

“Path is open” to peaceful denuclearization of Korean Peninsula: UN chief

Following the leader of North Korea’s announcement that nuclear and missile tests are to end, the UN chief António Guterres [said on Saturday](#) that the “path is open for the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean peninsula”.

Kim Jong-un, leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), otherwise known as North Korea, said earlier in the day – according to news reports – that after conducting a total of six nuclear tests since 2006, further missile tests as part of the country’s nuclear weapons programme, were no longer needed.

In [a statement](#) released by the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, Mr Guterres welcomed the decision, describing it as “a positive step forward” which would contribute to building trust between DPRK and its southern neighbour, the Republic of Korea (RoK), as well as other countries in the region.

In early March, the UN chief welcomed the announcement of an agreement between the United States and DPRK, to hold a formal summit meeting in the coming weeks, following months of rising tension between the two countries over the north’s refusal to stop ballistic tests.

The Secretary-General said in Saturday’s statement that he wished the leaders of the two Koreas “every success in their courageous and important task of resuming sincere dialogue, leading to sustainable peace on the Korean peninsula”.

An inter-Korean summit is due to take place next week, on 27 April.

Mr Guterres also commended the setting up of a direct telephone link between the two leaders which he hopes will “further build trust and narrow differences in understanding.”

US President Donald Trump described the north’s decision to suspend tests as “good news” and the RoK’s president, Moon Jae-in’s office issued a statement saying it represented a “significant step” towards denuclearization.

Health experts at UN meeting press for action to address 'double burden' of malnutrition in Africa

Africa's attempts to achieve health for all by 2030 could be threatened unless the continent address the twin challenges of undernutrition and obesity, experts attending a United Nations meeting in Nairobi this week have [warned](#).

Undernutrition occurs when people do not get enough to eat, resulting in conditions such as wasting, which is when a child becomes dangerously thin. On the other hand, people who are obese have body fat levels that may impair their health.

The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) Regional Office for Africa calls these two issues "the double burden of malnutrition."

Together with diet-related noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, they are leading to "catastrophic costs" for citizens, communities and national health care systems across the continent.

A 2016 study showed an estimated 59 million children in Africa were stunted, which is when a child is too short for their height: another condition caused by undernutrition.

Additionally, 14 million children suffered from wasting, which the WHO Office said is a strong predictor of mortality among children under five.

Meanwhile, 10 million Africans were overweight, which is nearly double the number from 2000, while a 2014 report estimated that five per cent of men and 15 per cent of women over 18-years-old were obese.

"Improving nutrition sustainably requires consideration of how to produce, deliver, and ensure access to healthy diets and essential nutrients, not just greater quantities of food," said Dr. Felicitas Zawaira, Director of the Family and Reproductive Health Cluster at the WHO Regional Office.

In 2015, Heads of State adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) which seek to bring about a more just and equitable world for all people and the planet by 2030.

[SDG 3](#), which focuses on good health and well-being, calls for achieving universal health coverage by this deadline, among other targets.

"Tackling all forms of malnutrition for the achievement of [universal health coverage] and the health-related SDGs requires remedial actions from multiple sectors and on many fronts," Dr. Zawaira stated.

Measures include implementing policies and action to control the marketing and consumption of unhealthy foods, or to promote consumption of healthy foods through taxation and subsidies.

[Do not send refugees back to the violence they fled from, UN agency urges Cameroon](#)

Despite warnings, Nigerian refugees and asylum-seekers who fled Boko Haram violence continue to be returned from Cameroon, the United Nations refugee agency has said, underscoring the need to accord international protection to those in need.

“We appeal once again to the authorities in Cameroon to [refrain from further forced returns](#) and to ensure protection to those fleeing insecurity and persecution in Nigeria, in accordance with Cameroon’s national and international obligations,” the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR) said in a statement.

Since the beginning of 2018, 385 Nigerians refugees and asylum-seekers have been forcibly returned from Cameroon – the majority of them last month, including 160 on 10 April and a further 118 a week later.

In total, the UN agency has registered some 87,600 Nigerian refugees in the country.

“The forced returns are in violation of the principle of no forced returns or *non-refoulement*. They are also a significant setback to progress previously achieved by Cameroon in granting asylum to Nigerian civilians fleeing Boko Haram violence,” said UNHCR.

In the statement, UNHCR also noted that it recognized legitimate national security concerns of States affected by the Boko Haram crisis, and stressed that it is important that refugee protection and national security are not seen as being incompatible.

“Properly functioning screening, registration and asylum systems help safeguard host country security,” it said, reiterating its support to the Government of Cameroon to ensure that all those seeking international protection have access to efficient screening and registration procedures, as well as appropriate reception arrangements.

'Save peace while it lasts,' says General Assembly President, ahead of UN summit on sustaining peace

The world needs a new approach to peace, which is why the United Nations General Assembly will hold a major meeting next week to discuss ways to foster peace by focusing on conflict prevention, mediation, dialogue and diplomacy, the 193-member body's President has said.

"By preventing conflict, we save human lives and we also save billions of dollars," said Assembly President Miroslav Lajcak, in a recent interview with *UN News*. "Therefore, we have to focus on prevention of conflicts rather than consequences of conflicts. We have to save peace while it lasts, not to deal with the situation once peace is lost."

"There is no development, there is not protection of human rights if there is no peace," Mr. Lajcak stressed, recalling the UN was created to achieve peace and the first sentence of the [UN Charter](#) is about saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

The [High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace](#) will take place at UN Headquarters in New York on 24 and 25 April, bringing together leaders of political leaders, UN entities and civil society.

It is expected to be the largest gathering of Heads of State and Government and Ministers at UN Headquarters since the General Debate in September 2017, and a "key legacy" event for Mr. Lajcak's presidency, as his spokesman put it.

The meeting will be held in line with "twin" resolutions in 2016 of the General Assembly and the Security Council on the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. These resolutions renew the UN's commitment to conflict prevention as embodied in the UN Charter.

On Friday, Amena Yassine, Senior Adviser to the Assembly President, briefed reporters in New York, the meeting is expected to produce two key outcome documents – a summary of discussions as well as a resolution aimed at reviewing implementation of the 2016 resolution and recommending ways to improve the work of UN on peacebuilding.

In a recent op-ed piece, titled *A New Approach to Peace*, Mr. Lajcak cited some examples of "sustaining peace."

"Some might say that true lasting peace is impossible in certain parts of the world. But it is not. I have seen this firsthand," he wrote.

When Montenegro split from Serbia, peace was not a given, he wrote, adding: “In fact, some people were predicting serious violence. But through intense diplomatic efforts, and real political will, peace persevered. And it has lasted – with no signs that it will waver in the future.”



UNIC Bogota/Brendan Verma

President of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, in Bogota, Colombia, 16 March 2018.

He also said indigenous communities in south Colombia are working with the UN to build peace through strengthening social bonds. “I was inspired to see villagers, some of whom had suffered through more than 50 years of war, excited about their futures. One woman told me about her people’s determination not to slide back into conflict.”

[A bio-based, recycle-reuse economy can feed the world and save the planet – UN agency](#)

Transforming pineapple skins into packaging or fashioning t-shirts from marine refuse may sound far-fetched but it is becoming clearer that an economy based on biomass can help tackle global problems like pollution and climate change, the United Nations agriculture agency said on Friday.

A sustainable bioeconomy, which uses biomass – organic materials, such as

plants and animals and fish – as opposed to fossil resources to produce food and non-food goods “is foremost about nature and the people who take care of and produce biomass,” a senior UN [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) official [said](#) at the 2018 Global [Bioeconomy Summit](#) in Berlin, Germany.

This means family farmers, forest people and fishers, who are also “holders of important knowledge on how to manage natural resources in a sustainable way,” she explained.

Maria Helena Semedo, Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) Deputy Director-General for Climate and Natural Resources, stressed how the agency not only works with member States and other partners across the conventional bioeconomy sectors – agriculture, forestry and fisheries – but also relevant technologies, such as biotechnology and information technology to serve agricultural sectors.

“We must foster internationally-coordinated efforts and ensure multi-stakeholder engagement at local, national and global levels,” she said, noting that this requires measurable targets, means to fulfil them and cost-effective ways to measure progress.

She held sway that with innovation playing a key role in the bio sector, we should ensure that all the knowledge – traditional and new should be equally shared and supported.

Feeding the world, saving the planet

Although there is enough food being produced to feed the planet, often due to a lack of access [estimates show](#) that some 815 million people globally are chronically undernourished.

“Bioeconomy can improve access to food, such as through additional income from the sale of bio-products,” said Ms. Semedo.

She also noted its potential contribution to addressing climate change, albeit with a warning against oversimplification.

“Just because a product is bio does not mean it is good for climate change, it depends on how it is produced, and in particular on much and what type of energy is used in the process,” she elaborated.

FAO has a longstanding and wide experience in supporting family farmers and other small-scale biomass producers and businesses.

Ms. Semedo, informed the summit that with the support of Germany, FAO together with a multistakeholder international sustainable bioeconomy working group is currently developing sustainable bioeconomy guidelines.

Some 25 cases from around the world have already been identified to serve as successful bioeconomy examples to develop good practices.

A group of women fishers in Zanzibar are producing cosmetics from algae – opening up a whole new market with sought-after niche products; in Malaysia,

a Government programme supports community-based bioeconomy; and in Colombia, a community is transforming pineapple skins into biodegradable packaging and honey into royal jelly – and these are just a few examples of a bioeconomy in action.

“Together, let’s harness the development for sustainable bioeconomy for all and leave no one behind,” concluded Ms. Semedo.