

## At development financing forum, top UN officials urge breakaway from 'short-termism'

The United Nations will support countries' path to sustainable development by brokering partnerships, pursuing innovative finance, leveraging resources and building the necessary capacities, senior officials said Monday, highlighting the need for a change of mind-set from "short-termism" to long-term investments.

"I will count on world leaders and all of you to invest in a sustainable and prosperous future for all," [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said in his video message to the opening of the financing for development [follow-up forum](#) in New York.

The forum, organized by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will discuss the main findings of the [2018 report](#) of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, which provides a first assessment of progress made in such financing.

"Mobilizing [financial resources](#) is crucial for advancing human well-being and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," said Mr. Guterres, who will convene a High-level Meeting on Finance in September.

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, in her speech to the Forum, underscored [several areas](#) for attention.

"Domestic resource mobilization is fundamental," she said, stressing the need to unlock domestic capital and fight tax evasion, money laundering and illicit financial flows that erode domestic resource bases.

The deputy UN chief also highlighted the critical importance of development cooperation to supporting SDG implementation, calling on governments to meet their commitments on official development assistance.

Further, she called for a global environment supportive of long-term investment.

"Short-termism is a persistent threat to successful poverty eradication efforts," she said, explaining that most corporate executives – according to the recent Inter-Agency Task Force report – say they would delay investments in projects with positive returns in order to hit quarterly earnings targets.

Short-termism is a persistent threat to successful poverty eradication efforts – *Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed*

"This mindset needs to change," she stressed.

Ms. Mohammed also urged the international community to find ways to speedily unlock resources and access to finance for countries with urgent needs, such as those affected by crises or disasters.

Although there are some innovative solutions being devised in this area – such as insurance-like mechanisms that can be supported where needed, or loans that reduce repayment during crises – many of these are yet to be implemented or taken to scale, she said.

Also, the global community must dramatically scale up investments, she said. For example, to achieve universal access to clean water and sanitation, there is a need to triple the amount spent to around \$114 billion per year.

Finally, she said, governments and partners from the private sector must work more effectively to overcome current financing challenges.

General Assembly President Miroslav Lajčák said that the investment gap in developing countries alone is some \$2.5 trillion per year for major SDG sectors, given the much-quoted SDG price tag of \$7 trillion per annum.

“But we cannot aim to just throw money at the problem. Instead, we must have a strategic and targeted approach,” he said. “The Addis Ababa Action Agenda sets out the strategy. It calls for maximizing all kinds of resources to support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.”



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Miroslav Lajčák, President of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, addresses the Economic and Social Council’s third Financing for Development Forum, held during the 2018 session at UN Headquarters in New York.

“The Forum provides opportunities to dig deeper into questions of supporting implementation,” he added.

On Sunday, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized the [SDG Investment Fair](#) to provide a platform for direct interaction between 100-150 participants representing governments of developing countries, private sector investors, financial intermediaries and other relevant stakeholders.

“After all, it is the public sector that is responsible for establishing a regulatory and policy framework that encourages responsible long-term investment into the SDGs,” said Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, in his opening remarks. “At the same time, multilateral institutions continue to play an indispensable part in providing additional funding and catalyzing private and public investment.”

Marie Chatardová, ECOSOC President, said that a greatest challenge policymakers face in raising resources for sustainable development is excessive short-term decision-making in the private sector as managers’ compensation is often tied to short-term performance measures and benchmarks.

But “an increasing number of asset managers and owners have committed to integrate ESG criteria in their capital allocation process,” she said, referring to environmental, social and governance (ESG) indicators that have a material impact on returns.

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## **With threat of nuclear weapon use growing, non-proliferation treaty more vital than ever – UN official**

The United Nations disarmament chief said on Monday that the world today faces similar challenges to the context that gave birth to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and that the threat of use of nuclear weapons is growing.

“The geopolitical environment is deteriorating. Some of the most important instruments and agreements that comprise our collective security framework are being eroded. Rhetoric about the necessity and utility of nuclear weapons is on the rise. Modernization programmes by nuclear-weapon States are leading to what many see as a new qualitative arms race,” said Izumi Nakamitsu.

Ms. Nakamitsu, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, was among the speakers at the opening of the preparatory meeting that began today in Geneva for the 2020 NPT review conference.

The Treaty entered into force in 1970 at the height of the Cold War and is

regarded as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

It was designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to further the goals of nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament, and to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

“Half a century later the NPT has transcended its initial purpose and has become a core component of our international architecture – the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime and an essential framework for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament,” the High Representative noted.

“Its near universal membership, legally binding commitment to disarmament and verifiable non-proliferation safeguards undergird its status as one of the most successful and credible multilateral security instruments,” she stated.

“That success and that credibility cannot and should not be taken for granted.”

Today’s meeting takes place just days after the announcement by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) to freeze its ballistic missile programme and nuclear tests, a decision that has been welcomed by the UN.

Ms. Nakamitsu said that “the decision by the DPRK to suspend nuclear tests and launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles, and to dismantle its nuclear test site, are welcome developments which we hope will contribute to building trust and to sustaining an atmosphere for sincere dialogue and negotiations.”

She added that the Secretary-General looks forward to a positive outcome of the Inter-Korean Summit and hopes for early agreement on a framework for resumption of negotiations leading to verifiable denuclearization and sustainable peace on the Korean Peninsula.

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## [Youth ‘the missing peace’ to tackling global challenges, UN envoy tells Security Council](#)

Tapping the potential and creativity of young people is indispensable to prevent conflict and build peace, the United Nations youth envoy said Monday, urging governments to create conditions that allow their meaningful participation in civic and political lives.

Jayathma Wickramanayake, the UN Secretary-General’s [Envoy on Youth](#),

underlined three critical areas – supporting youth’s peace efforts; prioritizing their political participation; and partnering with them.

“I will not ask you to let young people lead, as they are already leading. But they need inclusive and safe spaces and enabling environments to succeed,” she said, speaking at an [open debate of the Security Council on youth, peace and security](#).

“Recognize [their work], fund it, scale it up, protect it.”

Ms. Wickramanayake also called for dispelling misconceptions surrounding youth, citing studies that illustrate only a small minority of young people ever engage in violence.

Yet, she added, they face suspicions and undue restrictions, including when it comes to travelling across borders and many had difficulties in obtaining travel permits to be at today’s meeting.

“My generation represents promise – not peril. We should be seen as an asset – not a problem.”

In her remarks, Ms. Wickramanayake also called on all concerned to fully engage with young people in electoral processes and political party structures and not to consider them “too young to run” for Public Office.

Include young people in political, civic and economic life, she urged.

### **Do not demonize or patronize the youth – study author**

Speaking alongside the UN youth envoy, Graeme Simpson, the lead author of ‘[The missing peace: independent progress study on youth and peace and security](#),’ also called for tackling stereotypes, debunking assumptions and policy myths associated with the younger generation.

“It necessitates a new culture and new societal norms, that do not demonize, romanticize or patronize youth,” he said.

“The interests of young people and the work they do, naturally traverses the pillars of peace, development and human rights, and they make it clear that protection and prevention are inseparable.”

The open debate was convened by Peru in its capacity as the President of the Security Council for the month of April.

It comes ahead of a [high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace](#) convened by the President of the General Assembly, 24-25 April, at UN Headquarters in New York.

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## Unity in Security Council was key to recent easing of tensions on Korean Peninsula – UN chief

The unity within the Security Council played an essential role in creating the positive momentum that led to a decision by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to suspend nuclear tests and launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles, the United Nations chief said Monday, noting however that the 15-member body has so far failed to achieve such unity to tackle the Syrian crisis.

"I have no doubt that if we are today on track... for a peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, that is due to a number of reasons," [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said at a press conference in Stockholm, following a meeting with Sweden's Prime Minister, Stefan Löfven.

"I would say the most important of those reasons is [the unity of the Security Council](#) that was able to come together and to have a very strong and meaningful set of sanctions that I believe had a very important impact, and to a certain extent made North Korea realize that it was necessary to come forward, to enter into dialogue with the international community, and especially with both the Republic of Korea and the United States of America," he added.

He also cited the important role played by the United States, China and other countries.

Mr. Guterres was in Sweden for his annual retreat with the Security Council, which was held this year at Backåkra, the private estate of Dag Hammarskjöld, the late Swedish diplomat and the UN's second Secretary-General.

The Council members have used this retreat, normally held outside its chambers, as an opportunity to reflect on larger themes relevant to the work of the Council and the UN system with the Secretary-General and senior members of the Secretariat.



Photo: Moa Haeggblom

Secretary-General António Guterres and the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council in Backåkra, Sweden. Photo: Moa Haeggblom

To questions on Syria, Mr. Guterres said that “unfortunately [...], the unity of the Security Council has not existed.”

But at the retreat, there was “a unanimous recognition” of the need for a political solution to be achieved through intra-Syrian dialogue with UN facilitation, in line with Council resolution 2254, as well as “a strong commitment” to securing access to deliver humanitarian aid to the Syrian people in need, he said.

On questions about a proposal to create a mechanism to determine who is responsible for chemical attacks in Syria, Mr. Guterres explained that the report produced by the Joint Investigation Mechanism (JIM) that had existed exactly for that purpose was contested by some countries, namely by Russia, and as a result, the mandate of JIM was not renewed.

And after that, different proposals have been put forward to create a successor mechanism but have not been accepted.

“And this is the impasse in which we are, and this impasse is extremely negative and dangerous,” he said, adding that effort was made at the retreat “not to discuss what the solution is, but to try and really create an environment in which countries would understand that we need to overcome this impasse.”

The UN chief said that there was a recognition that such an independent and impartial mechanism is necessary, and “this was underlined by all, including by Russia.”

Describing Sweden’s role as “a pillar of multilateralism” and a “bridge builder” in today’s divided world, Mr. Guterres also acknowledged the

Scandinavian country's contributions to peace and security, humanitarian aid, development and the combat against climate change.

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## [Imprisoned Egyptian photojournalist to receive UN press freedom prize](#)

A photojournalist who has been in jail for nearly five years after being arrested for covering a demonstration in Cairo has been selected to receive this year's press freedom prize from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

An independent jury of media professionals selected Mahmoud Abu Zeid, known as Shawkan, for the 2018 [UNESCO/Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize](#), which will be awarded on 2 May in connection with [World Press Freedom Day](#).

"The choice of Mahmoud Abu Zeid pays tribute to his courage, resistance and commitment to freedom of expression," Maria Ressa, President of the jury, said in a [press release](#).

According to UNESCO, Shawkan has been in jail since 14 August 2013 when he was arrested while covering a demonstration at Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square in Cairo. In early 2017, the prosecutor in his case reportedly called for the death penalty.

His arrest and detention have been deemed arbitrary by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions, and contrary to the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The \$25,000 Prize recognizes a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence or promotion of press freedom, especially in the face of danger.

It is named in honour of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper, El Espectador, in Bogotá, on 17 December 1986. It is funded by the Cano Foundation (Colombia) and the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation (Finland).

UNESCO will lead the 25th celebration of World Press Freedom Day next week in Accra, Ghana. The global theme for this year is "Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and The Rule of Law," and covers issues such as media and the transparency of the political process and the independence and media literacy of the judicial system, as well as contemporary challenges of ensuring press freedom online.