

Sudan: After years of conflict, millions require aid; But is the world paying attention?

If it were a new crisis, it would be one of the biggest in the world, but despite the fact that more than five million people need aid, Sudan is at risk of falling off international donors' radar, a senior United Nations official has said.

"If it were a new crisis, the dimensions of it, the scale and the need of it, would be such that it would be one of the biggest crises in the world," Marta Ruedas, United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Sudan told *UN News*.

"But nobody realizes that because it's been going on for so long. The need is there, but the response is no longer the same. And we need to have people respond to it as the need requires, rather than with fatigue, which is somewhat understandable."

Some 5.5 million people in Sudan require humanitarian support, including 3.1 million in the province of Darfur. Fighting in that region, which is about the size of Spain, has displaced millions of people since 2003. During the past year, there has been sporadic new conflict, but the country has seen the arrival of new refugees from South Sudan, and it now hosts some 770,000 refugees from its southern neighbour.

"The refugees coming across the border are coming in a really bad state. They require a lot of support and we're just not getting enough [support]," Ms. Ruedas said, adding: "Some have died reaching the border."

The UN and its humanitarian partners are appealing for \$3 billion to assist South Sudanese refugees and displaced persons. Some \$1.5 billion is meant to aid host communities and agencies helping South Sudanese refugees in neighbouring countries, including \$327 million for Sudan. The focus is on boosting food and water rations, and providing health services.

The greatest percentage of the people in need are displaced Sudanese, who require some assistance getting food and livelihood support, education, water, sanitation and health services. The Government says nearly 400,000 people, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, have returned to their homes, but the majority continue to report that conditions are not in place – including security and access to services – to return to their homes. Many may prefer to be integrated into the communities where they are currently living.



OCHA

Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sudan, Marta Ruedas, visits the Tawilla site for Internally Displaced Persons.

“Some people have been in camps for nearly two decades, and we still call them displaced but really, it’s people who have been living in the same location for 10 years, 15 years,” said Ms. Ruedas.

“We should be able to either integrate them where they are living – because some of these places are like suburbs of a community – or if they do want to go back, and they can return to their place of origin, then we should be able to do that; establish them there and take them off the books of those internally displaced.”

The 2018 humanitarian appeal for Sudan, which requests \$1b to aid 4.3 million people, will be released in the coming weeks. The 2017 humanitarian appeal was only 46 per cent funded, the first time less than half of requested funding was received since the start of the Darfur crisis in 2003.

“Sudan has been on the books of donors – their humanitarian ledger – for so long that donor fatigue is setting in. But just because it has been going on for years doesn’t mean that the need is less,” Ms. Ruedas said.

[Protect the rights of ‘Dreamers,’ UN](#)

human rights experts urge US Government

With hundreds of thousands of migrants who arrived in the United States as children facing possible expulsion, a group of United Nations human rights experts has urged the country to take urgent steps to address their situation and ensure that their rights are protected.

“We are increasingly concerned about the impact that ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme could have on the young people who benefit from it,” said the rights experts in a [news release](#) issued by the UN human rights wing, OHCHR, Tuesday.

The call comes ahead of the 5 March deadline for the DACA programme, which grants work permits and renewable two-year deferments from deportation to qualifying migrants who arrived as children under 16, are pursuing or have completed a high school education or military service, and have not committed a serious crime.

Often referred to as ‘Dreamers,’ the DACA beneficiaries – estimated to number around 800,000 – will be stripped of their legal status and their protection from deportation without procedural safeguards if a solution is not reached by the deadline.

The majority of Dreamers are ages 25 or below, and many are current students.

“The US needs to adopt measures to address this situation as a matter of urgency. These migrants risk losing protection of their rights and being expelled from the country where many of them have lived and developed their lives for decades,” the experts underscored, noting that of particular concern is that the majority of these migrants are young women at risk of being expelled to countries where there are high levels of violence, lawlessness and crime.

The human rights experts also underscored that an abrupt end to the DACA programme will disrupt the lives of these migrants and cause “profound grief and irreparable harm by tearing their families apart” and making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse if deported to countries where they barely have any ties.

“Ending the programme without a feasible alternative would also send a wrong signal to the population, as it would reinforce harmful racial stereotypes and stigmatize hard-working, law-abiding young migrants who are an asset to the country which they consider home,” they added.

In the news release, the human rights experts also highlighted that the expiry of DACA offers a “unique opportunity” for regularization of many migrants who have strong economic, social, cultural and family links in the UN, and whose contribution to society is unquestionable.

The UN rights experts making the call include Felipe González Morales, UN [Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants](#); Elina Steinerte, Vice-Chair on Communications of the UN [Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#); Nils Melzer, UN [Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#); Alda Facio, Chair of the UN [Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice](#); and E. Tendayi Achiume, UN [Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism](#).

UN Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based [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.

[At leaders forum in Belarus, deputy UN chief urges concrete action on Global Goals](#)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the most ambitious, universal, people-centred and planet-sensitive set of goals and targets ever conceived by the United Nations, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed told a regional leaders forum in Belarus on Wednesday.

Speaking in Minsk at the Regional SDGs Coordination Leaders Forum, ‘Building a partnership to underpin national sustainable development solutions,’ Ms. Mohammed said translating the Agenda into concrete Action is one of her top priorities and dubbed the framework’s associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) “the global community’s roadmap to transform our world.”

She saw the meeting as an excellent opportunity to discuss implementation challenges, exchange best practices and explore new partnership modalities to advance the global goals.

“Our efforts to leave no one behind will be a test of our common vision, resolve and ingenuity,” she stressed.

Ms. Mohammed emphasized that a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach must become the new norm – with meaningful multi-stakeholder partners central in designing, implementing, financing and evaluating development solutions.

Noting some positive trends and successful initiatives since the 2030 Agenda’s adoption, she stated that the SDGs were being implemented at global, regional, national, city and community levels, in developed and developing countries alike, “reflecting its universality in ownership and scope.”

“More concrete efforts are needed to leverage the capacities, networks, skills and resources of civil society, the private sector, academia, statistical bodies, local community associations and youth groups,” she added.

Ms. Mohammed outlined three key points, beginning with the SDGs need for “governments to go beyond traditional development programmes to tackle the complexity of the 2030 Agenda through integrated approaches, attuned to specific contexts.”

She listed a number of measures underway to help move the agenda forward, including governments incorporating the global goals into national plans and legislative frameworks.



United Nations/Egor Dubrovsky

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed addresses the Regional SDGs Coordination Leaders Forum in Minsk, Belarus., by United Nations/Egor Dubrovsky

“Achieving these goals will require defining new national pathways and priorities, and mobilizing the necessary financing, technology and expertise,” she asserted.

According to the UN deputy chief, the second key point is the importance of partnerships, saying “small and medium enterprises are slowly coming on board and need to be supported as they play a major role in most economies.”

Ms. Mohammad called fiscal incentives and enabling environments “game-changers” for governments, underlining the importance of long-term investing

that price longer-term risks in sustainable development.

She called a data revolution, the third point, “the lynchpin” to ensure that programmes and interventions are targeting the poor and most vulnerable and marginalized communities and regions.

“Without high quality data, providing the right information on the right things at the right time, designing, financing, monitoring and evaluating effective policies is almost impossible,” she stated.

“Governments need to begin integrating different but comparable data sources; explore citizen-generated data to supplement national statistics; link evidence-based policy planning to financing the SDGs; and integrate data from the private sector, academia and civil society, particularly where indicators are not available from existing systems,” she elaborated.

The empowerment of youth and gender equality are also game changers, Ms. Mohammad continued, underscoring the need to address the issues of rights, voice and participation of women and the youth in the design and implementation of policy choices.

In closing, she maintained that together, “we can strengthen partnerships to achieve our shared ambition: an inclusive, equitable, prosperous and sustainable world, for everyone.”

[As relevant as ever, UN Charter is ‘our living template’ for tackling global challenges – Guterres](#)

The Principles outlined in the United Nations Charter remain the foundations of international relations and global harmony at a time when conflicts have come more complex, new threats and challenges have emerged and impacts of instability are felt far beyond their source, Secretary-General António Guterres said on Wednesday.

“So, while the Charter’s Principles are [as relevant as ever](#), we must continue to update its tools, we must use those tools with greater determination, and we must go back to the Charter’s roots for inspiration as we strive to deliver for ‘we the peoples’,” Mr. Guterres told a [ministerial-level briefing](#) of the Security Council on the purposes and principles of the [United Nations Charter](#).

Calling for rebalancing the approach to international peace and security, the UN chief underscored the need to help countries avert the outbreak of crises

– both natural and man-made – as well as the importance of full commitment to all human rights and inclusion of women in peace efforts.

“Preventing crises is primarily the responsibility of Member States. [Chapter VI](#) of the Charter [on Pacific Settlement of Disputes] describes the tools that are available to them for that purpose – negotiation; enquiry; mediation; conciliation; arbitration; judicial settlement; and other peaceful measures and means,” stressed the Secretary-General, adding that the UN, including his own good offices, stand ready to help prevent, manage or resolve conflicts.

Mr. Guterres also highlighted the role of Chapters [VII](#) and [VIII](#) on action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression; and regional arrangements, respectively, and said that regional perspectives are critical in understanding challenges and regional ownership essential for sustainable solutions.

In that context, the UN chief noted the partnership between the Organization and the African Union on peace and security, and the alignment of the 2030 Agenda with Africa’s Agenda 2063.

“The Purposes and Principles of the Charter speak to today’s challenges as firmly as they spoke to people who had just lived through the most horrible war the world has ever seen,” said Mr. Guterres.

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“The Charter is our living template for serving “we the peoples”,” he added.

The UN chief began his remarks with an appeal for an immediate suspension of all war activities in Syria’s conflict-battered eastern Ghouta, where, he said, “a human tragedy is unfolding in front of our eyes [with] 400,000 people living in hell on earth.”

“I don’t think we can let things go on in this horrendous way,” said Mr. Guterres, explain that an estimated 700 people in the town, near the Syrian capital, Damascus, need urgent treatment that cannot be provided there. I pause in the violence would allow for evacuations and for other civilians to be treated on site.

He also noted that acknowledged that the liberation of Kuwait from the forces of Saddam Hussein took place 27 years ago this month. This anniversary – of an undertaking in which the international community used the collective security principles outlined in the [UN Charter](#) to address a breach of the peace – “is a fitting backdrop to today’s discussion.”



UN Photo/Loey Felipe

Former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses a Security Council meeting on maintenance of international peace and security. February 2018.

Speaking alongside Mr. Guterres, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, also highlighted that the primary responsibilities in the Security Council to maintain international peace and security are [“needed now more than ever.”](#)

“In order to effectively respond to non-traditional and transnational security challenges such as climate change, terrorism and violent extremism, nuclear proliferation, and cross-border insecurity, the Security Council should undergo reforms to be more flexible in its decision-making process,” he said.

Mr. Ban also noted that multilateralism cannot be upheld by only one Member State or a group of states and urged the UN system, including the Security Council to strive to overcome “whatever challenges may loom over the horizon.”

He also emphasized the need for the entire membership of the Organization to faithfully and thoroughly implement the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the Paris Agreement on climate change while coping with other new challenges including, among others, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

[We can stop global deforestation, says](#)

UN official at start of conference on protecting forests

A future with zero net global deforestation is possible with the right mix of policies, social action and political will, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said as a major international conference on sustainable forest management kicked off this week in Rome.

[“We have the knowledge and tools to stop global deforestation](#) [...] but it calls for ambitious, concerted action across all agricultural sectors and beyond, underpinned by political and societal will,” said Maria Helena Semedo, FAO Deputy Director-General for Climate and Natural Resources, at the conference’s opening on Tuesday.

With rapid population growth driving global demand for forest products and services – timber, fibre, fuel, food, fodder and medicine – institutional, governance and policy innovations are vital to address those interlinkages.

Such efforts are all the more critical in tropical and low-income countries, where one of the major causes of deforestation is the demand for agricultural production, and converting forests to arable land.

Noting that over the past 25 years, the global deforestation rate has slowed by more than 50 per cent, Manoel Sobral Filho, the head of the UN [Forum on Forests](#) said that if the trends continue and forest restoration and plantation efforts continue, a future with zero net global deforestation “can go from being an aspiration to reality.”

Hosted by FAO, the three-day conference will promote dialogue across sectors and stakeholder groups on how to collectively achieve the global development targets, including under the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of halting deforestation and increasing forest cover.

The outcomes of the event will be submitted to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development – the UN body for all matters relating to sustainable development and the implementation of the SDGs.

In addition to Government officials, civil society, cooperatives and private sector, the conference will also see the participation of indigenous peoples associations.