

[UN chief encourages Korean leaders to act swiftly on agreements at 'historic' summit](#)

Following Friday's summit between the leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres expressed his hope that the two countries swiftly implement all agreed actions, including ridding the Peninsula of nuclear arms.

"The Secretary-General applauds today's [truly historic summit](#)," said Mr. Guterres' Spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric, in a statement. "Many around the world were moved by the powerful imagery of the two leaders coming together to advance harmony and peace on the Korean Peninsula."

According to the declaration signed by both leaders and released after the summit, the two nations agreed on a number of measures, including realizing the common goal of "complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," and pursuing phased military arms reduction and talks to declare an official end to the Korean War, which devastated the Peninsula from 1950 to 1953.

An armistice brought about a ceasefire to the Korean War in 1953, but the conflict never officially ended because the parties could not agree to a formal peace treaty.

"The Secretary-General salutes the courage and leadership that resulted in the important commitments and agreed actions outlined in the Panmunjom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula," noted the Spokesman.

The UN chief "counts on the parties to build on their first meeting and swiftly implement all agreed actions to further inter-Korean trust-building and reconciliation; sincere dialogue; and progress towards sustainable peace and verifiable denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula," Mr. Dujarric said, adding: The Secretary-General "looks forward to these gains being consolidated and advanced" at the US-DPRK summit expected to take place soon.

[UN rights experts voice concerns about 'structural racism' in United Kingdom](#)

United Nations human rights experts have expressed serious concerns about

racism rooted in the fabric of the United Kingdom's society, given the disproportionate number of people of African descent and of ethnic minorities dying due to excessive use of force by State security.

"The deaths reinforce the experiences of [structural racism](#), over-policing and criminalisation of people of African descent and other minorities in the UK," they said.

The UK Government last month responded to the concerns of the experts, recognising that further improvements were needed to develop solutions on healthcare in police custody, inquests and legal aid and support to families.

Data disclosed by the Metropolitan Police in August 2017 found that people of African descent and those belonging to ethnic minority groups, in particular young African and Caribbean men were twice as likely to die after the use of force by police officers and the subsequent lack or insufficiency of access to appropriate healthcare.

According to the experts, these deaths occurred in many circumstances, following the use of force involving firearms, tear gas agents, long handed batons, electroshock weapons; physical restraint resulting in the inhibition of the respiratory system and asphyxia; restraint equipment; and denial of appropriate healthcare.

"Failure to properly investigate and prosecute such deaths results in a lack of accountability for those individuals and State agencies responsible, as well as in the denial of adequate remedies and reparation for the families of the victims," they said.

The Government said it had commissioned the Ministerial Council on Deaths in Custody to implement the recommendations set out in the Report of the Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody, the experts said.

The UN experts include E. Tendayi Achiume, Special Rapporteur on racism, who will visit the UK from 30 April to 11 May at the invitation of the Government; Michal Balcerzak, Chairperson of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent; and Fernand de Varennes, Special Rapporteur on minority issues.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts 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.

Make mine Darjeeling: Locally identified foods promote sustainable development, UN study finds

Not just any peppers, but white Penja peppers, grown in volcanic soil in the Cameroon; not just any cabbage, but Futog cabbage, cultivated alongside the Danube in Serbia. The rising number of products with a specific and certified geographic origin, it turns out, not only have cachet among gourmards: they are also providing large economic and social benefits to rural areas and can foster sustainable development, according to a new study released by the UN agriculture agency.

Food products with trademarked geographical labels, which have specific qualities or reputations tied to their place of origin, already account for annual trade of more than \$50 billion worldwide, according to the report, [Strengthening sustainable food systems through geographical indications](#), by the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) (FAO) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The concept is not new: products from Bordeaux wine to Parmigiano cheese have had protected labeling for decades or centuries. But the idea is spreading and such products are taking off throughout developing countries and regions.

“Geographical indications are an approach to food production and marketing systems that place social, cultural and environment considerations at the [heart of the value chain](#),” said Emmanuel Hidier, Senior Economist in FAO’s Investment Centre.

“They can be a pathway to sustainable development for rural communities by promoting quality products, strengthening value chains, and improving access to more remunerative markets,” he added.

The report analyzes the economic impact of Geographical Indication registration in nine case studies: Colombian coffee, Darjeeling tea (India), Futog cabbage (Serbia), Kona coffee (United States), Manchego cheese (Spain), Penja pepper (Cameroon), Taliouine saffron (Morocco), Tête de Moine cheese (Switzerland) and Vale dos Vinhedos wine (Brazil).

For example, it reveals that by registering Penja pepper – grown in the Penja Valley’s volcanic soil in Cameroon and the first African product to receive the label – local farmers have increased their incomes six-fold.

“The process – from setting standards to registration and promotion – has benefited not only local farmers, but the whole local area in terms of revenues, productivity, the growth of other connected industries, and importantly, the inclusion of all stakeholders,” said Emmanuel Nzenowo, from the Penja Pepper producers’ association.

Gains from labeling surpass finances alone. The practice can also stimulate public-private sector dialogue, the report notes, as authorities are often associated closely with the registration and certification process.

While each country defines its own laws for registering their labels, they are regulated and protected under the [Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights](#), an international legal agreement among [World Trade Organization](#) members.

The report also recognizes potential pitfalls. Some small-scale or traditional producers may be excluded, for example, if specifications are overly complex. Environmental impacts must also be weighed and minimized.

But overall, the study finds, geographic labeling has had significant positive effects on prices of the trademarked goods, whether long-established or recently registered.

“The unique linkages of these products with their natural and cultural resources in local areas make them a useful tool in the advancement of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), in particular by preserving a food heritage and contributing to healthy diets,” said Florence Tartanac, Senior Officer in the FAO Nutrition and Food Systems Division.

['Gaza is about to explode,' UN envoy warns Security Council](#)

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is continuing with no prospects for a political resolution and “Gaza is about to explode,” a senior United Nations official said Thursday, urging both sides to avoid further clashes along the enclave’s border.

“Old wounds continue to bleed and deepen as we speak, [risking the outbreak of another war](#),” Nikolay Mladenov, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, told the Security Council during an open debate on the crises affecting the region.

While his briefing covered the situations in Syria, Yemen and Lebanon, it was largely focused on the unfolding crisis along the Gaza fence, which is at the tiny enclave’s border with Israel.

For the last four weeks, tens of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza have converged on the fence to protest the long-standing blockade of the enclave.

The so-called ‘Great March of Return’ demonstrations are expected to continue

and culminate around 15 May, and could spread to the West Bank and beyond, Mr. Mladenov said.

Since 30 March, during these demonstrations, 35 Palestinians have been killed and large numbers have been injured by Israeli security forces. No Israeli casualties have been reported, he added.

Israel has accused Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other militants of using the protests, women, children and the elderly, as a cover to infiltrate Israel and commit terrorist attacks.

The UN envoy urged Israel to calibrate its use of force and minimize the use of live fire, and called on Hamas – a Palestinian faction governing the enclave – and the leaders of the demonstrations to keep protestors away from the Gaza fence.

The combination of the security, development and humanitarian deterioration, coupled with the political impasse, makes Gaza “a powder keg,” Mr. Mladenov said, calling for action to prevent another war in the enclave, which was shaken by seven weeks of clashes in the summer of 2014 between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants.

“People should not be destined to spend their lives surrounded by borders they are forbidden to cross, or waters they are forbidden to navigate,” he said. “They should not be destined to live under the control of Hamas, which invests in militant activities at the expense of the population.”

He urged stepped-up efforts to support the parties in advancing a sustainable Israeli-Palestinian peace on the basis of the two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine co-existing peacefully as independent countries.

[Make every day a day for girls in ICT, says UN](#)

From Switzerland to Somalia girls are creating their own apps; they are programming the robots they build. On [Girls in Information and Communications Technologies](#) (ICT) Day, the United Nations is urging more girls to pursue careers in the fast-paced science and tech industry, generally regarded as a ‘boys-only’ club.

“Each time we introduce more women to the world of ICTs, not only do we take one more step towards achieving gender equality, but we accelerate socio-economic development for all,” said Brahima Sanou, the Director of Telecommunication Development at the United Nations International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)).

“In many countries, we are starting to see International Girls in ICT Day initiatives moving from one-day events to sustained, on-going programmes to teach girls about ICTs throughout the year.”

Held annually on the fourth Thursday in April, the International Day recognizes the importance of young women in science, technology, engineering and math, and to inform them of the vast potential in these fields.

Since its inception, over 300,000 girls and young women have taken part in more than 9,000 celebrations of International Day in 166 countries worldwide.

[Click here to see this year's commemorative events around the world.](#)

“The International Girls in ICT Day has become a global movement in which more girls and young women are learning about the wide range of fascinating opportunities ICT careers can offer,” said Houlin Zhao, the Secretary-General of ITU.

“It is essential that the public and private sectors, as well as academia, and civil society seize the momentum created by the International Day to leapfrog the number of girls pursuing careers in technology.”