

Millions of young lives 'at risk' says UN labour chief, calling for an end to child labour

No child under the age of 18 should be toiling in mines, fields, factories and homes, carrying heavy loads or working long hours, the head of the UN labour agency said on Tuesday, marking World Day against Child Labour.

“Many suffer lifelong physical and psychological consequences. Their very [lives can be at risk](#)”, said [International Labour Organization](#) (ILO) Director-General Guy Ryder in his message for the Day, calling for urgent global action to end common dangers associated with child labour.

About 73 million children are involved in doing hazardous work – almost half of the 152 million children aged 5 to 17 across the world, who are still forced into child labour.

“These children are toiling in mines and fields, factories and homes, exposed to pesticides and other toxic substances, carrying heavy loads or working long hours”, he said.

The [World Day](#), which was first marked under the auspices of the ILO in 2002, draws attention to the global extent of child labour and the efforts needed to eliminate it.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by world leaders in 2015, include a renewed global commitment to [ending child labour](#).

Although the overall number of children in hazardous work has decreased in recent years, progress has been limited to older children.

Between 2012 and 2016, according to ILO, the number of children aged 5 to 11, doing dangerous work in contravention international treaties, increased.

“This is unacceptable”, Mr. Ryder said.

Agriculture accounts for most of child labour

Nearly three out of every four children made to work, are in the [agriculture](#) sector, according to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO).

After years of steady decline, child labour on farms and in the fields, has started to rise again, driven in part by an increase in conflicts and climate-induced disasters.

This worrisome trend, not only threatens the wellbeing of millions of children, but also undermines efforts to end global hunger and poverty, FAO warned.

“Children who work long hours are likely to continue to swell the ranks of the hungry and poor”, said FAO Deputy Director-General Daniel Gustafson. “As their families depend on their work, this deprives the children of the opportunity to go to school, which in turn prevents them from getting decent jobs and income in the future”.

ILO’s conventions on child labour, namely the Minimum Age Convention of 1973 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention of 1999, require governments to establish a national list of hazardous work, prohibited for children.

These treaties have been ratified by 171 and 181 ILO member States respectively, reflecting a near global commitment to end child labour in all its forms.

[US-North Korea summit ‘an important milestone’ towards denuclearization, says Guterres](#)

Tuesday’s historic summit between the leaders of the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) has been hailed as [“an important milestone”](#) by the UN Secretary-General.

US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un concluded their meeting in Singapore by signing a statement covering issues that included a pledge from North Korea to complete the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and end its nuclear weapons programme.

In a statement issued by his Spokesman, UN chief António Guterres urged the parties “to seize this momentous opportunity”.

For the Secretary-General, the summit was “an important milestone in the advancement of sustainable peace and the complete and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula.”

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)) has also welcomed the outcome of the talks that took place over the course of several hours in Singapore, which was the first time that a sitting US President had sat down face-to-face, with a leader of DPRK.

IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said the agency [stands ready](#) to undertake any nuclear verification activities in North Korea, if requested.

Last September, the IAEA established a team in its Department of Safeguards to enhance its ability to monitor the country’s nuclear programme.

At the time, Pyongyang had just launched its sixth and largest nuclear test since it began its programme, in 2006.

With realities shifting in Darfur, operations on the ground 'must change', urges UN official

The African Union-United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur “must change” in accordance with the shifting realities on the ground, the Organization’s top peacekeeping official said on Monday, highlighting the need to “closely link” the mission’s drawdown to the scaling up of both peacekeeping and development activities.

“The peacekeeping mission ([UNAMID](#)) should be directed to the area where it is most needed, namely at the site of continued conflict in the Jebel Marra,” Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the UN Under-Secretary-General for peacekeeping operations, told the Security Council on Monday.

“In the rest of Darfur, the UN system should leverage the capabilities of the agencies, funds and programmes best suited to tackling the problems that remain there.”

Presenting a [special report](#) from the UN Secretary-General and the AU Commission Chairperson, Mr. Lacroix outlined two “central concepts” behind a new two-year strategy – each supporting the other.

The first, dealing with peacekeeping, would focus on protection of civilians, humanitarian support and mediation of local conflict.

The second central tenet, would, in effect, bridge the evolution from peacekeeping to early recovery and development, in collaboration with the UN country team serving Darfur, he added.

“The whole-of-system transition concept focuses on addressing the critical drivers of conflict and preventing relapse,” explained Mr. Lacroix.

For the roadmap to be realized, the senior UN official underscored the need to have longer-term funding arrangements in place and increase voluntary contributions from donors.

In addition, funds from the assessed budget would need to be used during the transition and in close collaboration with the Peacebuilding Support Office, to access sufficient resources, he added.

Also vital is the need for continued engagement and partnership with the AU

and backing of the Government of Sudan and UN Member States, he said.

“We believe that, working together, this new approach can help establish a future of UN and AU support to Darfur that will help to improve the lives of the Darfuri people now and in the long-term,” concluded Mr. Lacroix.

Central African Republic: UN chief condemns killing of peacekeeper; the second in a week

The United Nations chief has strongly condemned Sunday’s attack that killed a peacekeeper in the Central African Republic (CAR); the second ‘blue helmet’ to lose his life there in the space of a week.

“This brings to five, the number of peacekeepers killed in targeted attacks in the Central African Republic since January 2018, with [two attacks occurring in the span of a week](#),” UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said in a statement issued on behalf of [Secretary-General António Guterres](#).

The latest attack by armed insurgents on the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR, known by its French acronym MINUSCA, resulted in the killing of a peacekeeper from Burundi and the wounding of another while they were on patrol in Bambari, in the centre of the country.

On 3 June, [an attack](#) by armed insurgents killed a UN peacekeeper from Tanzania and injured seven others while they were patrolling in the country’s west.

The Secretary-General “urges the Central African Republic authorities to spare no effort in investigating and identifying the perpetrators so that they can be swiftly brought to justice,” Mr. Dujarric said, recalling that attacks against UN peacekeepers may constitute a war crime and that sanctions can be applied against perpetrators who are brought to justice.

In the statement, the Secretary-General offered his deepest condolences to the family of the deceased as well as to the Government of Burundi, and wished a swift recovery to the injured.

Paraguay's elimination of malaria 'shows what is possible' – UN health agency

Paraguay has successfully eliminated malaria, the United Nations health agency has announced, highlighting that the major milestone offers lessons to other countries aiming to control the mosquito-borne sickness.

According to the UN [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), the “[incredible achievement](#)” makes Paraguay the first country in the Americas in almost 45 years to wipe out the disease. Cuba was the last country in the region to eliminate malaria, in 1973.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of WHO, [attributed](#) the success to three key factors, the first of which was Paraguay's focus on tracking the disease and preventing outbreaks, not just treating cases.

“Second, a network of committed health staff and community volunteers ensured no one was left behind in getting universal access to primary health care,” he continued.

Also vital was the “unwavering commitment and leadership” at all levels, to keep malaria control efforts on track, added the head of WHO.

However, in spite of the success in Paraguay and in other countries, malaria remains a major health concern. In 2016, the disease resulted in 216 million cases worldwide and claimed 445,000 lives.

Mr. Tedros urged continued vigilance against the disease, noting that success in Paraguay “shows what is possible.”

“It gives us hope that if malaria can be eliminated in one country, it can be eliminated in all countries.”

The end of malaria in Paraguay

According to WHO, between 1950-2011, Paraguay systematically developed policies and programmes to control and eliminate the disease, a significant public health challenge for a country that reported more than 80,000 cases in the 1940s.

As a result, the South American country recorded its last case of *Plasmodium falciparum* malaria in 1995, and *P. vivax* malaria, in 2011.

In 2011, a five-year plan was launched to consolidate the gains, prevent re-establishment of transmission and prepare for elimination certification, said WHO.

Continued efforts against malaria identified Paraguay in 2016, as one of 21 countries with the potential to eliminate malaria by 2020, and receive support under WHO's E-2020 initiative.

Other countries on the list being supported through the E-2020 initiative, include Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Suriname.

Malaria: Symptoms and prevention

Malaria is a [life-threatening disease](#) caused by parasites (*P. falciparum*, *P. malariae*, *P. ovale* and *P. vivax*) that are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female *Anopheles* mosquitoes.

According to WHO, it takes between 10 and 15 days for symptoms to appear, after being infected.

The first symptoms – fever, headache, and chills – may be mild and difficult to recognize as malaria. If not treated within 24 hours, *P. falciparum* malaria can progress to severe illness, often leading to death.

Vector control is the main way to prevent and reduce malaria transmission.

WHO recommends protection for all people at risk of malaria with effective malaria vector control. Two forms of vector control – insecticide-treated mosquito nets and indoor residual spraying – have proven to be highly effective at preventing transmission.

Antimalarial medicines (chemoprophylaxis; or sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine for pregnant women) can also be used to prevent malaria.