

'Surge in financing' needed to transform the world: UN chief

A "surge in financing and investments" is needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the United Nations plan of action agreed by Member States, to transform the world, the Secretary-General said on Monday.

António Guterres was speaking at the opening of the High Level [Meeting](#) on Financing the 2030 Agenda, at which he launched his [Strategy to support Financing the 2030 Agenda](#).

He was joined by [Christine Lagarde](#), Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), several Heads of State and Government, as well as senior representatives of leading companies – including the founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates – and philanthropic foundations.

The financing needs of the 2030 Agenda, said Mr. Guterres, are immense, in the order of between \$5 and \$7 trillion per year.

Whilst some progress has been made in mobilizing resources, he said that urgent action is needed to drive progress: "that means galvanizing political support across governments and local communities; building momentum for change in corporate boardrooms; and doing better in tapping resources that sit idle."

Mr. Guterres outlined three "essential action points" for developed countries: meeting the commitments made in the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#); continued support for developing countries in creating good governance measures and fighting illicit flows of capital; and stepping up efforts in developing innovative financing and in mobilizing private investment.

The Secretary-General's new Strategy to support Financing the 2030 Agenda builds on existing efforts and proposes urgent action to achieve three objectives: aligning global financial and economic policies with the 2030 Agenda, enhance sustainable financial strategies at the regional and country levels, and exploit the potential of financial innovations, new technologies and digitalization to provide equitable access to finance.

On this latter point, Mr. Guterres announced that he had tasked [Achim Steiner](#), head of the United Nations Development Programme, [UNDP](#), with setting up a Task Force on the Digital Financing of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Speaking on behalf of the IMF, Christine Lagarde said that the organization's objective is sustainable development for all, "making sure that all girls and boys have a fair chance to thrive, to flourish, to develop their capacities no matter who they are or where they were born," and that the "essence of sustainable development growth is to eradicate poverty, eliminate deprivation for a fairer world that respects the limits of nature."



UN Photo/Evan Schneider

Bill Gates speaking at the High-Level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, at UN Headquarters in New York, on 24 September 2018.

Bill Gates underlined the ways in which philanthropic organizations, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, play an important role in advancing the system, using innovative tools that allow them to invest in new technologies, make innovation less risky, and address market failures, and pointing out that the development finance system is key to achieving the objectives of the SDGs.

Mr. Guterres concluded by reminding those present that, “by investing in the Sustainable Development Goals, we invest in the future, ensuring a world in which we strive for peace, stability and prosperity that leaves no one behind.”

You can find out more about the financing of the 2030 Agenda [here](#).

[UN News Daily #UNGA Guide: General Debate kicks off, peacekeeping, human rights for all and South-Sudan](#)

Every year, in September, global leaders and change-makers gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York for two weeks, to discuss the burning issues of our time and set the global agenda for the year ahead. The 73rd session of

the [UN General Assembly](#) opened this week and the body's annual high-level segment – formally known as the 'general debate' – begins on Tuesday, 25 September, where every country's leader gets to address the world.

“Humanity cries for justice” ICC President says, underscoring importance of Criminal Court

Amidst a slew of high-level events at United Nations Headquarters in New York on Monday, Judge Chile Eboe-Osuji, President of the International Criminal Court (ICC) underscored in an interview with UN News that “humanity cries for justice,” and that “no country can do it alone.”

He pointed out that there are more conflicts in the world today than in 1998, when the Rome Statute established the Court to address genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Judge Eboe-Osuji deflected the significance of remarks reportedly made by the US national security advisor earlier this month, that the ICC was an “illegitimate court,” urging countries to focus on why the Rome Statute was adopted.

In response to the advisor John Bolton's reported remarks indicating that the US would be prepared to ban ICC judges and prosecutors from entering the country, should a proposed investigation into alleged US war crimes in Afghanistan go ahead, the Judge calmly responded that it was “unfortunate that that kind of threat was made,” but again stressed the importance of focusing on “why we have the Rome Statute.”

“The world needs the United States in the ICC...[especially] because they have a long history and experience of supporting these sorts of efforts to address violations,” he said, noting the Nuremberg trials after the Second World War, in which the American judicial system “led the way.”

Judge Eboe-Osuji also pointed out that in response to problems in the former Yugoslavia, genocide in Rwanda and war crimes committed in the Sierra Leone civil war, “the United States played a strong role in insisting that justice must be done post-conflict, and that was done.”

“We do want them to come to the ICC and do the same thing, they know how to do it, they know how to assist.”

we have to keep our eyes on the ball – *ICC President Judge Chile*

“That is what is more important,” he stated, “we have to keep our eyes on the ball.”

“We cannot be distracted, by whatever reasons some people feel irritated by what the Court does,” adding that it would continue to do its work.

He said it was important “for everyone to keep in mind that there are strong systems in place around the Rome Statue that ensures that there is no unfair prosecution against anyone.”

“There is no need for anyone to get carried away at the beginning of the process, even before any preliminary examination or investigation has been begun,” he said, elaborating on the very long process of the Court.

“Humanity cries for justice,” he said, adding that “no country can do it alone..The world needs a collective effort to solve collective problems.”

Private business must be a ‘driving force’ for securing peace, curbing climate change: Guterres

The rate of sustainable development is “too slow” and private business has a major role to play in speeding it up, while also slowing the runaway pace of climate change that threatens the entire world with catastrophe, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said Monday.

“I am deeply concerned with the fact that climate change is running faster than we are,” he warned the Private Sector Forum, on the eve of the UN General Assembly’s 73rd General Debate, stressing that Governments are losing momentum in achieving the goal of keeping global warming, well below 2 degrees Celsius above industrial levels, by the end of the century.

“I think we need to raise the alarm. Not only are things getting worse than expected, what we are witnessing in the world is more dramatic than the worst forecasts that scientists have made a few years ago,” he added.

“I strongly believe that the business community can be the driving force together with civil society to make sure that everybody understands that to meet the goals defined in the Paris Agreement (on limiting global warming) is essential, and that not only do we have to be able to respond to the commitments made but we need to have an enhanced ambition and to make stronger commitments,” he said.

“We count on the private sector to be a driving force to push governments to assume their responsibilities in this very important aspect of our commitments.”

Hosted annually by the UN Global Compact, a UN partnership with the business community, the Private Sector Forum brings together leading business executives and investors, Heads of State and Government, senior UN leadership and select civil society representatives to take part in an interactive discussion.

SDGs ‘not moving fast enough’

Turning to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which seek to eliminate a host of social ills in an environmentally friendly way by 2030, Mr. Guterres highlighted the “very important role” of business leaders in mobilizing civil society, business communities and all other relevant actors.

“We are not moving fast enough,” he said. “When one looks at what is happening in the global economy, we are moving more or less in the right direction in the majority of them (SDGs), but too slow.”

Noting that the Global Compact is based on a set of values combining peace, development and human rights, he singled out creating jobs for youth as probably “the most important tool we have today” in preventing conflict.

“And so, if companies do their job properly; if companies do their job in the respect for these values and create richness and wealth and help to have communities with cohesion by the way they are integrated in the communities where they operate, companies are indeed contributing decisively for peace,” he declared.

Yemen: amid major roadblocks, an ‘unprecedented’ response to an unprecedented tragedy

Despite continuing challenges in Yemen, the United Nations and partners have provided a robust humanitarian response to the world’s largest humanitarian crisis, thanks to major donor support. However, as the situation continues to worsen for civilians across the country, aid agencies [warned on Monday](#) that international aid efforts must be sustained to avoid a major catastrophe and called for a political end to the conflict.

During a high-level event at UN Headquarters in New York, chaired by UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock, officials of the humanitarian and donor

communities exchanged views on the scale of the need, what has been accomplished so far, and the roadblocks which remain across Yemen.

A tragedy of unprecedented proportions

The event started with the UN Humanitarian Coordinator [Lise Grande](#) stating that “there is no other place in the world where people are suffering so greatly”.

The unprecedented scope and depth of the crisis in Yemen, now in its fourth year, has been repeatedly reported: three-quarters of the population require some form of basic assistance to survive; over 2 million internally displaced; 16 million in need of medical help. The figures are near-impossible to grasp.

The Humanitarian Coordinator painted a concrete picture: “One child is dying every 10 minutes because of the conflict... 70 per cent of girls are being married before 18 as a coping strategy... 8.3 million people have absolutely no idea when they wake up in the morning where their meal will come from... one in four Yemenis are malnourished...”

She also explained that the country’s currency, the Yemeni Rial, has [depreciated by 300 per cent](#) compared to pre-crisis rates. “If the depreciation continues, we believe 12 million people could be at risk of starvation”, she stressed.

Conflict in Yemen – already one of the poorest countries in the world before the crisis – escalated in March 2015, when an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia intervened militarily at the request of the Yemeni presidency. Airstrikes and ground-fighting have become a daily occurrence for millions of civilians. “It is officially estimated that 16,000 people have been killed,” said Ms. Grande. “The real numbers are probably a lot higher,” she added.

Hundreds of thousands of families no longer have a regular source of income – including teachers, health workers, water and sanitation workers and other public servants. They have not been paid a regular salary in two years.

The Humanitarian Coordinator noted that the situation is particularly desperate in Hudaydah, an opposition-held governorate in western Yemen, where “vulnerability levels” are the worst and where, in the past three months alone, half a million people have been forced to flee their homes.

The world’s largest humanitarian response

Lise Grande stressed that “humanitarians have been and will continue to do everything they can do” to address these devastating levels of need.

To date, the humanitarian response, called “very efficient” by Mr. Lowcock, has achieved a lot. This led several of the high-level representatives attending the event, including the Yemeni Minister of Foreign Affairs and various top donors, to congratulate the humanitarian community.

According to Ms. Grande, the more than 150 relief organisations in Yemen are reaching “more people in absolute terms and a higher percentage of the population than in any other humanitarian response” in the world.

To name only some of the achievements listed by the Humanitarian Coordinator, every month, 8 million Yemenis receive food assistance; 1.7 children and pregnant or lactating women are receiving nutritional support; millions are receiving emergency cash transfers; over 1 million people are receiving protection services; and a third cholera outbreak was avoided with medical teams responding within 24 hours, instead of one week as was the case in 2017.

The Director-General of the [World Health Organization](#), Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, noted that 11 million people have been reached with vital health services, including vaccinations against cholera, diphtheria and polio. In addition, 2,000 disease surveillance sites have been established with trained personnel so any response required can happen in a timely fashion.

The expansion of the humanitarian operation across the country was made possible thanks to three factors, said the Humanitarian Coordinator: deconfliction, strong collaboration with the Government and local actors; and the support of donors above all.

Priorities ahead and remaining roadblocks

Ms. Grande listed three priorities for humanitarian organisations: reduce hunger and roll back malnutrition; prevent another cholera outbreak; and protect civilians at any cost.

She also provided the international community with a long list of requirements, topped by the need for the warring parties to stop fighting. “Humanitarians cannot solve the conflict in Yemen, only politicians can,” she stated.

Humanitarians cannot solve the conflict in Yemen, only politicians can – UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Yemen, Lise Grande

Other requirements included: the need for ports to remain open, the creation of a line of credit for importers of basic commodities, the creation of a medical aid corridor, the transfer millions of dollars in cash directly to families in need, as well as additional unearmarked funds for the response to continue.

These requirements were echoed by the other high-level speakers of the event, including WHO’s Dr. Tedros, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees [Kelly Clements](#), and the CEO of Save the Children International Helle Thorning-Schmidt who said that “saving lives in Yemen is an uphill battle” due to the many challenges faced by aid groups.

According to the UN [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#) ([OCHA](#)), organizer of the event, impediments to humanitarian action include

movement restrictions, attempted interference and harassment, fluctuating commercial import levels, and collapsing basic health, education, water and sanitation services.

Closing the event, the United Kingdom, Canada Kuwait, the USA and Denmark pledged their continued support to the international response to the Yemen crisis.