

Consuming and producing sustainably, a 'cornerstone' for reaching 2030 Global Goals, UN Forum stresses

A reckoning on the importance of maximising the world's resources is taking place across the world, and achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 depends heavily on reeling in our global consumption and production patterns, a key United Nations forum heard on Thursday.

That was one focus on the fourth day of the [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#), currently taking place at UN Headquarters in New York, when delegates debated the best way to make SDG 12 a reality, highlighting what countries consume and produce.

Production and consumption activities lie at the core of our societies and our global economy, delegates heard. Ensuring that they are driven by sustainable policies and practices is therefore crucial in achieving many other goals of the Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda such as poverty alleviation, carbon emission reduction and general environmental protection.

"Goal 12 lies at the heart and soul of the 2030 Agenda," said Peter Thomson, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, adding that it presents us "with a rational plan to secure the future of our species on Planet Earth, providing a train of cost-efficient and effective ways to achieve economic development, harmonize our relationship with the environment, and advance the well-being of humanity".

Goal 12 lies at the heart and soul of the 2030 Agenda – Peter Thomson, UN Ocean Envoy

Currently, mass extraction of raw materials is taking place in low-income countries to support the fast-paced consumption practices of higher-income nations. Statistics from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs ([DESA](#)) show that developed countries have at least double the per-capita footprint of developing countries. According to experts, the path to sustainable consumption requires that our societies make efforts on three different fronts: the use of fewer resources, the reduction of waste production and accelerated recycling.

"We see a better future in the movement away from economic models that value growth for growth's sake, towards models that respect planetary boundaries and support a vision of humanity living in harmony with nature," said Mr. Thomson.

Progress is underway. To date, 93 per cent of the world's 250 largest companies are now reporting on sustainability, as are three-quarters of the

top 100 companies in 49 countries. In addition, in 2018, at least 108 countries have now developed policies and initiatives designed to improve the way people, companies and Governments consume and produce.

Further progress will require that Government decision-makers, the private sector and individuals, join forces, the Forum's panelists insisted, as some of the challenges that remain to be overcome are a lack of institutional linkages between the various actors, a lack of technical capacity and the continued exclusion of vulnerable groups from the discussion.

The HLPF, which meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council ([ECOSOC](#)) and which will run this year through 18 July, brings together more than 1,000 Government, business and civil society leaders to share lessons learnt and best practices and discuss progress made towards the SDGs adopted by 193 Member States in 2015, based on the UN Secretary-General's annual [progress report](#).

This year's Forum focuses on six of the 17 goals: To ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (Goal 6); To provide access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (Goal 7); To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11); To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (Goal 12); To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and biodiversity loss (Goal 15); and To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, that will be considered each year (Goal 17).

[“Remain calm, exercise restraint,” advises UN Security Council following violent protests in Haiti](#)

While acknowledging the right to peaceful assembly, the United Nations [Security Council](#) has strongly condemned recent violence in Haiti, sparked by protests against a government announcement of fuel price increases, reportedly of up to 50 per cent, last Friday.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the Council condemned “all acts of violence and attacks on civilians, which have resulted in several deaths, and expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of those killed.”

The initial policy change sparked widespread looting in the capital Port-au-Prince and other cities over the weekend, during which at least three were

killed, and all international flights were cancelled.

Even though the Haitian Government backed away from the price hike on Saturday, and flights have resumed, protesters continued to clash with police on Monday, according to news reports.

The Council statement called for the immediate cessation of all forms of violence and for those responsible for crimes to be held accountable.

Council Members called on “all parties in Haiti to remain calm, exercise restraint, and to avoid acts that could contribute to instability,” underlining the importance of “respecting the rule of law and democratic order and not resorting to violence or criminal activity.”



MINUJUSTH

United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) and United Nations Police (UNPOL) personnel attend to the remnants of three days of violent protests in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 9 July 2018.

The Council also expressed support for the Government “to work with all key actors to quickly restore order, ensure the security of people and property, and overcome the challenges faced by the country.”

Its members recognized the important role of the Haitian National Police, with support from the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti ([MINUJUSTH](#)), in protecting the civilian population and maintaining public order.

MINUJUSTH called for “constructive dialogue” to restore security in the capital Port-au-Prince.

“The members of the Security Council reiterated their support for MINUJUSTH, working closely with the UN Country Team, in assisting the Government and the people of Haiti in their efforts to consolidate the security gains made in recent years, to promote the rule of law, and to bring lasting stability to

their country,” the Council statement concluded.

[UN emergency fund releases \\$15 million to help Ethiopians affected by inter-communal violence](#)

A United Nations emergency fund on Thursday released \$15 million to urgently scale up humanitarian assistance to people affected by escalating inter-communal violence in Ethiopia.

Historical tensions between communities in southern Ethiopia escalated during April, leading to loss of life, widespread property damage and large-scale displacements.

“Nearly one million people are displaced and require urgent help, especially during this rainy season,” said [Secretary-General António Guterres](#), noting that releasing money from the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is one of the fastest ways to ensure aid reaches those who need it the most.

Those one million people, including children, often find shelter with relatives who are struggling themselves to secure enough food, or living in overcrowded public buildings, without adequate food and water, and with substandard sanitation and hygiene facilities.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, new measures to bring unity and reconciliation have spurred great enthusiasm within the country and the enthusiastic support of the international community, Mr. Guterres said.

“However, the impact of inter-communal tensions presents a challenge for the new leadership. It is critical to act immediately,” he said.

CERF’s allocation will enable humanitarian partners to scale up life-saving assistance in support of the Government-led response. More than 36,600 people will receive urgent nutrition assistance; some 600,000 people will be supported with water, sanitation and hygiene service; around 71,200 households will receive non-food item kits and 175,000 people will benefit from extra healthcare services.

This year’s Ethiopia Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Plan requires \$1.6 billion to reach millions of people with food and non-food support.

In late June, the Government of Ethiopia and humanitarian partners launched a joint Response Plan requesting an additional \$117.7 million for the coming six months to deliver immediate life-saving help for those affected by the

inter-communal violence in the border of Gedeo and West Guji zones in the country's south.

Established by the General Assembly in 2005 as a global fund 'by all, for all,' CERF has assisted hundreds of millions of people with more than \$5 billion across 100 countries and territories.

[‘Multilateralism in action’ says UN chief, ahead of expected agreement on migration compact](#)

With the General Assembly set to agree a new global compact on migration, the United Nations chief on Thursday highlighted its "immense potential" to harness the benefits of orderly migration and lower the risks facing millions on the move without documentation.

"Migration is a positive global phenomenon," [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) told a press conference at UN Headquarters, with negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration expected to conclude on Friday in New York, for formal adoption in December in Marrakesh.

"Migrants are a remarkable engine for growth," Mr. Guterres stressed, noting that they number more than 250 million around the world, making up 3 per cent of the global population and contributing 10 per cent of the overall global gross domestic product.

Yet more than 60,000 people on the move have died since 2000 – at sea, in the desert and elsewhere, he warned. And often, migrants and refugees are "demonized and attacked".

Migrants are a remarkable engine for growth – *Guterres*

The UN chief said the Compact has three important objectives.

First, to reorient national development policies and international development cooperation to take migration into account, and create opportunities for people to work and live in dignity at home.

Second, he said, it was vital to strengthen international cooperation against smugglers and human traffickers, and to protect their victims. "Smuggling and trafficking are criminal activities; migration is not", said the UN chief.

Third, he called for more opportunities on the part of nations worldwide, to

broaden legal migration.

Mr. Guterres said that many aging developed countries need migrants to fill crucial gaps in labour markets. Climate change and other factors, “including simple human aspiration, will continue to lead people to seek opportunity far from their homes”.

“If migration is inevitable, it needs to be better organized through effective international cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination, so that we do not leave control of movements of people in the hands of smugglers,” he said.

Turning to consultations on a Global Compact on Refugees, which were concluded last week for consideration by the General Assembly at the end of the year, Mr. Guterres said that the vast majority of the world’s refugees are hosted in developing countries that themselves face constraints.

“This responsibility must be shared globally,” he said.

The two global compacts are being developed, following the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, in which 193 Member States adopted the so-called New York Declaration – an overarching plan to manage large movements of refugees and migrants.

“The two Global Compacts were the product of intense and inclusive consultations bringing together a wide range of actors, including migrants and refugees themselves,” Mr. Guterres said. “These agreements show multilateralism in action and give us a strong platform for progress.”

Zero tolerance on sexual harassment

At the press conference on Thursday, the Secretary-General also gave an update on UN action to tackle sexual harassment in-house.

He said he has created a specialized team within the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to focus on sexual harassment investigations, with six new investigator posts approved.

Measures undertaken also include fast-tracked and streamlined procedures to receive, process and address complaints on sexual harassment, a 24-hour “Speak Up” hotline, a first-of-its-kind Secretariat staff survey to be launched, and revamped mandatory training on sexual harassment.

All sexual harassment reports are now considered Category 1, which means they will all be investigated by OIOS, not using any of the intermediate areas of investigation that in the past were possible, he added.

“But all of that is not enough. Since the challenge is system-wide our action must be as well,” he said, noting that he encouraged agencies throughout the UN family to adopt similar measures.

Hearing 'horrific' testimonies from rape survivors in South Sudan, UN envoy says they yearn only for peace

Since the start of the conflict in South Sudan, widespread and systematic sexual violence has been a pervasive tactic of war and terror, said a high-level United Nations envoy, after visiting the war-torn country and hearing "horrific" testimonies.

Pramila Patten, UN [Special Representative](#) on Sexual Violence and Conflict, told reporters that she had been "alarmed to hear about the increasing climate of intimidation" in which civil society organisations work, "including attacks against those providing [services to sexual violence survivors](#)."

The world's youngest country, South Sudan has been wracked by violence and humanitarian crisis since late 2013, following a descent into faction fighting between forces loyal to the President and then Vice-President.

As part of a joint UN–African Union visit, led by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed from 3 to 7 July, Ms. Patten met government officials and religious leaders, among others.

She toured sites protecting displaced civilians in Malakal and around the capital Juba, and spoke with survivors of sexual violence, who continue to live in acutely vulnerable situations.

"The testimonies I heard were horrific: men being systematically killed, the elderly and sick being burned alive, the genitals of young boys being mutilated or cut off, and women and girls being gang-raped – often to death," she continued.

"In this context, sexual violence serves as a lethal tactic of war and a 'push factor' for forced displacement," she added.

Ms. Patten spoke to women in the protection camps who lamented the lack of food, health services and opportunities to make a living for themselves and their families. The main hope and desire of these women was "the desire for peace," she stated.

Although the women walk in groups collecting firewood to reduce attack risks, they need to venture beyond camp, still frequently assaulted by soldiers lurking in the high grass.

"Yet," she explained, "they have few alternatives, as they cannot ask male

community members for help.”

In the words of one woman: “Our men would get killed, whereas we only get raped.”

“All of the women I spoke with said that they wanted to see the perpetrators punished,” said the Special Representative, “yet sexual violence is fueled and exacerbated by impunity on a massive scale.”



UNMISS

Pramila Patten, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, gives a press conference during her visit to South Sudan, 6 July 2018.

Government officials affirmed their willingness to implement an agreed Joint UN Communiqué to end sexual violence and Cessation of Hostilities, she said, and to measure progress, an action plan had been drawn up to hold perpetrators of sexual violence within the army to account, she said.

This month, she said she would deploy experts to South Sudan to provide technical assistance; and also brief the Security Council and South Sudan Sanctions Committee on her findings, including sexual violence among the criteria for sanctions.

She underscored that a “permanent ceasefire” must be respected by all sides, and should also include the cessation of all forms of sexual violence.

Ms. Patten said it was “critical” that the authorities investigate all alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed, as well as other alleged atrocity crimes.

She commended the UN and AU efforts towards facilitating a lasting peace, recognizing the “extremely challenging” environment and called for increased donor support.

A disturbing report

The [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR) and the [UN Mission in South Sudan](#) (UNMISS) released a report on Tuesday revealing indiscriminate attacks against civilians in Southern Unity State in which at least 120 women and girls, as young as four-years-old, were raped and gang-raped by the army and associated forces in Koch and Leer county. Witnesses indicate that those who resisted rape were shot.

The report further documented 15 incidents of abduction involving at least 132 women and girls, for the purposes of sexual slavery and forced labor.