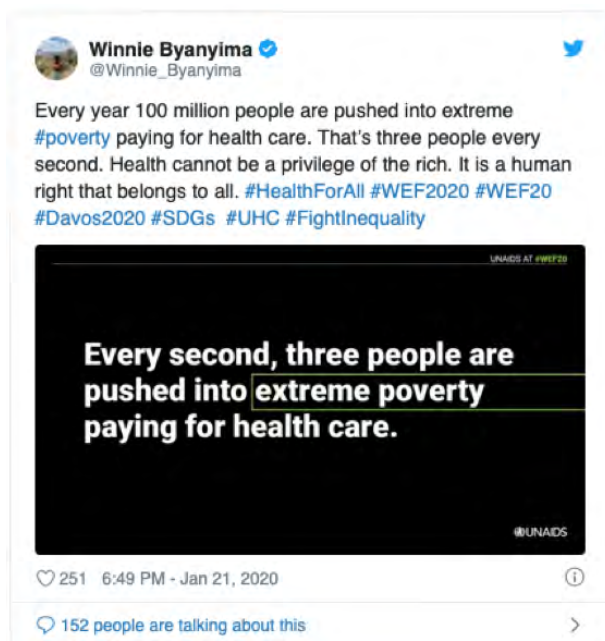
The independent international Forum (WEF)

in Davos is an annual gathering, committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic and other leaders in reshaping the economic agenda.

100 million pushed into extreme poverty

Every two minutes a woman dies while giving birth, said the agency, with vulnerable women, adolescents, people living with HIV, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, people who inject drugs, transgender people, migrants, refugees and the poor, among the billions being left behind.

Nearly 100 million people are pushed into extreme poverty (defined as living on \$1.90 or less a day) because they have to pay for health care, and more than 930 million people - around 12% of the world’s population - spend at least 10% of their household budgets on health care, said UNAIDS.



In many countries, people are denied health care or receive poor quality health care because of unaffordable user fees. Stigma and discrimination denies poor and vulnerable people, especially women, their right to health.

Women and girls most vulnerable

Every week, 6,000 young women around the world continue to become infected with HIV. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, four out of five new HIV infections among adolescents are recorded among girls, and AIDS-related illnesses are the biggest killer of women of reproductive age in the region. Despite significant progress in reducing AIDS-related deaths and new HIV infections, there were 1.7 million new HIV infections in 2018 and nearly 15 million people are still waiting to receive HIV treatment.

“Publicly financed health care is the greatest equalizer in society” said Ms Byanyima. “When health spending is cut or inadequate, it is poor people and people on the margins of society, especially women and girls, who lose their right to health first, and they have to bear the burden of caring for their families.”

Governments must do better

Delivering health care for all is a political choice that too many governments are not making, said the agency. For example, Thailand has managed to reduced mortality

rates for children under the age of five, to 9.1 per 1000 live births, while in the United States of America the rate is 6.3 per 1000 live births, even though Thailand’s gross domestic product per capita is about one tenth of that of the United States.

That success can be attributed to Thailand’s publicly financed health-care system that entitles every Thai citizen essential health services at all life stages and leaves no one behind, UNAIDS maintains.

South Africa had just 90 people on antiretroviral therapy in 2000, but in 2019 had more than 5 million on HIV treatment. The country now has the largest HIV treatment programme in the world.

Price of tax avoidance

And tax avoidance on the part of the top one per cent, and the wealth that they control, continues to deny resources to healthcare the world over, the agency maintains.

“It is unacceptable that rich people and big companies are avoiding taxes and ordinary people are paying through their ill health” said the UNAIDS chief. “Big companies must pay their fair share of taxes, protect employee rights, provide equal pay for equal work and provide safe working conditions for all, especially women.”

African debt burden

Debt is also posing a serious threat to Africa’s economy, health and development, resulting in big cuts in social spending to ensure debt repayment, the agency notes.

According to the International Monetary Fund, as of April 2019 half of low-income countries



in Africa were either in debt distress or at a high risk of being so. Beyond low-income countries, in Zambia there was a 27% drop in health-care investments and an increase of debt servicing by 790% between 2015 and 2018. Similar trends were seen in Kenya, where debt servicing increased by 176% and health investments declined by 9% between 2015 and 2018.

Rights denied

Another driver of ill health is the denial of human rights, said UNAIDS. According to the World Bank, more than one billion women lack legal protection against domestic violence and close to 1.4 billion women lack legal protection against what they term, domestic economic violence.

In at least 65 countries, a same-sex sexual relationship is a crime, with a knock-on effect in formal legal rights to healthcare, including hospital and insurance access. In recent years in some countries, crackdowns and restrictions on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people have increased. Sex work remains a criminal offence in 98 countries, notes the agency.

Progress can be made

“In the next decade, we can end AIDS as a public health threat and achieve universal health coverage”, said Ms. Byanyima, calling on governments everywhere to “tax fairly, provide publicly funded quality health care, guarantee human rights and achieve gender equality for all—it is possible.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

More profound statements from the health sector: “The richest one per cent benefit from cutting-edge science while the poor struggle to get even basic health care.... And tax avoidance on the part of the top one per cent, and the wealth that they control, continues to deny resources to healthcare the world over. It is unacceptable that rich people and big companies are avoiding taxes and ordinary people are paying through their ill health.” No comment necessary. Just some deep thinking.



SDG 3:

**Smoking and
drinking link to
recreational drug
use by young
people**



SDG 3: Smoking and drinking link to recreational drug use by young people



© **UNICEF/Giacomo Pirozzi** A 19 year-old boy sits on his bed at a shelter for children who live or work on the streets, in Odessa, Ukraine. He is a drug user and HIV-positive, but does not have access to antiretroviral medications.

United Nations, 27 February 2020, UN News - The use of alcohol and tobacco by young people and children is closely linked to the use of illicit drugs, a UN-backed narcotics control body warned on Thursday.

The International Narcotics Control Board ([INCB](#)) annual [report](#) cites studies which reveal that, in young people aged between 16 and 19, early use of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis leads to an increased likelihood of the use of opiates and cocaine in adulthood.

The report also shows that substance abuse and associated health consequences are highest among young people, with cannabis being the most widely used substance. The highest rate of use, in young people aged 15-16, is in Europe (13.9 per cent), followed by the Americas (11.6 per cent), Oceania (11.4 per cent), Africa (6.6 per cent), and Asia (2.7 per cent).

The decriminalization of cannabis in some countries is criticized by the INCB, whose President, [Cornelis P. de Joncheere](#), said that, of internationally controlled substances, the drug continues to play the most prominent role amongst adolescents and adults.

“We pay special attention to this development and highlight our concern over the situation in a few countries that have moved to permit the use of controlled substances, namely cannabis, for non-medical use contrary to the provisions of and their obligations under the drug control treaties”, [said](#) Mr. de Joncheere.

Prevent, treat, educate

The report sets out several recommendations for countering the problem, based on international standards drawn up by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)) and the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

Prevention programmes should include a focus on family and parenting skills, setting rules and limits for young people; school support for the development of personal and social skills; the availability of screening, assessment and counselling in schools; and strict enforcement of regulations related to the access to medications with psychoactive qualities, and to tobacco, alcohol and cannabis.

To improve the effectiveness of prevention programmes, governments, says the report, should monitor changing trends in the use of psychoactive drugs amongst young people, and invest in the development of national expertise.



A drug addict consumes heroin in the Russian Cultural Palace in Kabul., by UNAMA/Najeeb Farzad

Afghanistan: opiate economy bigger than legal exports

Drug control remains a major challenge in Afghanistan, the report notes, with the opiate economy still large than the value of the country's legal exports of goods and services. This is despite a substantial reduction in the total area used for illegal opium poppy cultivation in 2018, due to severe drought.

The INCB reiterates the importance of addressing the illegal drug economy in Afghanistan, as part of overall efforts to bring about peace, security and sustainable development in the country.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The youth are involved in many Travel & Tourism forums. Placing problems like these on the agenda would help involve the future generation in attempts to alleviate them. Treating the young generation merely as cash-cow consumers is an insult to their intelligence.



SDG 3:

**Smokers who quit
one month before
surgery reap
benefits**



SDG 3: Smokers who quit one month before surgery reap benefits



OCHA/Rawsht Twana A man in Shaqlawa, Iraq, sits smoking, waiting for dawn.

United Nations, 20 January 2020, UN News - Tobacco smokers who quit at least four weeks before undergoing surgery not only have a lower risk of complications, but also show better results six months later than those who continue, the United Nations health agency [said](#) on Monday.

While tobacco smokers face a significantly higher risk of post-surgical complications, including impaired heart and lung functions, infections and delayed wound healing, evidence from a new joint study by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), the University of Newcastle, Australia and the World Federation of Societies of Anesthesiologists reveals that patients who quit smoking are less likely to experience complications with anesthesia than those who do not.

New data shows that after four weeks, every tobacco-free week improves blood flow throughout the body to essential organs and

improves health outcomes by 19 per cent.

“The report provides evidence that there are advantages to postponing minor or non-emergency surgery to give patients the opportunity to quit smoking, resulting in a better health outcome,” said Vinayak Prasad, Head of Unit, No Tobacco, WHO.

The Nicotine and carbon monoxide present in cigarettes can decrease oxygen levels and greatly increase risk of heart-related complications after surgery.

Tobacco also damages lungs, making it difficult for the proper amount of air to flow through – increasing the risk of post-surgical lung complications.

Smoking distorts a patient’s immune system, can delay healing and increases the risk of infection at the wound site. Smoking just one cigarette decreases the body’s ability to deliver necessary nutrients for healing after surgery.



“Complications after surgery present a large burden for both the health care provider and the patient”, explained Shams Syed, Coordinator, Quality of Care, WHO, adding that “primary care physicians, surgeons, nurses and families are important in supporting a patient to quit smoking at every stage of care,

especially before an operation”.

WHO encourages countries to include cessation programmes and educational campaigns in their health systems to spread awareness and help people to quit.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Smoking is a health hazard, kills thousands of people every year. So why are cigarettes widely sold at duty-free shops in airports? One of the many head-scratching contradictions embedded in Travel & Tourism system-wide.

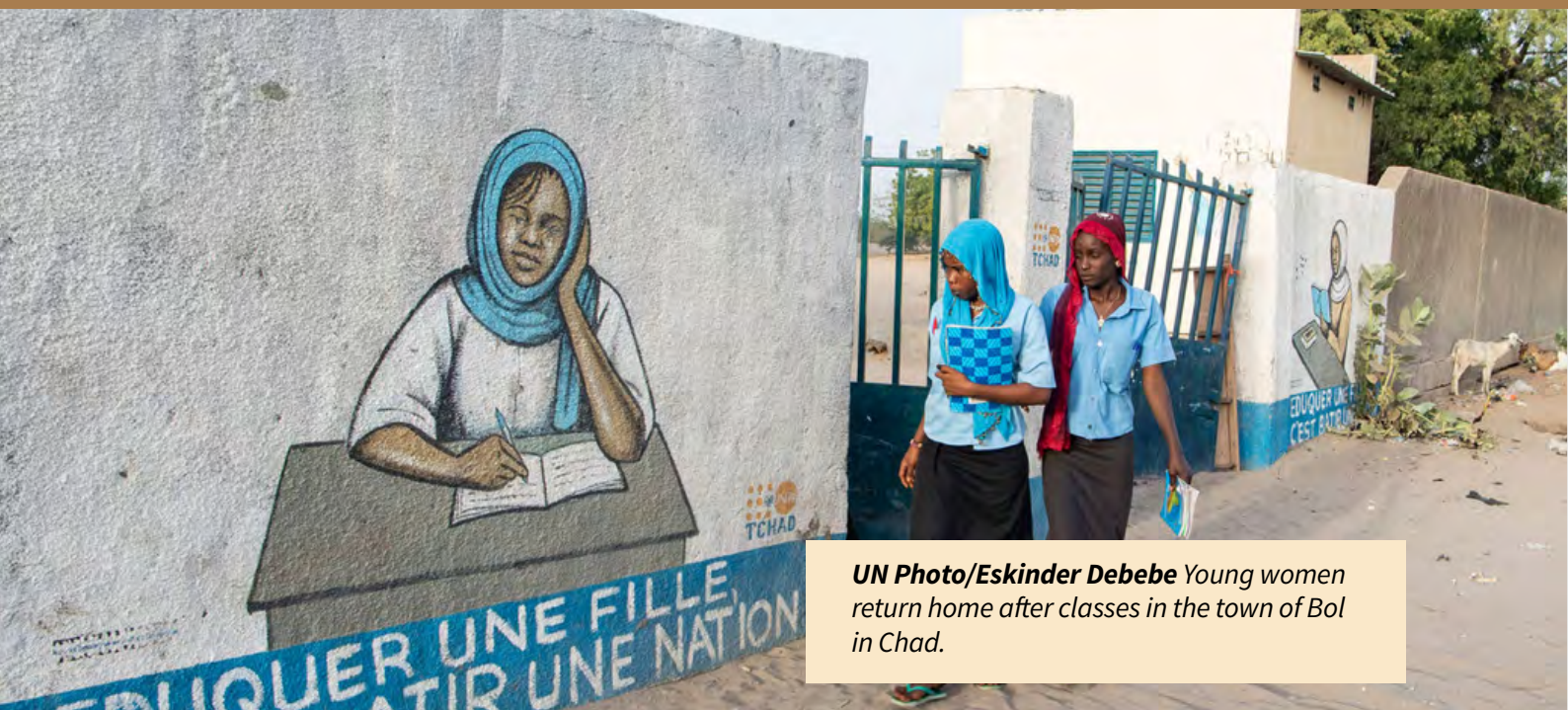


SDG 4:

**Drive for quality
education
worldwide,
faces ‘mammoth
challenges’**



SDG 4: Drive for quality education worldwide, faces ‘mammoth challenges’



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe Young women return home after classes in the town of Bol in Chad.

United Nations, 24 January 2020, UN News - Aligning inclusive, quality education with the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) was centre-stage on Friday, as the President of the UN General Assembly held a high-level interactive meeting for the [International Day of Education](#).

“The education sector is wrestling with mammoth challenges worldwide”, said [Tijjani Muhammad-Bande](#), in his message for the day.

Listing them, he said there was a “precipitate decline” in the quality and standards of education; a widening knowledge gap between students in technically advanced societies and those in developing countries; a crisis of learning in conflict zones; growing school bullying, and “the declining esteem of the teaching profession” overall.

Mr. Muhammad-Bande maintained that today’s education must “bridge the yawning gap”

between the modern employment needs for specialized skills, and actual learning opportunities.

“School curricula have yet to anticipate and respond to workplace needs for hands-on, vocational, ICT applications, and sundry technical skills, while still advancing the traditional scholastic pursuits”, he stated.



Moreover, he highlighted, “the significance of the deficits in education outcome becomes obvious when viewed alongside the spiralling population crisis”.

Education in a crisis

The fate of school children trapped in conflict zones deserves even more urgent attention.

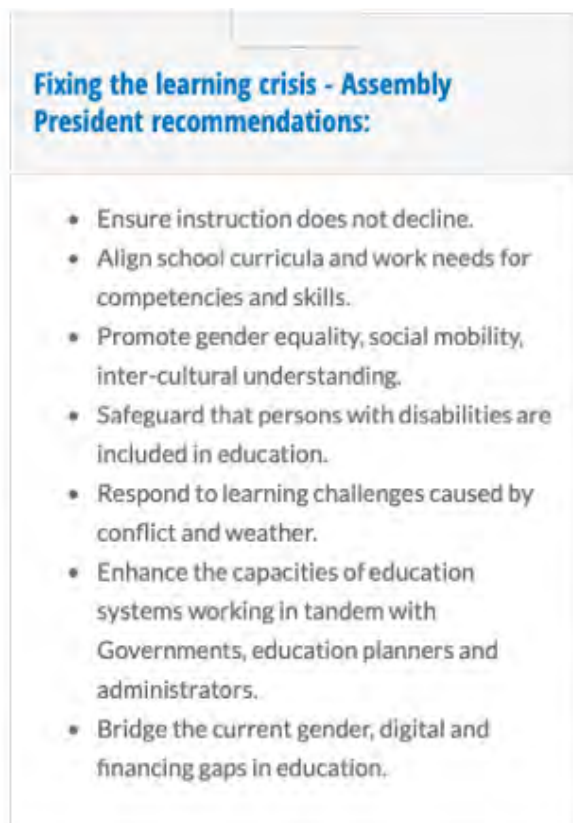
According to [UNICEF](#), in 2017, 500 attacks were staged on schools in 20 countries worldwide. In 15 of those 20, troops and rebel forces turned classrooms into military posts.

Thousands of children were recruited to fight, sometimes made to serve as suicide bombers, or forced to endure direct attacks.

“The learning environment may also be rendered unsafe by gun-toting, machete-wielding, gangs and unruly youths, and by sexual predators on school premises”, Mr. Muhammad-Bande said.

And natural disasters pose additional threats to the learning environment.

Cyclones, hurricanes and storms are among the climatic conditions that periodically wreak havoc on school buildings and facilities, making learning difficult, if not impossible.



Fixing the learning crisis - Assembly President recommendations:

- Ensure instruction does not decline.
- Align school curricula and work needs for competencies and skills.
- Promote gender equality, social mobility, inter-cultural understanding.
- Safeguard that persons with disabilities are included in education.
- Respond to learning challenges caused by conflict and weather.
- Enhance the capacities of education systems working in tandem with Governments, education planners and administrators.
- Bridge the current gender, digital and financing gaps in education.

“The choices that education stakeholders make have direct impact on various social groups, particularly, disadvantaged groups like rural communities, the urban poor, persons with disabilities, and women”, upheld the PGA, noting that nearly two-thirds of the world’s illiterate adults are female, mostly in under-developed countries.

Choice also becomes critical in the struggle to elevate the status of the teaching profession, recruit competent and motivated teachers, and expose teachers to innovative techniques.

But there are bright spots he said: “Forward-looking education policies have contributed to the attainment of SDG targets in some countries”, asserted Mr. Muhammad-Bande.

And participants at this year’s International Day of Education are given the opportunity “to share international good practices in inclusive quality education”.

Partnerships are key

Education enhances the “analytical, inventive and critical thinking capacities of human beings”, the Assembly President said, adding that in the process, it accelerates each nation’s technological attainments and economic growth.

“When a society remains perpetually under-developed, it must among other things re-evaluate its education system”, said Mr. Muhammad-Bande. “If the system is dysfunctional or does not facilitate the acquisition of pertinent knowledge and skills, the economy will, at best, stagnate, and at worst, collapse”.



Bearing in mind the “tremendous amount of work” that lies ahead, he shared his belief that partnerships can play an important role in implementing and attaining the SDGs, which is why his office “has placed strong emphasis on engendering partnerships across key priority areas”, including education.

In conclusion, Mr. Muhammad-Bande urged Member States and other key partners to examine the feasibility and value-added support in establishing a network of key existing education networks to exchange information and ideas, “including sources of support, relating to all aspects of education”.

Power of education

“Education has the power to shape the world”, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed spelled out at the podium.

“Education protects men and women from exploitation in the labour market” and “empowers women and gives them opportunities to make choices”, she said.

Moreover, it can help change behaviour and perceptions, thereby fighting climate change and unsustainable practices. A quality experience in the classroom helps promote mutual respect and understanding between people; combat misperceptions, prejudice and hate speech; and prevent violent extremism.

“Without education, we cannot achieve any of the SDGs”, Ms. Mohammed flagged.



And yet, with 2030 looming on the horizon, the world is lagging behind, prompting the Secretary-General to issue a global call for a Decade of Action, to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.

“The situation in education is alarming...because of the crisis in the number of children, young people and adults who are not in education”, as well as because many who are, are not learning.

And refugees and migrants face additional challenges.

According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), the proportion of refugees enrolled in secondary education is 24 per cent, only three per cent of whom have access to higher education.

“We have the power to shape education, but only if we work together and really bring the partnerships that are necessary to provide quality education”, she concluded. “We have a duty to step up our efforts, so that quality education for all is no longer a goal for tomorrow, but a reality”.

Invest in education

Action for “the four Ps on which our future depends”, namely people, prosperity, the planet and peace, is imperative, according to the head of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [UNESCO](#) in her Friday message.

Although education is “a valuable resource for humanity”, Director-General Audrey Azoulay [pointed out](#) that it is “all too scarce for millions of people around the world”.

A global learning crisis, confirmed by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, is a major cause for concern as it is also a crisis for prosperity, for the planet, for peace and for people”, she said, urging everyone to take action for education “because education is the best investment for the future”.

UNESCO has been charged with coordinating the international community’s efforts to achieve SDG 4, quality education for all.

“First and foremost”, the UNESCO chief said, “our Organization takes action for people, by making education an instrument of inclusion and, therefore, of empowerment”.

Changing lives, transforming communities

For her part, Mona Juul, President of the UN Economic and Social Council, [ECOSOC](#), [maintained](#) that education is “the most powerful means to escape poverty”.

“It changes lives, transforms communities and paves the way towards productive, sustainable and resilient societies in which children – girls and boys – can reach their full potential”, she expanded, urging everyone to strengthen their efforts to manifest a world in which every child receives a quality education that allows growth, prosperity, empowerment and so they can “make meaningful contributions to communities big and small, everywhere”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Without quality education, Travel & Tourism will never have a quality workforce. Certainly, the industry provides many opportunities for educational development, ranging from language training to I.T. and much more, but complaints are still rife that it cannot keep up with the pace of change. A topic worth exploring further at the next HRD conference.



SDG 5:

Teenage girls' education, 'an indispensable foundation' for achieving development goals



SDG 5: Teenage girls' education, 'an indispensable foundation' for achieving development goals



World Bank/Arne Hoel Students in computer programming class at Al Shami Girls Secondary School in the West Bank.

United Nations, 11 February 2020, UN News - Promoting education for adolescent girls is an “indispensable foundation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, Secretary-General António Guterres declared at the launch event of the [Drive for 5](#) education initiative at UN Headquarters on Tuesday, hosted by the Irish Mission to the United Nations.

Drive for 5 is a global call to action for all Governments to commit to five transformative actions: 12 years of free quality education; supportive school environments; teacher training; safe journeys to and from school; and keeping girls healthy in the classroom.

“Education is necessary for success and well-being in society”, the UN chief pointed out, “And it is essential for gender equality. A good education can boost a woman’s quality of life and open doors to decent work opportunities. “

Mr. Guterres added that education also give women and girls the life skills they need to adjust to an uncertain future, to stand up to discrimination and violence, and to make decisions about health care, including sexual and reproductive health.

Great strides made in last 25 years, but barriers still to overcome

2020 marks the 25th anniversary of the [Beijing Conference on Women](#), which marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. Since then, great strides have been made. More girls are in school than ever before, and more countries have reached gender parity in educational enrolment.

However, as the Secretary-General pointed out, there are still many barriers to overcome: “The rising rates of female education have not shifted deeply entrenched occupational



UN Photo/Mark Garten | Secretary-General António Guterres (right) meets with Bono (left), Co-Founder of the ONE Campaign and Mary Robinson, Chair of the Elders, prior to the high-level event at the United Nations focused on Girls' Education.

segregation in both developed and developing countries; the global gender pay gap stands at an unrelenting 20 per cent; and, despite doing just as well as boys in the classroom, social and institutional barriers still discourage girls from taking up careers based on science, technology, engineering and mathematics”.

‘Overturn deeply rooted stereotypes’

The event took place on the [International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#), and the UN chief pledged to end the gender imbalance in science: according to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), women in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) are published less, paid less for their research and do not advance as far as men in their careers.

“These are the careers of the future, and we cannot achieve gender equality in our societies without women playing an equal role”, said Mr. Guterres, “addressing these issues means working to overturn deeply rooted stereotypes

and social norms that see women and girls as less deserving of an education, or that limit which subjects they have access to”.

The Secretary-General ended his speech for a call for investment in building new skills, enabling young women to be equipped for the changing world of work, and in mobile learning so that education is accessible to women and girls wherever they are.

Also speaking at the event were rock star Bono, singer of U2 and co-founder of the ONE Campaign, a global movement to end extreme poverty and preventable disease; Mary Robinson, first woman President of Ireland, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Chair of the Elders group, and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women.

Drive for 5, a partnership between the Government of Ireland, the Global Partnership for Education, UN Women, One and Malala Fund, is a response to the continued exclusion of some 96.5 million adolescent girls from secondary education worldwide.

Among the reasons girls are being kept out of the classroom are high costs, domestic responsibilities, socio-cultural norms and expectations, early marriage and early pregnancy. Girls living with disabilities, from ethnic minorities or living in remote areas face additional constraints.



IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Teenage girls today are potentially the future staff in Travel & Tourism. So ensuring a good education for them means they become more productive members of society in future. Another challenge for HRD teams to consider adopting as part of their contribution to the SDG agenda.



SDG 5:

**Make this the
century of women's
equality**



SDG 5: Make this the century of women's equality



UN Photo/Mark Garten UN Secretary-General António Guterres explains his commitment to gender equality at The New School in New York.

United Nations, 27 February 2020, UN News – The 21st century must be the century of women's equality, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said on Thursday evening, in a call to transform the world by ensuring equal participation for all.

Speaking to faculty and students at The New School, a university in New York City, the UN chief declared himself a proud feminist and called for men everywhere to support women's rights.

"Just as slavery and colonialism were a stain on previous centuries, women's inequality should shame us all in the 21st. Because it is not only unacceptable; it is stupid", he said.

For the UN chief, gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls remains an overwhelming injustice across the globe.

"From the ridiculing of women as hysterical or hormonal, to the routine judgement of women based on their looks; from the myths and taboos that surround women's natural bodily functions, to mansplaining and victim-blaming – misogyny is everywhere", he said.

At the heart of the issue is power, as male-dominated power structures underpin everything from national economies, to political systems, to the corporate world and beyond. But he pointed out that patriarchy also has an impact on men and boys, trapping them in rigid gender stereotypes, declaring that a systemic change is long overdue.

"It is time to stop trying to change women, and start changing the systems that prevent them from achieving their potential. Our power structures have evolved gradually over thousands of years. One further evolution is long overdue. The 21st century must be the century of women's equality", he said.



Man-made problems, ‘human-led solutions’

Dismantling gender inequality will transform the world, the UN chief stated, and is critical to solving intractable global challenges such as conflict and violence, and the climate crisis.

It also will help close the digital divide, lead to fairer globalization, and increase political representation.

“The opportunity of man-made problems – and I choose these words deliberately – is that they have human-led solutions”, he said.

As the UN turns 75 this year, the global body is taking greater action to support women’s rights, he continued.

Last month marked the start of a Decade of Action to achieve the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) aimed at building peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies while also safeguarding the planet.

The Decade of Action is aimed at transforming institutions and structures, broadening inclusion and driving sustainability.

“Repealing laws that discriminate against women and girls; increasing protection against violence; closing the gap in girls’ education and digital technology; guaranteeing full access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, and ending the gender pay gap are just some of the areas we are targeting”, he said.

On a personal level, the Secretary-General pledged to deepen his commitment to highlighting and supporting gender equality over the remainder of his mandate.



UNAMID/Albert Gonzalez Farran UNAMID, in collaboration with the North Darfur Committee on Women, organised an open day session on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security in North Darfur.

He will take steps at the global level, such as advocating for change among governments that have discriminatory laws on their books, and within the UN, by strengthening work on the links between violence against women and international peace and security.

‘Transform and redistribute power’

“Gender equality is a question of power; power that has been jealously guarded by men for millennia. It is about an abuse of power that is damaging our communities, our economies, our environment, our relationships and our health”, said Mr. Guterres.

“We must urgently transform and redistribute power, if we are to safeguard our future and our planet. That is why all men should support women’s rights and gender equality. And that is why I am a proud feminist”.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Has any study ever been done on how women are portrayed in Travel & Tourism advertising? If so, I would love to take a look at it. Just do a random check yourself. Whether in the swimming pools or on beaches, cabin crew or in meet-and-greet positions, some of the portrayals would definitely match those flagged in the comments above.



SDG 5:

**UN-backed boost
for women-run
businesses in the
developing world**



SDG 5: UN-backed boost for women-run businesses in the developing world



Impact Investment Exchange

Sokkheng, who runs a village store in Cambodia, is supported by IIX's WLB1 (Women's Livelihood Bond 1).

United Nations, 26 February 2020, UN News - Many women running small businesses in emerging markets in developing countries have to juggle their business objectives with family obligations and personal savings goals. By supporting a women-focused bond providing loans to microfinance institutions and impact enterprises, the UN is helping women entrepreneurs facing similar challenges, to succeed in their professional and private lives.

Sokkheng, who runs a village store in Cambodia with her husband, lacked confidence when it comes to choosing the best approach to reinvest in her business, potentially making her vulnerable to economic and financial risks.

Today, her prospects have markedly improved, thanks to the support of a microfinance institution with a history of promoting the well-being of rural society, backed by a loan from the world's first financial product focused on women to be listed on a stock exchange; the

product is called the Women's Livelihood Bond Series (WLB Series) and has been launched by Impact Investment Exchange (IIX).

Microfinance, major impact

The microfinance company approved a microloan for Sokkheng's store and, crucially, provided expert financial advice. According to a [UN-backed study](#), around 89 per cent of Cambodian adults find it challenging to manage their personal finances.

Financial education is an important way to ensure that more people can establish savings priorities, spend in a smarter way and, crucially for women entrepreneurs such as Sokkheng, feel more fully informed when they take out loans or look for other forms of financial support.

Armed with the information she received, Sokkheng now has better cash management knowledge, helping her to improve the



A client in Cambodia supported by IIX's WLB1 (Women's Livelihood Bond 1), by Impact Investment Exchange

profitability of her business. She also signed up for microinsurance, which now provide her with additional economic security in times of emergencies.

Forging stronger bonds

The microfinance institution that helped Sokkheng has been able to scale up its operations and help more women borrowers, thanks to IIX's [WLB1](#), the first in a series of gender bonds, listed on the Singapore Exchange. IIX's WLB Series is designed to create sustainable livelihoods for some two million women in Cambodia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India.

Following the success of the first bond, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([ESCAP](#)) and the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), have partnered to provide support for the second bond in the series.

This support came in the form of a grant to help IIX to undertake impact monitoring and to help scale up the WLB Series.

The second WLB (WLB2), a \$12 million bond, focuses on supporting 250,000 women in the region: capital is lent to several microfinance institutions and impact enterprises (companies which look to make a positive impact to society, alongside making a profit), chosen because they improve women's access to finance, essential goods, assets that generate income, and vocational training.

Commenting on the launch of the second bond, Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCAP, said "we are proud to announce our partnership with IIX's Women's Livelihood Bond Series, which embodies the bold innovations that are needed to advance progress for the world's poorest communities."

Judith Karl, Executive Secretary of UNCDF, said, "We are excited to work with IIX, ESCAP, the Rockefeller Foundation and other key partners to demonstrate that viable investment vehicles can be created to attract finance from the international capital markets to the countries and people that need it most."

Life for Sokkheng and her family has been transformed by IIX and microfinance: her business has expanded, and her household income has grown. She can now set aside savings every month, and look forward to a comfortable, and secure retirement.

Gender equality, finance, and the UN



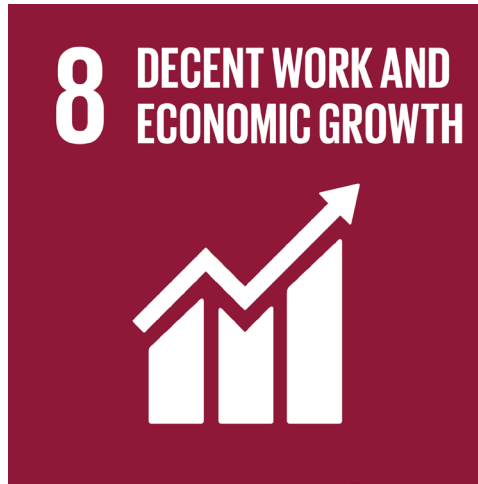
A client in Sri Lanka supported by IIX's WLB1 (Women's Livelihood Bond 1), by Impact Investment Exchange

- Achieving gender equality is one of the goals of the UN's [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(SDG 5\)](#)
- The UN support for the Women's Livelihood Bonds is in line with SDG 5, which calls for reforms that give women "equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws"

- [ESCAP](#)'s involvement in the bonds is part of the Catalyzing Women's Entrepreneurship [programme](#), funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. The programme aims to advance women entrepreneurship and market participation in the Asia-Pacific region, resulting in poverty reduction, improved livelihoods and economic growth
- UNCDF develops [programmes](#) that focus on eliminating gender equality and empowering women.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

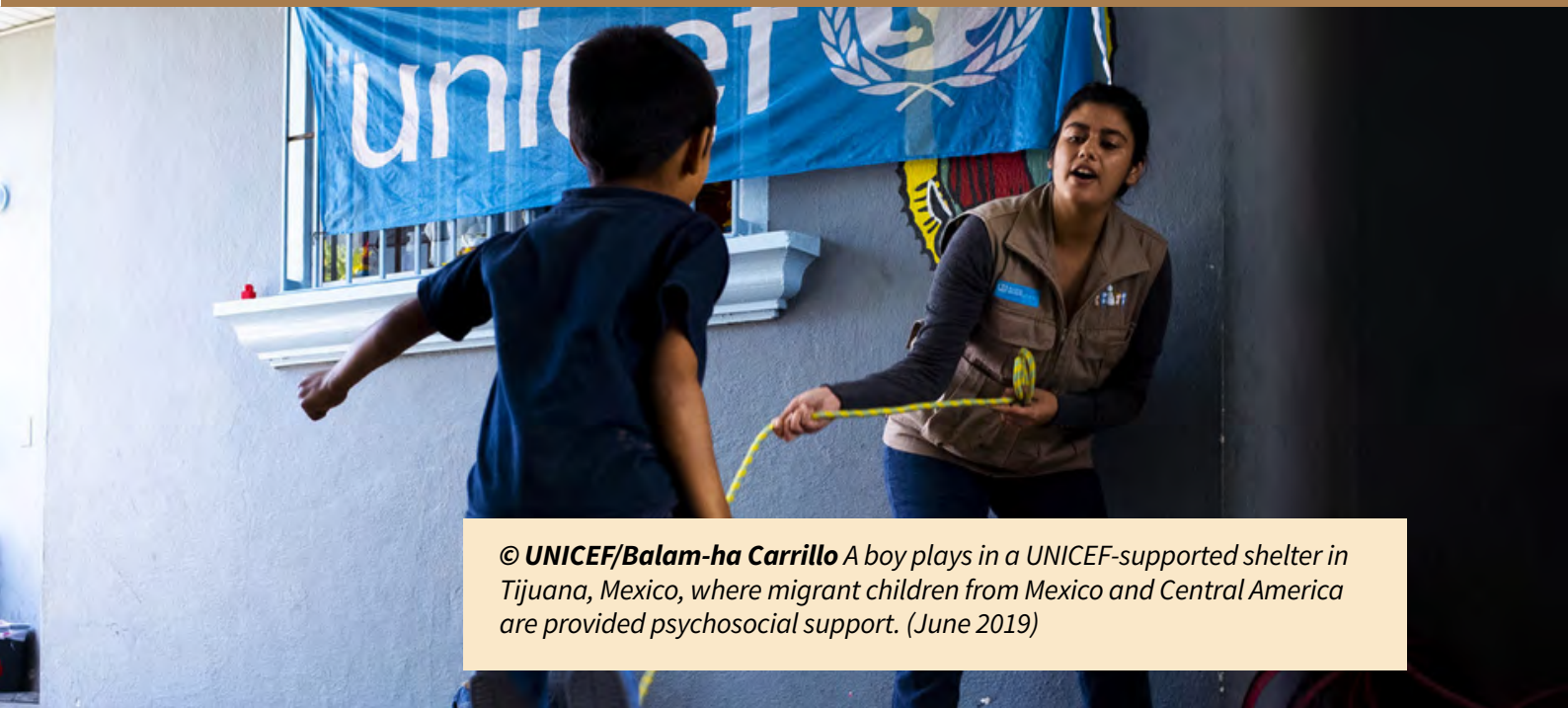
Travel & Tourism abounds with women-run businesses, especially small and medium sized enterprises. Perhaps the UN could learn something from them, or use them as case-studies for expansion of the business models in other economic sectors.



SDG 8:

**2019 was a deadly
year for migrants
crossing the
Americas**

SDG 8: 2019 was a deadly year for migrants crossing the Americas



© **UNICEF/Balam-ha Carrillo** A boy plays in a UNICEF-supported shelter in Tijuana, Mexico, where migrant children from Mexico and Central America are provided psychosocial support. (June 2019)

United Nations, 28 January 2020, UN News - More than 800 people died last year crossing deserts, rivers and remote lands while migrating across the Americas, making 2019 one of deadliest years on record, the UN migration agency said on Tuesday.

Data from the Missing Migrants Project (MMP), collected at the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) Data Analysis Centre in Berlin, indicate that it was the highest number of deaths documented in this region since IOM began keeping records six years ago.

Since 2014, more than 3,800 deaths have been recorded across the continent.

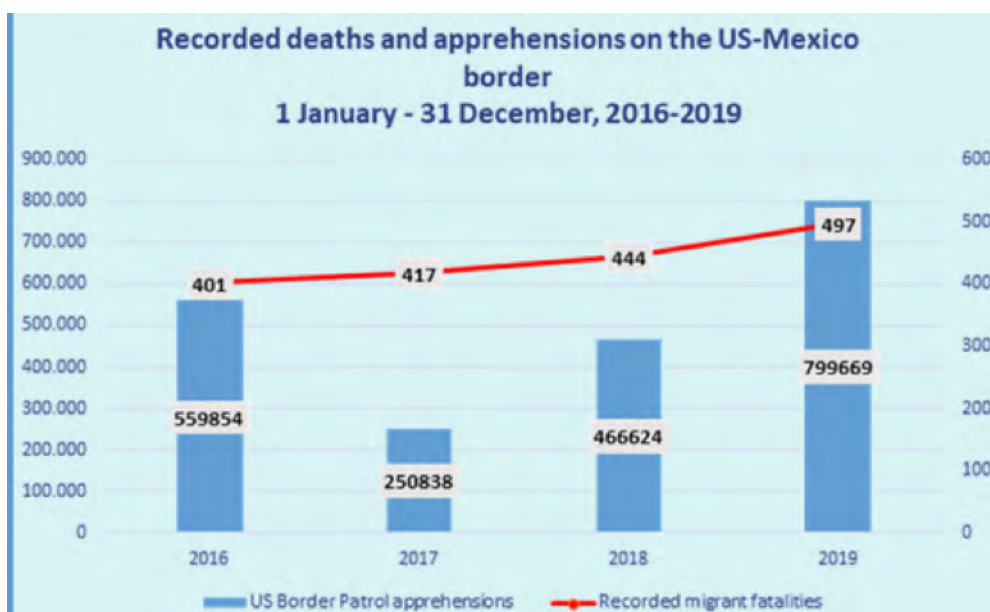
"These numbers are a sad reminder that the lack of options for safe and legal mobility pushes people onto more invisible and riskier paths, putting them at greater danger", said Frank Laczko, Director of IOM's Data Analysis Centre.

"The loss of lives should never be normalized nor tolerated as an assumed risk of irregular migration."

Close to 2,500 deaths since 2014

The region surrounding the United States–Mexico border is one of the deadliest for migrants, with the number growing each year. The MMP has documented a total of 2,403 deaths since 2014, including 497 in 2019.

Most were recorded in the waters of the Río Bravo/Rio Grande river, which runs between the Texas border and the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León and Coahuila, where 109 people lost their lives last year.



This represents a 26 per cent increase from the 86 deaths recorded in 2018.

Many people also attempt crossing through the remote rugged terrain of the vast Arizona desert region, where at least 171 people died in 2019 – a 29 per cent jump over the 133 deaths documented in this area in 2018.

Missing Migrants Project data are compiled by IOM staff based at its Global Migration Data Analysis Centre but come from a variety of sources, some of which are unofficial.

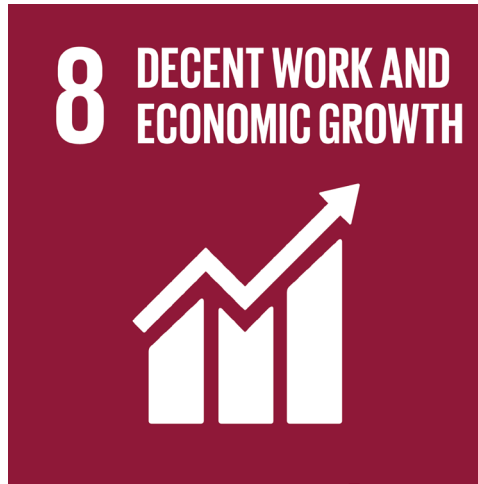
Top destination: US

Back in November, IOM reported that 2019 saw an estimated 270 million migrants crossing international borders, and, at nearly 51 million, the United States was the most desirable destination.

News reports have painted pictures of desperate asylum-seekers giving up their children at the border, hoping that they may have a better life. Some migrant parents have sent their unaccompanied children across the border to surrender to US agents.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Without migrant workers, there would be no Travel & Tourism. Yet, I have never seen a single industry conference ever address their concerns. Why not?



SDG 8:

**Nearly half a
billion can't find
decent work,
unemployment set
to rise**



SDG 8: Nearly half a billion can't find decent work, unemployment set to rise



ILO/Marcel Crozet
A construction worker builds a cylindrical metal structure in Yangon, Myanmar.

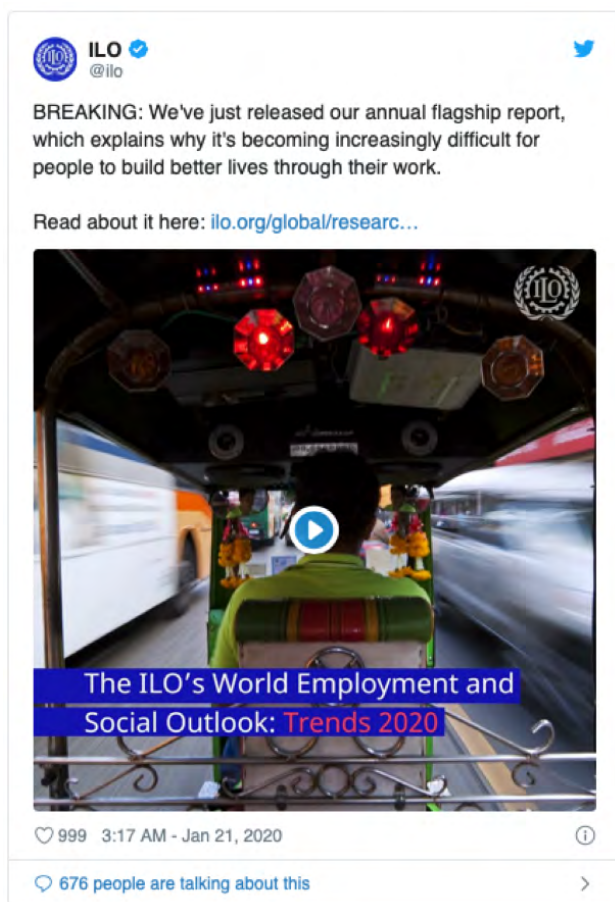
United Nations, 20 January 2020, UN News - Around half a billion people work fewer paid hours than they would like, or are not getting enough access to paid work, shows a study published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on Monday, which also forecasts that unemployment will rise by about

2.5 million this year.

After nine years of relatively stable global unemployment, the [World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020](#) puts the rising jobless numbers down to a stagnating global economy



ILO/Marcel Crozet
Two workers on a construction site in Pokhara, Nepal.



The number of people unemployed around the world stands at some 188 million. In addition, 165 million people don't have enough paid work, and 120 million have either given up actively searching for work or otherwise lack access to the labour market.

"For millions of ordinary people, it's increasingly difficult to build better lives through work", said ILO Director-General [Guy Ryder](#). "Persisting and substantial work-related inequalities and exclusion are preventing them from finding decent work and better futures. That's an extremely serious finding that has profound and worrying implications for social cohesion."

Earlier in January, a UN report on the economy showed that developed countries are experiencing slow growth, and some African countries are stagnating. The consequence is that not enough new jobs are being created to absorb the growing labour force as it enters the market. In addition, many African countries are experiencing a drop in real incomes and a rise in poverty.

Eradicating poverty is an important element of the UN's [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) but, according to the ILO study, moderate or extreme working poverty – defined as earning less than the equivalent of \$3.20 per day – is expected to edge up in 2020-21 in developing countries.

Inequalities related to gender, age and geographical location continue to plague the job market, with the report showing that these factors limit both individual opportunity and economic growth.

Some 267 million young people aged 15-24 are not in employment, education or training, and many more endure substandard working condition.

The rise in trade restrictions and protectionism, which could have a significant impact on employment, is seen as a potentially worrying trend, as is the significant drop in the share of national income in the form of wages, compared to other forms of production.

The report's authors recommend that countries ensure that economic growth and development occurs in a way that leads to the reduction of poverty and better working conditions in low-income countries, through structural transformation, technological upgrading and diversification.

What is WESO?

The annual World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) Trends report analyses key labour market issues, including unemployment, labour underutilisation, working poverty, income inequality, labour income share and factors that exclude people from decent work.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The Covid19 crisis has just worsened this scenario by a hundred-fold. Rebuilding economies, businesses and jobs is going to be a costly, painful exercise. If the right decisions are not made, and if money is allocated more to bailing out political and corporate cronies, joblessness will soon mutate into a social and political virus that will cross borders at lightning speed.



SDG 9:

**Restoring
competition in
“winner-took-all”
digital platform
markets**

SDG 9: Restoring competition in “winner-took-all” digital platform markets



United Nations, 4 February 2020, UNCTAD News - Competition law and policy can help ensure open and accessible markets with fair and reasonable terms for businesses

Digital platforms are at the centre of the global economy and daily lives of consumers.

A handful of these platforms have become dominant in specific markets without facing meaningful competition. They include Amazon as a marketplace, Facebook in social networking, Google in search engines and Apple and Google in application stores.

Digital platforms rely on big data and are characterized as multisided markets with economies of scale, network effects and winner-takes-all features.

These firms offer their products for “free” on one side of the market and earn revenues from online advertising and selling user data on the other side of the market.

Download:

- [Restoring competition in “winner-took-all” digital platform markets](#)

The growing market power of these platforms raises concerns not only for consumers and smaller businesses but also for competition authorities.

Consumers not in control

Consumers can no longer control the use of their data.

Smaller businesses face unfair market conditions, where they compete with big platforms that offer services by self-preferencing their own products. It is now widely recognized that these markets cannot self-correct.

What needs to be done?

One effective response is competition law and policy that promotes open and accessible markets with fair and reasonable terms for businesses.

This goal is more pronounced in highly concentrated digital markets, where large platforms' market power is enduring.

The most important competitive threats to monopolists are likely to come from new entrants, which are vulnerable to exclusionary conduct or anticompetitive acquisitions.

Governments should have in place relevant policies and legal frameworks to overcome different challenges of the platform economy. These include competition, consumer protection and data protection policies and legislation.

Adapt to new realities

There is a need for adapting competition law enforcement tools to new business realities by revising laws like in Germany and Austria or issuing regulations or guidelines as has been done in Kenya and Japan.



A 2017 law revision in Germany incorporated in the assessment of the market power of firms in the digital economy such criteria as direct and indirect network effects, parallel use of services from different providers and switching costs for users.

It also factored in economies of scale in connection with network effects, access by firms to data relevant for competition and innovation-driven competitive pressure.

This amendment allowed the Federal Cartel Office in Germany to consider these criteria in analyzing Facebook's dominance in the social network market during its investigation into Facebook between March 2016 and February 2019.

Merger control regimes should enable competition authorities to scrutinize the acquisition of start-ups by major platforms.

Merger analysis needs to incorporate the role of data in acquiring and sustaining market power and establishing entry barriers to new firms, thereby affecting future competition and innovation.

Not only free but also fair competition

It is important to ensure not only free but also fair competition. This is more so in digital markets, where smaller firms face challenges in their contractual relationship with big platforms.

Competition law provisions on unfair trade practices and abuse of superior bargaining position, as found in competition laws of Japan and the Republic of Korea, would empower competition authorities in protecting the interests of smaller firms vis-à-vis big platforms.

Developing countries could consider this policy measure in revising their competition legislation or introduce a separate regulation concerning digital platforms' dealings with their business users.

Such measures could facilitate entry of local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to platform markets, thereby allowing developing countries to reap the benefits of the digital economy.

This is important as SMEs are crucial to job creation and innovation.

Both the implementation of fair competition legislation and review of acquisitions of startups by dominant platforms could play an important role in maintaining an inclusive, competitive and fair business environment in the digital economy. This might eventually enhance innovation.

Apt taxation policy needed

Another critical element needed to ensure fair competition is an appropriate taxation policy. A significant proportion of the value created in the digital economy results from users who provide data.

The current international corporate tax system is not adapted to the digital economy. There is not yet a common understanding of "value creation" for taxation purposes in the digital economy.

This leads to a disconnect between where value is generated and where taxes are paid. According to the [UNCTAD Digital Economy Report 2019](#), taxes paid abroad by Facebook represented only 2.9% of the profits it generated outside the United States in 2017.

Ideally, an international taxation system, which is agreed upon by all countries, and recognizes the main aspects of digital businesses that have significant implications for taxation, should be put in place.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

These companies dominate Travel & Tourism conferences. Yes, they drive business but, as this report points out, they are becoming much too powerful oligopolies. Why are their monopolistic, market-shifting policies never challenged? Why do audiences unquestioningly jump on the bandwagon? When companies become so big and powerful, and cannot be held accountable, they become global threats equal to the Covid19.



SDG 10:

**Rising inequality
affecting more than
two-thirds of the
globe, but it's not
inevitable**



SDG 10: Rising inequality affecting more than two-thirds of the globe, but it's not inevitable



World Bank/Sarah Farhat Students attend class at Zanaki primary school in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

United Nations, 21 January 2020, UN News - Inequality is growing for more than 70 per cent of the global population, exacerbating the risks of divisions and hampering economic and social development. But the rise is far from inevitable and can be tackled at a national and international level, says a flagship study released by the UN on Tuesday.

The [World Social Report 2020](#), published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), shows that income inequality has increased in most developed countries, and some middle-income countries - including China, which has the world's fastest growing economy.

The challenges are underscored by UN chief António Guterres in the foreword, in which he states that the world is confronting “the harsh realities of a deeply unequal global landscape”, in which economic woes, inequalities and job insecurity have led to mass protests in both developed and developing countries.

“Income disparities and a lack of opportunities”, he writes, “are creating a vicious cycle of inequality, frustration and discontent across generations.”

‘The one per cent’ winners take (almost) all

The study shows that the richest one per cent of the population are the big winners in the changing global economy, increasing their share of income between 1990 and 2015, while at the other end of the scale, the bottom 40 per cent earned less than a quarter of income in all countries surveyed.

One of the consequences of inequality within societies, notes the report, is slower economic growth. In unequal societies, with wide disparities in areas such as health care and education, people are more likely to remain trapped in poverty, across several generations.



Between countries, the difference in average incomes is reducing, with China and other Asian nations driving growth in the global economy. Nevertheless, there are still stark differences between the richest and poorest countries and regions: the average income in North America, for example, is 16 times higher than that of people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Four global forces affecting inequality

The report looks at the impact that four powerful global forces, or megatrends, are having on inequality around the world: technological innovation, climate change, urbanization and international migration.

Whilst technological innovation can support economic growth, offering new possibilities in fields such as health care, education, communication and productivity, there is also evidence to show that it can lead to increased wage inequality, and displace workers.



Rapid advances in areas such as biology and genetics, as well as robotics and artificial intelligence, are transforming societies at pace. New technology has the potential to eliminate entire categories of jobs but, equally, may generate entirely new jobs and innovations.

For now, however, highly skilled workers are reaping the benefits of the so-called “fourth industrial revolution”, whilst low-skilled and middle-skilled workers engaged in routine manual and cognitive tasks, are seeing their opportunities shrink.

Opportunities in a crisis

As the UN’s 2020 report on the global economy showed last Thursday, the climate crisis is having a negative impact on quality of life, and vulnerable populations are bearing the brunt of environmental degradation and extreme weather events. Climate change, according to the World Social Report, is making the world’s poorest countries even poorer, and could reverse progress made in reducing inequality among countries.

If action to tackle the climate crisis progresses as hoped, there will be job losses in carbon-intensive sectors, such as the coal industry, but the “greening” of the global economy could result in overall net employment gains, with the creation of many new jobs worldwide.

For the first time in history, more people live in urban than rural areas, a trend that is expected to continue over the coming years. Although



cities drive economic growth, they are more unequal than rural areas, with the extremely wealthy living alongside the very poor.

The scale of inequality varies widely from city to city, even within a single country: as they grow and develop, some cities have become more unequal whilst, in others, inequality has declined.

Migration a ‘powerful symbol of global inequality’

The fourth megatrend, international migration, is described as both a “powerful symbol of global inequality”, and “a force for equality under the right conditions”.

Migration within countries, notes the report, tends to increase once countries begin to develop and industrialize, and more inhabitants of middle-income countries than low-income countries migrate abroad.

International migration is seen, generally, as benefiting both migrants, their countries of origin (as money is sent home) and their host countries.

In some cases, where migrants compete for low-skilled work, wages may be pushed down, increasing inequality but, if they offer skills that are in short supply, or take on work that others are not willing to do, they can have a positive effect on unemployment.

Harness the megatrends for a better world

Despite a clear widening of the gap between the haves and have-nots worldwide, the report points out that this situation can be reversed. Although the megatrends have the potential to continue divisions in society, they can also, as the Secretary-General says in his foreword, “be harnessed for a more equitable and sustainable world”. Both national governments and international organizations have a role to play in levelling the playing field and creating a fairer world for all.

Reducing inequality should, says the report, play a central role in policy-making. This means ensuring that the potential of new technology is used to reduce poverty and create jobs; that vulnerable people grow more resilient to the effects of climate change; cities are more inclusive; and migration takes place in a safe, orderly and regular manner.

Three strategies for making countries more egalitarian are suggested in the report: the promotion of equal access to opportunities (through, for example, universal access to education); fiscal policies that include measures for social policies, such as unemployment and disability benefits; and legislation that tackles prejudice and discrimination, whilst promoting greater participation of disadvantaged groups.



United Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

social.un.org/worldsocialreport

While action at a national level is crucial, the report declares that “concerted, coordinated and multilateral action” is needed to tackle major challenges affecting inequality within and among countries.

The report’s authors conclude that, given the importance of international cooperation, multilateral institutions such as the UN should be strengthened and action to create a fairer

world must be urgently accelerated.

The UN’s [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), which provides the blueprint for a better future for people and the planet, recognizes that major challenges require internationally coordinated solutions, and contains concrete and specific targets to reduce inequality, based on income.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

The four powerful global megatrends impacting inequality globally are technological innovation, climate change, urbanization and international migration. All are also impacting on Travel & Tourism. But Travel & Tourism can also be a part of the solution – but only if it can muster the intellectual horsepower to start seriously searching for one.

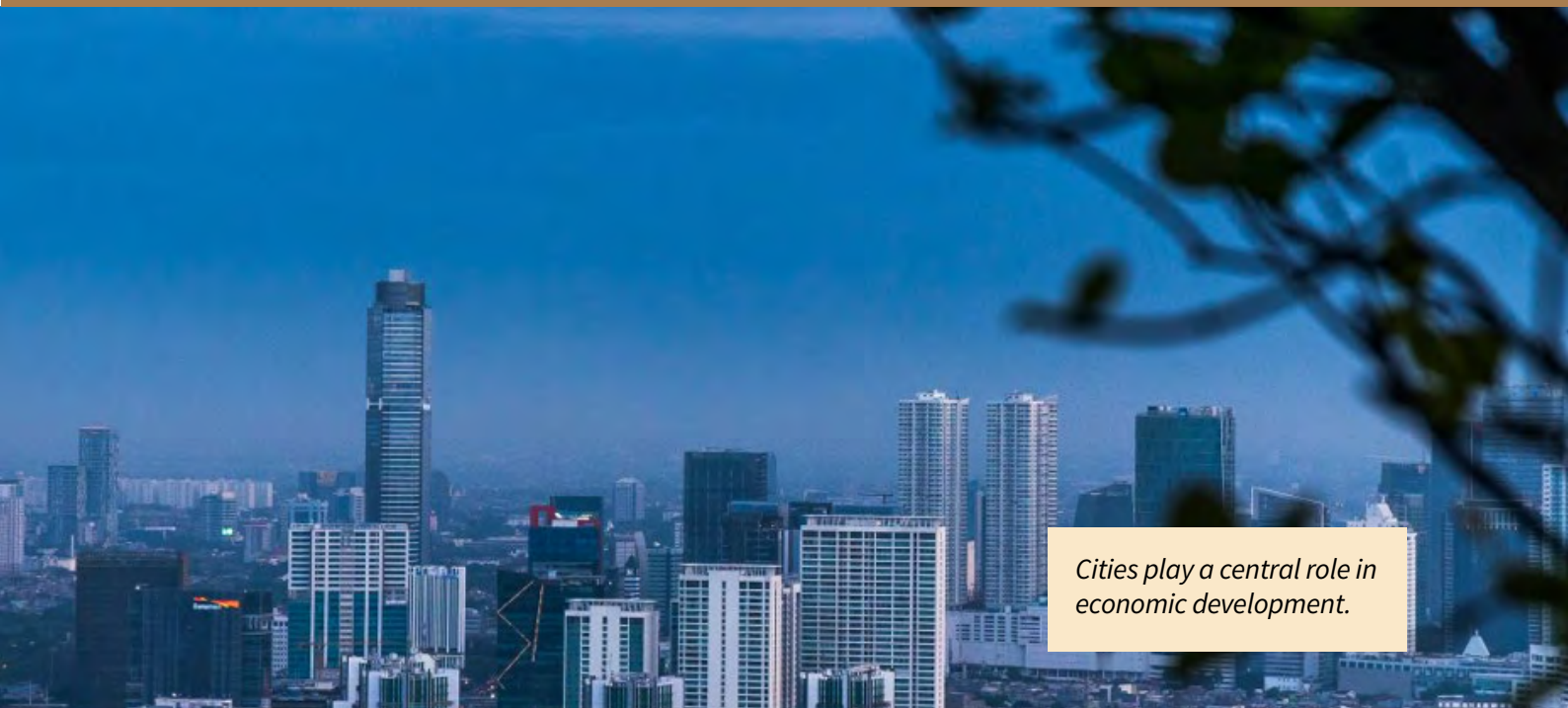


SDG 11:

**Rethink Cities to
Help Asia Make
the Most of
Urbanization**



SDG 11: Rethink Cities to Help Asia Make the Most of Urbanization



Cities play a central role in economic development.

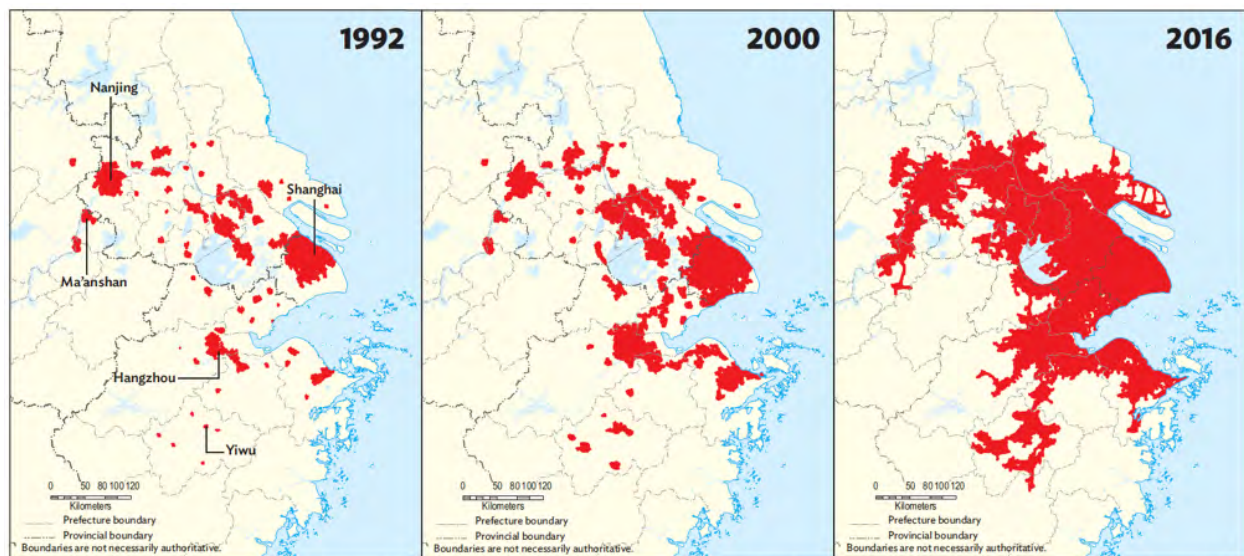
United Nations, 6 January 2020, ADB News - Cities have always played a central role in economic development by bringing workers and entrepreneurs together, spurring innovation, and sharing resources including infrastructure more efficiently. This should be good news for developing Asia: by 2050, there is projected to be 2.96 billion people living in the region's towns and cities – 64% of all the entire population - up from 1.84 billion - or 46% of the population - in 2017.

Unfortunately, while the region's cities are sure to grow in size, they may fail to fulfill their potential as engines of growth and job creation due to underinvestment in urban infrastructure, a lack of affordable housing, and unsynchronized spatial and economic planning.

What are policymakers to do?

First, they must achieve a more accurate and granular understanding of how their countries are urbanizing. New data sources are needed because official statistics often fail to capture the true urban footprint of cities since they rely on municipal boundaries drawn decades ago, for example. Satellite imagery, however, shows clearly that developing Asia's cities are expanding without regard to those boundaries, forming what we call “natural cities”.

Our study, *Fostering Growth and Inclusion in Asia's Cities* tracked almost 1,460 natural cities across developing Asia, with many of them in the People's Republic of China (680 natural cities), India (320), and Indonesia (93). Further, cities are merging to form integrated urban agglomerations; 476 natural cities that were separate in 1992 had linked up to form 124 city clusters by 2016, the largest being the Shanghai-centered city cluster, home to 91.5 million people, and encompassing a total of 53 natural cities, including Nanjing and Hangzhou, in the Yangtze River Delta area.



This map was produced by the cartography unit of the Asian Development Bank. The boundaries, colors, denominations, and any other information shown on this map do not imply, on the part of the Asian Development Bank, any judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries, colors, denominations, or information.

Urban expansion and formation of a city cluster in the Yangtze River Delta Area

Source: Asian Development Bank. 2019. Asian Development Outlook 2019 Update: Fostering Growth and Inclusion in Asia's Cities. Manila.

This means urban planning cannot simply stop at the city limits. Efficient transport networks that extend from neighborhoods to workplaces prevent fragmentation of a city's labor market.

Similarly, as cities cluster, decisions on where to place vital infrastructure, such as water treatment and solid waste facilities, transport hubs, green spaces, and industrial parks require coordinated decision-making among local government units. Unfortunately, companies operating in city clusters are now significantly more likely than those in stand-alone cities to complain about infrastructure and regulatory bottlenecks.

Second, policymakers must think of cities as labor markets. To be sure, cities are much more than places of work. However, they cannot thrive unless they function well for both enterprises and workers. This requires that travel within the city or city cluster is fast and cheap, that firms and households can easily relocate from one part of a city to another, and that real estate is affordable.

Asian cities need to do a lot on these fronts. Tests using Google Maps in 278 natural cities show considerable congestion during peak travel times in many large cities, such as Metro Manila, Dhaka, and Bengaluru. Moreover, in 199 of the cities a full quarter of the surveyed trips could not be made by public transport at all, while for the other three quarters, travel by public transport including walking to and from the transport hub was three times longer than by car.

This clearly shows that Asian cities must invest much more in efficient public transport if businesses are to attract workers and flourish. The transport system must combine trains, buses, taxis, ride sharing, and less formal services like jeepneys and autorickshaws—but regulating them well—to improve mobility.

Affordable homes are also critical to attract workers, keep them as their skills and families grow, and then allow them to easily shift to other jobs. However, our analysis showed that that home prices are well beyond the means of median-income households in more than 90% of cities. What is needed to tackle that is a combination of demand-side and supply-side policies, including reassessment of land use regulations that might be inadvertently restricting the supply of real estate.

Finally, growth requires vibrancy in all types of cities. Cities are connected to one another, and to the rural hinterland, through flows of goods, services, and people. Robust and balanced national economic growth depends also on mid-sized cities and even market towns that specialize in distributing agricultural produce.

This requires investment in efficient inter-city transport. Given competing demands on public funding, large cities should draw more on private sector funding. Such cities have an edge in attracting private investment because the agglomeration economies they generate promise high returns to those who choose to locate there. Allocations of public funds must follow the people. Many medium-sized cities in the region with populations of 1–5 million and some smaller cities with populations of half a million still attract migrants. Public investment should support that.

Asia's steady urbanization represents an unprecedented chance for the region to ensure robust long-term growth and the creation of good jobs. Policymakers must not let the opportunity slip through their hands by neglecting their cities.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Travel & Tourism survives on clean cities as primary hub and spokes distribution centres. Certainly, hotels and wellness centres and elegant shopping centres have contributed significantly to making cities liveable. But they have cropped up in a deficient infrastructure environment that has worsened traffic, smog and congestion. That vicious circle will need to be broken in the post-Covid19 era.



SDG 13:

**Climate action ‘both
a priority and a
driver of the decade’**



SDG 13: Climate action ‘both a priority and a driver of the decade’



OCHA/Danielle Parry *Extreme weather events are devastating many countries, including Fiji which was hit by a cyclone in 2016.*

United Nations, 3 February 2020, UN News - Climate action will be both a priority and a driver of world affairs through the coming decade, United Nations Secretary-General chief António Guterres announced on Monday, during a speech at UN Headquarters in New York, in which he declared that the next ten years will be “crucial for achieving a fair globalization, boosting economic growth and building peaceful societies”.

Mr. Guterres was addressing the UN Group of Friends on Climate, created by France and Morocco ahead of COP21 in order to foster global commitment to climate action.

The Decade of Action begins, said the UN chief, with efforts to ensure that the next UN climate conference, set to take place in Glasgow in November, is a success, following the “disappointment” of COP25.

“70 countries committed to carbon neutrality by 2050, including the European Union, but

also many that have contributed least to the problem”, said Mr. Guterres. “That number represents less than one fourth of global emissions. We must make this commitment universal”.

Fossil fuel subsidies growing

Mr. Guterres repeated his attack on fossil fuel subsidies, and the necessity for countries – particularly, but not only, in East, South and Southeast Asia – to break their addiction to coal. Many countries, he said, continue to put coal at the heart of their energy plans, and there is still no universally agreed price on carbon.

This inability to kick the coal habit comes as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) analysis shows that 2019 was the second hottest year on record, and that ocean heating is at a record level.



Coal mine in South Africa (file), by UN Photo/Gill Fickling

Positive private sector signs

Despite the mixed political messages, Mr. Guterres said he took heart from the proactive reaction to the climate emergency from the private sector, which has seen many parts of the financial world taking part in initiatives to encourage sustainable development.

An example is the Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance, a UN-supported coalition of businesses worth trillions of dollars that will cooperate across borders, and even with competitors, to mobilize long-term finance.

Key 2020 events

Three key events taking place in 2020 were singled out for attention in the Secretary-General's speech. The first, the Sustainable Transport Conference, which takes place in May, was described by the UN chief as a chance

to “align our mobility systems with a climate-neutral world”.

In June, the Oceans Conference will be an opportunity to “reverse and end the assault on the world’s marine ecosystems and resources, including the rising tide of plastics pollution”, and at the Biodiversity COP15 conference in October, the world must, said the UN chief, “move decisively towards an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Let’s not forget that one million species are in the near-term danger of extinction”.

Strengthening the UN climate team

Mr. Guterres announced that he has begun scaling up the UN’s ambitions, with his new Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance, the former Bank of England governor, Mark Carney, due to start in March, tasked with engaging business leaders on subjects including carbon neutrality, carbon pricing, disclosure of climate risk, and embedding climate into economic and financial priorities.

“We need to push for transformation in the way the financial sector works”, said Mr. Guterres, “as a lever for more ambitious national government engagement and commitments”.

The Secretary-General is also reshaping the climate team in his office, to better focus on a roadmap towards COP26 in Scotland, other 2020 climate priorities, and to reach the goals of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), during the Decade of Action.



UN chief António Guterres in Tuvalu, by UN Photo/Mark Garten

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Covid19 has certainly taken care of this agenda. Planet Earth has been breathing easy for several months. The problem will re-emerge when the pandemic abates and the world goes back to business as usual.



SDG 13:

**At Davos, UN chief
urges 'big emitters'
to take climate
action**



SDG 13: At Davos, UN chief urges ‘big emitters’ to take climate action



World Economic Forum/Boris Baldinger UN Secretary-General António Guterres addresses the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2020 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland.

United Nations, 23 January 2020, UN News - The world is “doomed” in the face of climate change unless major industrial nations reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, UN Secretary-General António Guterres told business leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Thursday.

The UN chief observed that while many smaller developing countries and the European Union have committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, “the big emitters” have yet to act.

If the big emitters do not rally around the principle of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, “we will be doomed because they represent a very important share”, the UN chief said.

“The G20 represents 80 per cent of the emissions that contribute to climate change.”

Government action

Mr. Guterres said Governments can take steps to help move the world towards a greener future, such as cutting subsidies for fossil fuels.

“As a taxpayer, I can’t really accept the idea that my taxes are used to boost hurricanes, or to bleach coral, or to melt glaciers”, he stated.

For the Secretary-General, climate change is the defining issue of our time, representing an “existential threat” to the entire planet and threatening development.

Mr. Guterres said he is encouraged by private sector commitment to the environment, as evidenced by increasing numbers of financial institutions and asset managers making carbon neutrality a priority in their investments.



Hope for ‘transformational decisions’

Similarly, cities, voters and young people have been mobilizing for action.

“I am hopeful that it will be possible to mobilize both the private sector and public authorities in order to take transformational decisions in the way we produce our food, power our economy, move, support industry and plan our cities - the transformational changes that are necessary for us, to reach the objectives that the scientific community tells us it is absolutely essential to do”, he said.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Covid19 has certainly forced major industrial nations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. A rather harsh way of solving the problem, but it has worked.



SDG 13:

**Climate crisis
'affecting quality
of life and fuelling
discontent'**



SDG 13: Climate crisis ‘affecting quality of life and fuelling discontent’



WFP/Matteo Cosorich In Mazambara, Zimbabwe, where rain has been very sparse, a woman shows a plate of cicadas, one of the food options available after the WFP food ration is over.

United Nations, 16 January 2020, UN News - The climate crisis, as well as persistently high inequalities, and rising levels of food insecurity and undernourishment, is affecting the quality of life in many societies and fuelling discontent, the UN warned on Thursday, on the publication of the 2020 World Economic Situation Report ([WESP](#)).

Switch to renewables and low-carbon energy urgently needed

If the world continues to rely on fossil fuels over the next few years, and emissions in developing countries rise to the level of those in richer nations, global carbon emissions would increase by more than 250 per cent, with potentially catastrophic results.

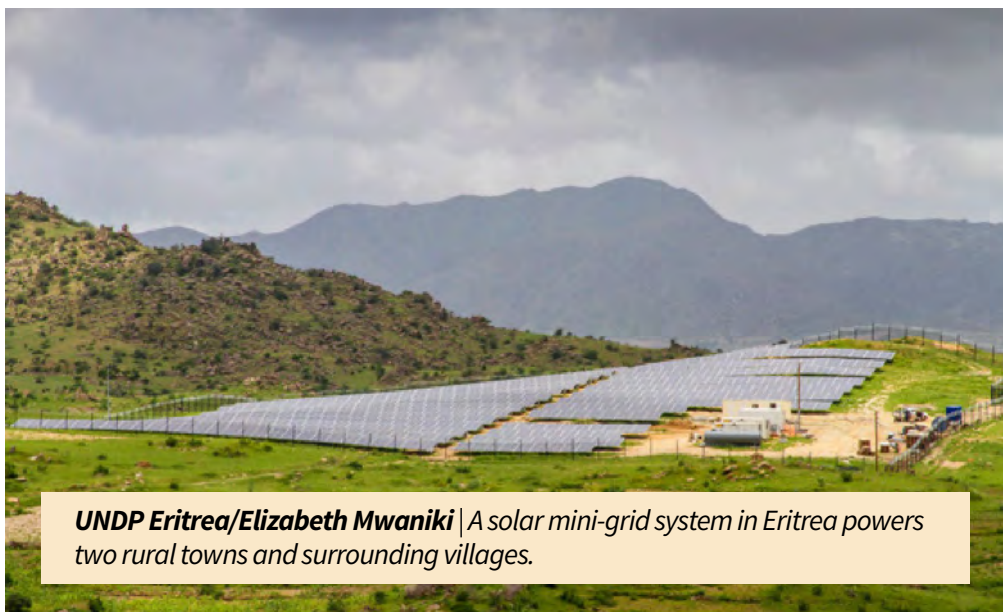
The report’s authors insist that the world’s energy needs must be met by renewable or low-carbon energy sources, which will lead

to environmental and health benefits, such as lower air pollution, and new economic opportunities for many countries.

However, the 2020 WESP finds that the urgent need to switch to clean energy continues to be underestimated, noting that countries are continuing to invest in oil and gas exploration, and coal-fired power generation (read our story on the the move away from coal [here](#)).

This reliance on fossil fuels is described as “short-sighted”, leaving investors and governments exposed to sudden losses, as the price of oil and gas fluctuates, as well as contributing to deteriorating climatic conditions, such as global warming.

“Risk associated with the climate crisis are becoming an ever-greater challenge”, concludes



UNDP Eritrea/Elizabeth Mwaniki | A solar mini-grid system in Eritrea powers two rural towns and surrounding villages.

the report, and “climate action must be an integral part of any policy mix”.

Strategies and technology for a transition to a clean economy that delivers accessible to reliable and decarbonized energy already exist, continues the report, but will require political will and public support. Failure to act will significantly increase the ultimate costs.

East Asia forges ahead, as Africa stagnates



ILO/Marcel Crozet | A female employee at a printing factory in Kyoto, Japan.

The East Asia region continues to be the world’s fastest growing region, with China’s economy growing at a rate of 6.1 per cent in 2019. Although growth is expected to level off, China will still see world-beating growth of 5.9 per cent by 2021.

The more economically developed parts of the world are seeing much slower growth, with the USA expected to see a slowdown from 2.2 per cent in 2019, to 1.7 per cent in 2020. The European Union is only expected to grow by 1.6 per cent, although this is an improvement on 2019, when the bloc only grew by 1.4 per cent. The sluggish growth in both regions is blamed mainly on global uncertainty.

Africa, meanwhile, continues to suffer from near stagnation. In a third of developing countries dependent on commodities, including Angola, Nigeria and South Africa, average real incomes are lower today than they were in 2014 and, in several sub-Saharan African countries, the number of people living in extreme poverty has risen.

Setback for UN development agenda

Although the report assumes that trade tension will ease, the potential for a relapse is high, says the report, as the root causes behind disputes have not yet been tackled.

Continuing weak growth in the global economy will make it harder to achieve the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The Agenda, the UN’s blueprint for a better future for people and the planet, includes commitments to eradicate poverty and create decent jobs for all.

What is the WESP?

The World Economic Situation and Prospects report is the UN's flagship publication on expected trends in the global economy.

It is produced annually by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)) and the five UN regional commissions (Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, and Western Asia).

On the launch of the WESP, [UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#) warned of the potential impacts of a slowdown: “These risks could inflict severe and long-lasting damage on development prospects. They also threaten to encourage a further rise in inward-looking policies, at a point when global cooperation is paramount”.

Growth alone is not enough



WFP/Giulio D'Adamo | Women in Madagascar cultivate vegetables on land using a micro irrigation system, where WFP is providing income generating opportunities to small-holder farmer organizations.

The authors of the 2020 WESP conclude that it is not enough to simply focus on economic growth, at any cost, and governments must ensure that growth is inclusive.

“Policymakers should move beyond a narrow focus on merely promoting GDP growth, and instead aim to enhance well-being in all parts of society”, said Elliott Harris, UN Chief Economist and Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development.

In order to improve well-being for all, Mr. Harris emphasizes the importance of prioritizing investment in sustainable development to promote education, renewable energy, and resilient infrastructure, and called for governments to pay closer attention to the implications of their policies on the environment, and a fairer distribution of wealth within their countries.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

“The authors of the 2020 WESP conclude that it is not enough to simply focus on economic growth, at any cost, and governments must ensure that growth is inclusive.” The defining statement of the post-Covid19 agenda. Clearly, the world has been down the path of focusing on economic growth at any cost. It will have to learn its lessons when the global reconstruction starts.



SDG 13:

**2019 second
hottest year on
record**



SDG 13: 2019 second hottest year on record

WMO/Jordi Anon 2019 was the second warmest year on record after 2016, according to the World Meteorological Organization.

United Nations, 15 January 2020, UN News - Last year was the second warmest year on record, the World Meteorological Organization ([WMO](#)) confirmed on Wednesday.

“The average global temperature has risen by about 1.1°C since the pre-industrial era and ocean heat content is at a record level,” [said](#) WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

“On the current path of carbon dioxide emissions, we are heading towards a temperature increase of 3 to 5 degrees Celsius by the end of century.”

WMO analysis showed the annual global temperature in 2019 was 1.1°C warmer than in the period from 1850-1900, or the pre-industrial era.

Only 2016 was hotter, due to a very strong El Niño which causes warming, combined with long-term climate change.

Furthermore, average temperatures for the past five years and 10 years, respectively, were the highest on record.

Since the 1980s, each decade has been warmer than the previous one: a trend the UN agency expects will continue due to the record level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

WMO added that 2019 and the past decade also were characterized by retreating ice, record sea levels, increasing ocean heat and acidification, and extreme weather, all of which have “major impacts” on human health and the natural environment.



Meanwhile, the New Year began where 2019 left off, according to Mr. Taalas.

“Australia had its hottest, driest year on record in 2019, setting the scene for the massive bushfires which were so devastating to people and property, wildlife, ecosystems and the environment,” he said.

“Unfortunately, we expect to see much extreme weather throughout 2020 and the coming decades, fuelled by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Thanks to Covid19, this year will probably show a significant decline in temperatures -- giving Planet Earth a welcome respite. Of course, all that could come undone very quickly once economic engines go into full thrust again.

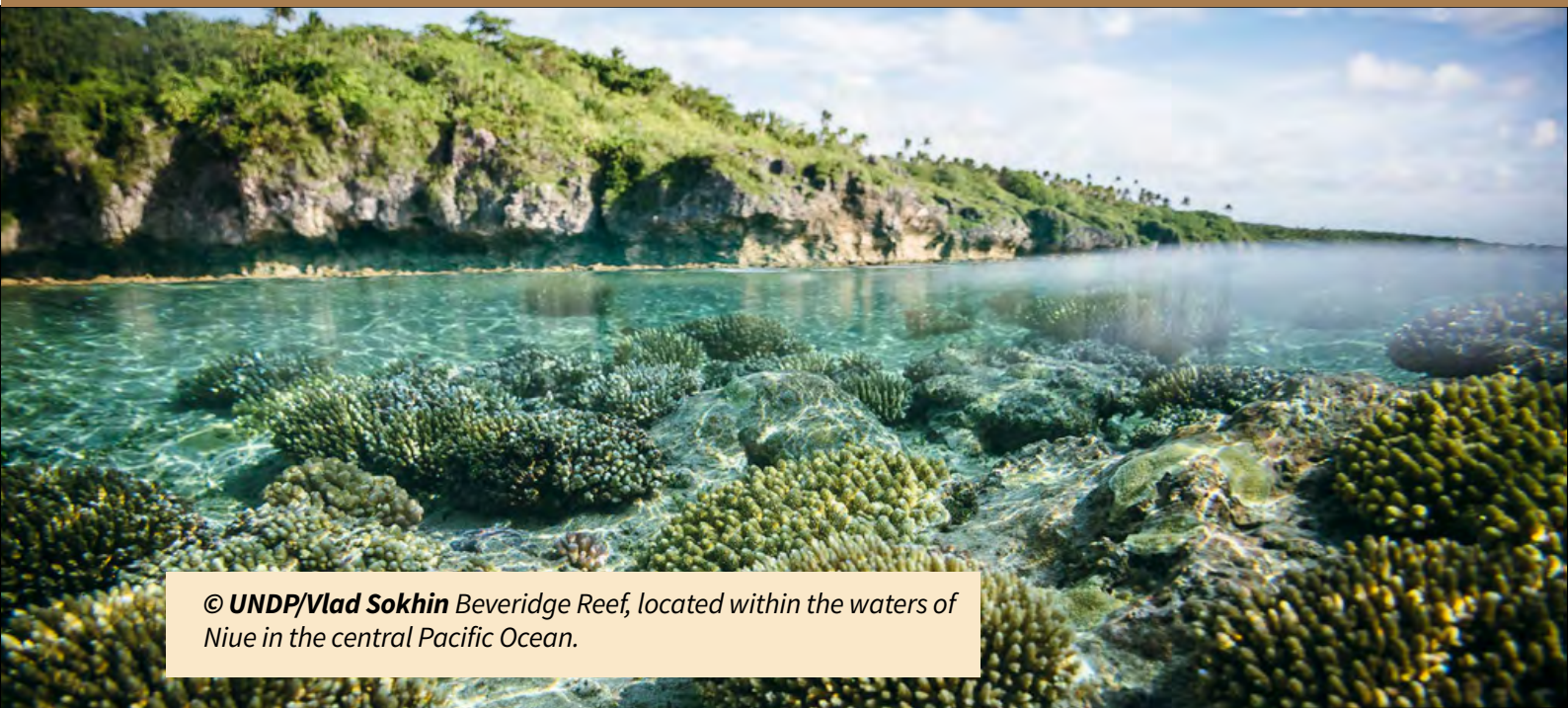


SDG 14:

**2020: The year
for action, to 'rise
up' and safeguard
ocean life**



SDG 14: 2020: The year for action, to ‘rise up’ and safeguard ocean life



© **UNDP/Vlad Sokhin** Beveridge Reef, located within the waters of Niue in the central Pacific Ocean.

United Nations, 5 February 2020, UN News - With the ocean in deep crisis, members of civil society and philanthropic organisations are urging governments and corporations to take bold action to safeguard the ocean. After a two-day preparatory meeting in New York ahead of June’s UN Ocean Conference in Portugal, activists handed over what they termed “A Blue Call to Action” to the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, on Wednesday.

Multiple stressors are eroding the ocean’s ability to function as the planet’s life support system, and so defending its capacity to produce oxygen, sequester carbon and provide food and livelihoods for billions of people is vital, delegates heard.

With that in mind, in May last year, the Oceano Azul Foundation partnered with Ocean Unite and Oak Foundation to bring together representatives of fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, ocean conservation organizations and

foundations, to agree on common priorities and solutions needed to tackle the ocean crisis and raise the level of ambition for action.

Gathering ministers and representatives from civil society organizations, the business community, intergovernmental and United Nations agencies, the preparatory meeting of the [UN Ocean Conference](#) took place in New York this week, defining key areas of ocean action, and aiming to drive governments and other key decision-makers to deliver on their commitments.

During the preparatory meeting, co-chaired by the Governments of Palau and Denmark, Tiago Pitta e Cunha, CEO of Oceano Azul Foundation, said that “the decisions needed to address the ocean crisis had been delayed for too long” similar to action on climate change.

Highlighting the need to agree on concrete actions, he added that “now is the time to push tirelessly for such actions”.



The [Ocean Conference](#), taking place in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June, aims to propel science-based innovative solutions in the form of global ocean action.

‘Take the momentum further’

According to recent data, the world has at most 10 years to win the battle to stay below the 1.5°C threshold above pre-industrial levels, and avoid the existential risks to nature and people that crossing it would bring.

Briefing the press at UN Headquarters in New York on Wednesday, Ambassadors Ngedikes Olai Uludong of Palau and Martin Hermann of Denmark, emphasized that the conference in June was an opportunity to “take the momentum further”, the momentum achieved

with the first UN Ocean Conference in 2017, and “drive a new chapter of ocean action”. According to the group, “2020 is a huge opportunity for the global community to come together and raise the level of ambition.”

[Fijian islander Peter Thomson](#), Special Envoy for the Ocean - who as UN General Assembly President, oversaw the historic first Conference - drove home the importance of the UN [Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#), which is poised to strengthen the international cooperation and partnerships needed to develop the scientific research and innovative technologies for the wellbeing of the ocean.

Also speaking to the press at UN Headquarters in New York, Karen Sack, President and CEO of Ocean Unite, added that “our ocean is essential to all life on Earth”, and called for more “ocean protection without delay.”

Blue Call to Action / RISE UP targets:

- Restore ocean life
- Invest immediately in a net-zero carbon emissions future
- Speed the transition to a circular and sustainable economy
- Empower and support coastal people
- Unite for stronger global ocean governance
- Protect at least 30% of the ocean by 2030

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Over-tourism has led to a lot of “overs”, such as overconsumption, overeating and their various side effects such as overfishing. Travel & Tourism is widely known as an industry of excess and waste. Protecting ocean life by curbing overfishing and waste-dumping could go a long way.

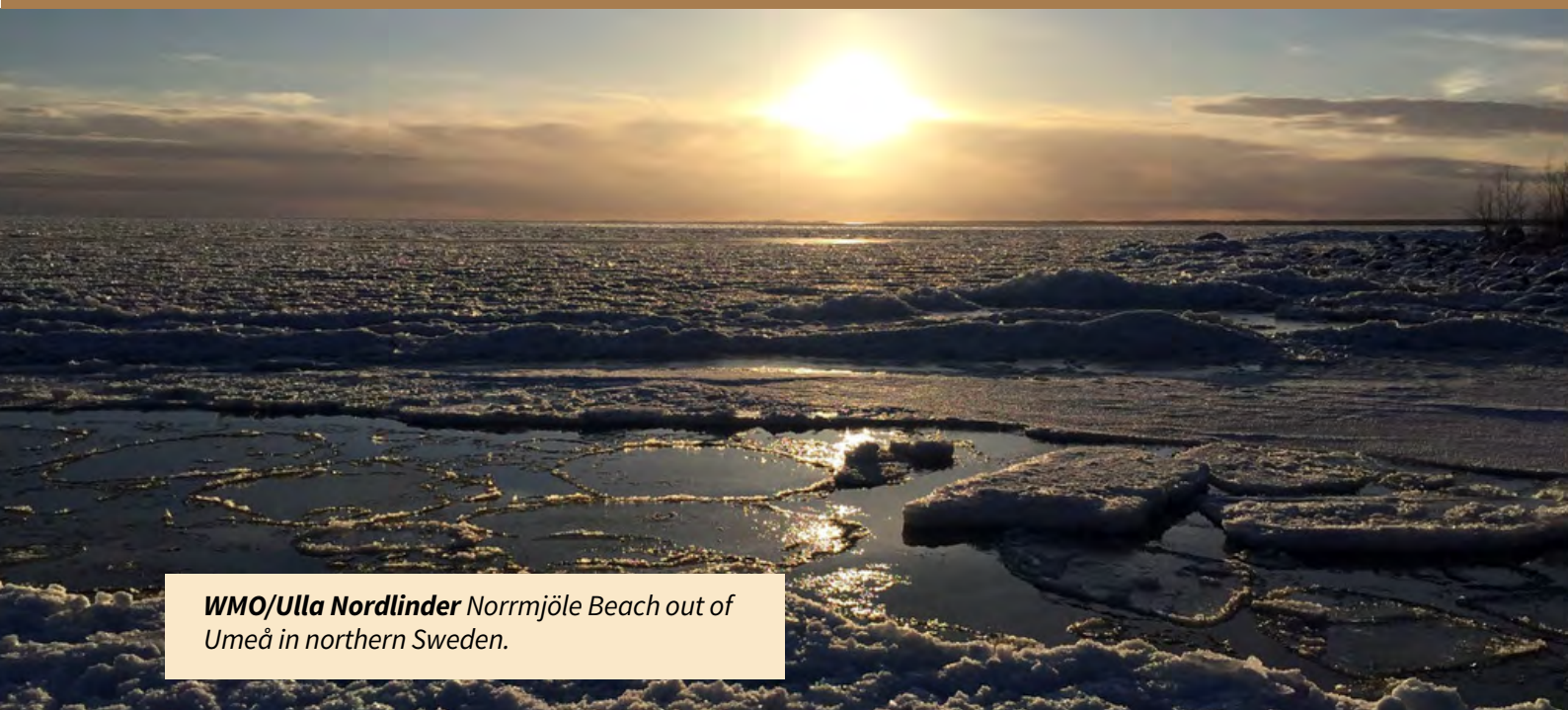


SDG 14:

**Ocean Conference
has potential to
be a 'global game-
changer'**



SDG 14: Ocean Conference has potential to be a ‘global game-changer’



WMO/Ulla Nordlinder Norrmjöle Beach out of Umeå in northern Sweden.

United Nations, 4 February 2020, UN News - The second global [Ocean Conference](#) taking place in Portugal in a few months’ time promises to be “a critical moment” for the health of life under water and on land, the President of the UN [General Assembly](#) said on Tuesday, as preparations got underway.

“[Life under water is essential to life on land](#)”, said [Tijjani Muhammad-Bande](#). The ocean produces “half of the oxygen we breathe” and provides food for millions of around the world, playing a “fundamental role in mitigating climate change as a major heat and carbon sink”.

The Ocean Conference, which will run in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June, aims to propel science-based innovative solutions in the form of global ocean action.



The worldwide ocean economy is valued at around \$1.5 trillion dollars annually, as aquaculture is the fastest growing food sector and 350 million jobs world-wide are linked to fisheries.

“A healthy marine environment holds untold potential for achieving the entirety of the [Sustainable Development Agenda](#)”, he said. “Yet the unsustainable use – and misuse – of ocean resources, climate change, and pollution all threaten the ability of our ocean to provide for us all”.

Boosting life under water

In this first year of the [Decade of Action](#) and Delivery, acceleration is needed on the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) targets that are due to be met this year, two-thirds of which relate to the health of our environment.

Mr. Muhammad-Bande spelled out: “We must reach several targets related to [SDG 14: Life Under Water](#)...to reframe our understanding of nature as an accelerator for implementing the 2030 Agenda”.

Life under water and on land have a “symbiotic relationship”, he said, noting that “pollution hampers the ocean’s ability to provide for people”.

He referred to last year’s [UN Environment Assembly](#)’s ministerial declaration calling for a reduction of single-use plastic products by 2030 as demonstrating “multilateral commitment to forging a better world” and maintained the importance of emulating this leadership at the Ocean Conference “to ensure that the declaration has a transformative impact on life under water”.



Ocean health

While coral reefs are home to a quarter of all marine life, half have been lost, adversely impacting global food security. And illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing further burdens ecosystems.

Moreover, sea level rise induced by climate-change poses an existential threat, with small island developing States at the frontline.

“We must stand with them in solidarity and support. This is for us all”, the Assembly President stated, further emphasizing improving ocean health as “key to safeguarding our future”.

Transitioning to a green economy is “essential to protect our oceans and our world”, he said, recalling that next year marks the beginning of the [Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development](#).

Sustainable use of the ocean

[Peter Thomson](#), Special Envoy for the Ocean, and himself a former President of the General Assembly, outlined five major problems facing the oceans.

Pollution – from plastics to industrial agricultural sewerage – and the sustainability of fisheries in the face of harmful practices, are both “eminently fixable by 2030”.

However, more difficult to fix are problems associated with acidification, deoxygenation and ocean warming, all of which are linked to greenhouse gas emissions.

“We find ourselves in a much longer fixing period when it comes to those three”, he said, noting that although they would continue for hundreds of years “even if we do the right thing tomorrow”, indeed we must start doing, so “we can start turning the corner”.

‘Positive tipping points’

Mr. Thomson urged everyone to focus on the “positive tipping points”, claiming they “are closer than you think”.

These include “scaling up of science and innovation” and other solutions “that we will be concentrating on in Lisbon”, he elaborated.

The UN envoy spoke about the “strong will” of developing countries to participate in sustainable agriculture, windfarms and the greening of shipping, stating that “we are now on the cusp of a great positive revolution”.

Vicious climate crisis cycle

And speaking at a press conference for correspondents in New York, UN chief [António Guterres](#) highlighted the importance of oceans to the on-going climate crisis, and solutions to alleviate it.

He [explained](#) that “as oceans warm, ice melts and we lose the vital service the ice sheets perform – reflecting sunlight, thus further increasing ocean warming”.

And, as ice melts and the oceans warm, sea levels rise and more water evaporates, “fueling ever greater rainfall, threatening coastal cities and deltas”.

The UN chief pointed out that last year, ocean heat and mean-sea level reached “their highest on record”, revealing that scientists now say “that ocean temperatures are now rising at the equivalent of five Hiroshima bombs a second.”

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

“The worldwide ocean economy is valued at around \$1.5 trillion dollars annually, as aquaculture is the fastest growing food sector and 350 million jobs world-wide are linked to fisheries.” All well and good. How about measuring the ecological loss generated by that economic profit.



SDG 16:

**Half of all violent
deaths involve
small arms and light
weapons**

SDG 16: Half of all violent deaths involve small arms and light weapons



UN Photo/Ky Chung A UN peacekeeper with firearms collected from militias in Côte d'Ivoire.

United Nations, 5 February 2020, UN News - Nearly 50 per cent of all violent deaths between 2010 and 2015, more than 200,000 each year, involved small arms and light weapons, the Security Council was told on Tuesday, during a briefing by UN disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu.

Ms. Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, noted that one billion small arms are in circulation worldwide, and that their use in lethal violence is prevalent from the Americas, to Africa and Southern Europe. 'Current and past crises that have been addressed by this Council', she said, "from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Haiti to Mali, have all been aggravated by the widespread availability and uncontrolled flow of small arms and light

weapons and their ammunition".

Small arms also pose a challenge to UN peacekeeping and political missions. Nine of the mission mandates address issues related to conventional weapons, including the control of small arms and light weapons.

The illicit flow of small arms is having a serious impact, including in relation to violent extremism, throughout the African Sahel region, and parts of Central Africa, warned the disarmament chief.

This is a cause for serious concern in war-torn Libya and South Sudan, both of which are seeing a steady influx of weapons and ammunition.



UN Photo/Loey Felipe | Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, briefs members of the UN Security Council.

A negative impact on human rights and sustainable development

Illicit small arms and light weapons have a negative impact on all of the core pillars of the UN's work, explained Ms. Nakamitsu, from security and conflict prevention, to human rights, sustainable development, and gender equality.

They are factors in a large range of human rights violations, including the killing and maiming of children, rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence.

Small arms also play a role in displacement and food insecurity, including the world's most high profile and serious conflicts: "In Yemen, as of the end of 2019, an estimated 4 million people are internally displaced amidst devastating conflict facilitated by steady arms flows".

'Critical' regional efforts to curb arms flows

THE disarmament chief outlined the many efforts being undertaken, at global, regional and national levels, to support small arms and light weapons control. Regional efforts are, she declared "especially critical" in combatting cross-border trafficking.

The UN is supporting the African Union in achieving its goal of a conflict-free continent, through such initiatives as "Africa Amnesty Month" in September, which calls for the surrender, collection and destruction of illegally acquired weapons.

The wide and easy availability of small arms and light weapons is a key denominator in all of the issues addressed by the Security Council, said Ms. Nakamitsu. For this reason, she concluded, the problem should remain a priority and the root causes of illicit arms flows should be examined as a matter of urgency.



UNMISS/Isaac Billy | Former child soldiers are released in Yambio in South Sudan in February 2018.

Small arms and the UN

- The Security Council has been briefed on small arms on a biennial basis since 2008, in response to the consequences of excessive and poorly-controlled small arms and light weapons.
- In a 2007 statement, the Council noted that these consequences include the increased intensity and duration of armed conflicts, the undermining of peace agreements, and frustrated efforts to prevent conflict. This compromises the Council's primary responsibility, namely the maintenance of international peace and security.
- One of the targets of [Sustainable Development Goal 16](#) (the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies), is to "significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime" by 2030
- The Office for Disarmament Affairs ([UNODA](#)) supports country-level small-arms control and armed violence reduction initiatives.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Who profits from this? Why is it that in spite of unprecedented security checks and crackdown on terrorist financing and movements, these small arms and light weapons still seem to land up in the hands of all kinds of unsavoury characters?

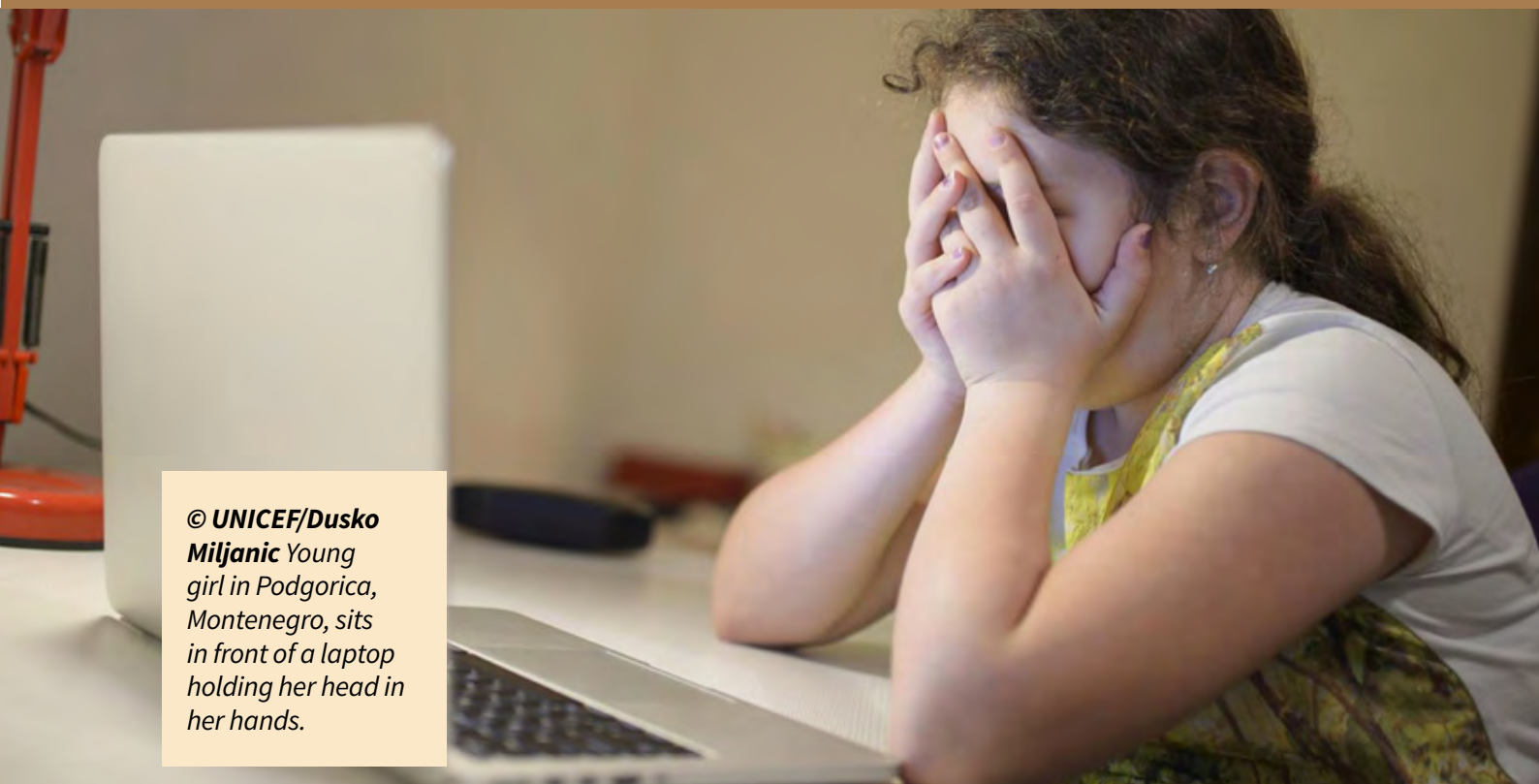


SDG 17:

**Victim-centred
laws ‘paramount’
to combat online
sexual abuse against
children**



SDG 17: Victim-centred laws 'paramount' to combat online sexual abuse against children



© UNICEF/Dusko
Miljanic Young
girl in Podgorica,
Montenegro, sits
in front of a laptop
holding her head in
her hands.

United Nations, 11 February 2020, UN News - Comprehensive national strategies are urgently needed to prevent child sexual abuse online and other Internet issues for children, independent UN human rights experts said on Tuesday, Safer Internet Day.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, [UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children](#), expressed concern over an unprecedented spike in reports of child sexual abuse material online, noting the scale and complexity of the problem and the enormous harm it is causing.

“By virtue of their commitments under several human rights treaties, States have the primary responsibility to establish a comprehensive legal framework and strategies to protect children in the digital environment, encompassing the early detection of cases, appropriate services, child-friendly reporting mechanisms and effective remedies,” the experts [said](#). “Victim-centred laws and policies are of paramount importance and perpetrators must be held to account.”

According to the experts, “States must ensure that the IT [information technology] industry has mechanisms to detect, report and block child sexual exploitation material”.

They must establish tools to monitor the hosting of child abuse materials within their jurisdictions. They must also ensure that the private sector is effectively collaborating with law enforcement, to guarantee that their networks and services are not misused for criminal purposes and to gather evidence for criminal proceedings.”



Prioritize prevention

Ms. de Boer-Buquicchio called for the IT industry to provide more resources and technical expertise to curb abuse online.

She also pointed out that “financial coalitions” against child pornography have significantly impacted the detection of abuse and must be expanded.

The experts noted that as digital technologies provide anonymity to generate, host and consume child sexual abuse materials, the Internet industry is uniquely placed to act as a conduit for reporting suspicious behaviour, blocking inappropriate material, and reinforcing key safety messages.

“Prevention must be prioritized, including through education programmes and awareness-raising campaigns targeting children,” the experts stated.

They observed the need to “act together, better and faster”, to end online violence against children by 2030, “ensuring that digital media are not used to perpetrate crimes against children”.

Tackling the issue

Children themselves are among the most important actors in combating the issue.

“They must be involved and empowered to act as drivers of change, with particular attention to the most vulnerable, to ensure no child is left behind,” said Najat Maalla M’jid, [UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children](#).

And the [UN Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy](#) Joseph Cannataci said it was “the responsibility of both the State and the private sector to educate children and teenagers about safety on social media platforms and the Internet”.

“Embrace technology through a child-centred perspective -- UN Experts”

Potential for good

The experts also noted the Internet’s enormous potential for good. Ms. de Boer-Buquicchio underscored the need to “embrace technology through a child-centred perspective by prompting an empowering, inclusive and safe digital agenda for children”.

“We must integrate the issue of new technologies and their impact on children’s rights into existing initiatives and processes, including the Decade of Action to deliver the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) by 2030,” she concluded.

Special Rapporteurs are appointed by the Geneva-based [UN Human Rights Council](#) to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Another challenge that family-oriented theme parks and attractions can adopt as their individual agenda. Teaming up to find ways of addressing this would go a long way to spreading awareness, securing funds and promoting healthier families. That can only be good for the bottom-line.



SDG 17:

**At Stockholm road
safety summit,
global call to
end 'scourge' of
preventable deaths**



SDG 17: At Stockholm road safety summit, global call to end ‘scourge’ of preventable deaths



Mikael Ullén Representatives and participants from more than 80 countries at the 3rd Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety taking place in Stockholm, Sweden.

United Nations, 19 February 2020, UN News - Road traffic accidents take some 1.35 million lives every year and cost most countries three per cent of their gross domestic product, the top UN health official said on Wednesday as the Third Global Ministerial Conference On Road Safety kicked off in Stockholm, Sweden.

According to the UN World Health Organization (WHO), road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29 years.

The millions of lives lost every year due to road traffic collisions is “an outrage”, said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “It is an unacceptable price to pay for mobility”.

Moreover, 93 per cent of the world’s road fatalities occur in low- and middle-income countries, even though these nations have approximately 60 per cent of the world’s vehicles.

“Most road traffic deaths and injuries can be prevented, using tried and tested strategies,” stated the WHO chief.

“This conference is an opportunity for the world to embrace a new agenda to radically reduce the number of lives lost on our roads and re-think how we can provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all.”

In his opening statement, the King of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustaf, said the conference “represents an opportunity to link the road safety challenge to other sustainability challenges, such as climate change, health, equality, poverty and human rights”.

Headway on road safety

Many countries have made progress through road safety management and better legislation around risks – such as speeding, drinking and



failing to use seatbelts, and infrastructure – including safer sidewalks and dedicated bicycle lanes.

Positive changes depend on strong leadership and political will at the highest level of government and in close collaboration with civil society and the private sector.

In collaboration with WHO, Sweden hosted the more than 1,700 participants from some 140 countries at the Conference on Road Safety where delegates shared successes and lessons learned, while charting strategic directions for global road safety, and defining ways to fast-track progress around proven strategies to save lives.

The Chairman's conclusions, called the Stockholm Declaration, were presented by Swedish Infrastructure Minister Tomas Eneroth, and called for strong political will and international cooperation, along with partnerships across society.

It also connects road safety to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), laying out recommendations to accelerate action towards halving global road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030.

Previously, UN Secretary-General, António Guterres had said that saving lives by improving road safety was “one of the many objectives of the 2030 Agenda”.

UN Road Safety Fund

The Conference also saw the UN Road Safety Fund unveil 10 new projects that will target key gaps in the road safety systems of 12 countries. With a total budget of nearly \$4 million, these projects will scale the Fund's geographical and programmatic footprint in the coming months.

Maring the occasion, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt said: “When the Fund launched the 2019 Call for Proposals, the Advisory Board, of which I am a member, had one clear priority – projects must demonstrate a chain of results leading to tangible impact on the number of fatalities and injuries on the road. I am convinced that these selected projects will accelerate progress in this direction.”



World Bank Seven-thousand four-hundred shoes, each pair representing one of the road crash victims who die every day.

Getting serious about road safety

Meanwhile, Etienne Krug, Director at WHO's Department of Social Determinants of Health, in a commentary, painted a haunting picture of a new mode of transport that while offering speed and comfort, would kill 1.3 million people per year and injure 50 million more. The UN official explained that half of those killed voluntarily used the system, while the others just happen to be in the vicinity, at "the wrong place at the wrong time".

"No sane government would permit it!", he stressed.

Noting that the declaration from ministers and stakeholders in Stockholm would "pave the way for the necessary political will and additional innovative approaches to drive progress towards halving global road traffic deaths and injuries by 2030", he said, "Let's hope the right decision is taken now, so that we can move quickly towards a safe, healthy, and clean transport system for everyone".

IMPORTANCE TO TRAVEL & TOURISM

Shocking statistics here. Clearly, another major killer, far worse than terrorism, but largely ignored. How many of those accidents involve tour coaches? Does the Travel & Tourism industry tally any of these figures within its own ranks? Would be worth exploring.

