

UN agency launches appeal to fund aid efforts in crisis-struck South Sudan

30 January 2018 – Amid worsening humanitarian situation in South Sudan and the number of persons in need of assistance continues to grow, the United Nations migration agency today launched a \$103.7 million appeal to sustain critical and life-saving aid programmes.

“As civilians continue to bear the brunt of the crisis, experiencing violence and displacement, [timely and effective humanitarian assistance is critical](#),” said William Barriga, the head of the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) operations in the country, in a news release announcing the launch.

“[We] remain committed to responding to these needs and reaching the most vulnerable, wherever they are,” he stressed.

According to estimates, some 7 million people across the African nation are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

With full funding, the appeal aims to reach about one million displaced persons, their host communities as well as communities of potential returnees and migrants with assistance in 2018. Specific IOM programmes focus on providing aid and assistance as well as supporting transition, recovery and migration management initiatives.

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Additionally, in line with the broader 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for South Sudan, the UN migration agency will also continue its multi-sector humanitarian responses in camp coordination and camp management, displacement tracking and monitoring, health, shelter and non-food items, mental and psychosocial support and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Given the diverse nature of displacement and the dynamics of the crisis, IOM has adopted an integrated approach, where in migration management, recovery and stabilization efforts complement humanitarian interventions to build community resilience and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid.

Poverty eradication, inclusive growth focus of UN Social Development Commission's 2018 session

29 January 2018 – Countries must accelerate inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development that will not leave behind vulnerable populations, such as women and youth, the United Nations deputy chief told the Commission for Social Development, which opened its annual session on Monday.

“We have achieved impressive reductions in extreme poverty, and major improvements in providing access to schooling and healthcare, and promoting the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous populations,” said Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed in her remarks to the 56th session of the intergovernmental body under the UN Economic and Social Council.

“However, [the drop in extreme poverty remains uneven](#) across regions, within countries and between various social groups,” she added, stressing a key role the Commission can play in addressing such challenges.

The Commission has been the key UN body in charge of the follow up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the world summit for social development, held in the Danish capital in March 1995.

The theme of this year’s gathering is ‘Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.’

Ms. Mohammed noted that while more than one billion people have risen above the \$1.90-a-day poverty line since 1990, millions slide back into the threshold annually because of economic, environmental, health or other shocks.

“Of particular concern are the persistently high levels of poverty and deprivation among women and children, indigenous groups, older persons and persons with disabilities,” she said.

Among other things, she stressed the need to address unemployment and underemployment among the world’s young people and inequality between and within countries.

She also said that it is imperative to promote social policies and protection that ensure the benefits of globalization and economic growth are shared by all, noting that globally, 45 per cent of the people who need social protection have access to just one social benefit, while the rest – some four billion people – go without.

“This is unacceptable – and underscores the challenge we face in upholding

our promise to leave no one behind,” she said, referring to the pledge made in the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by UN Member States in 2015.

“To fulfil that vision, I encourage the Commission to emphasize the imperative of accelerating inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, including full, productive employment and decent work for all,” she added.

She also noted that the Commission can support the Secretary-General’s efforts to reposition the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, and continue to serve as a space for policy debate and the sharing of experiences.

The upcoming adoption by the Commission of a resolution on its methods of work is an important step that will establish the Commission’s identity for the period ahead, she said.

[Youth leaders ready to ‘roll up their sleeves’ and get to work at annual UN forum](#)

29 January 2018 – Not content to follow old-school rules to tackle problems like climate change, poverty and inequality, today’s youth – media savvy ‘Millennials’ and the ‘Born in the 90s’ cohort that can’t remember life without the Internet – are using disruptive, new-school innovations to drive change; and they’re heading to the United Nations to talk about building a better world for all.

At UN Headquarters in New York on 30 and 31 January, youth leaders from every corner of the world will lead discussions with government officials, civil society and other stakeholders on policy frameworks and innovative initiatives to advance the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) – a 15-year plan to create a prosperous world for everyone on a clean planet.

Marie Chatardová, the President of the UN Economic and Social Council, the UN body that convenes the annual [Youth Forum](#), has said that it is vital to empower young people to break cycles of poverty allow them to fulfil their potential to the fullest.

“If young people have the right support, education, and means, they can go on to build better societies. They have energy, creativity, and innovation to power entrepreneurship and create jobs for themselves and others,” she wrote in an opinion piece, published in the *Miami Herald* on Friday.

Citing examples of the youth taking action on pressing global concerns, such as on impacts of climate change or growing pollution, Mr. Chatardová said that young people do not wait idly for others to transform their ideas into reality.

“They are leaders who roll up their sleeves and work hard to transform their societies,” she added.



Marie Chatardová, President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
UN Photo/Manuel Elias

Around the world, the population of young people is now almost [1.8 billion](#) – the largest ever. And it offers both immense potential as well as considerable challenges ranging from 71 million unemployed youth and an additional 161 million in situations of moderate or extreme poverty despite having a job.

In this situation, building on the work of young people to address the problems of the young people is critical, highlighted Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth.

“We will be discussing the issues [the youth] care about like sustainable energy for all, safe and inclusive cities, access to clean water and sanitation, protecting bio-diversity and forests and partnerships to achieve the [SDGs],” said Ms. Wickramanayake.

As a subset of the partnerships agenda, she explained, is the involvement of the youth in the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [SDGs](#).

[Started in 2012](#), the Youth Forum is the only gathering of its kind to bring together young people and senior Government officials in-charge of youth matters in their countries, such as youth ministries. This year’s overarching theme is *the role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities*.

In addition to discussing youth action for specific SDGs, the agenda also includes regional perspectives and a roundtable on means of implementation, including finance, technology, capacity building and trade.

The outcomes from the Youth Forum will flow into this year High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the global UN forum to which discusses and reviews the status of implementation of sustainable development.

Peace in Syria must be built on dignity, human rights for all Syrians, UNHCR envoy Angelina Jolie

29 January 2018 – With nearly 5.5 million war-weary Syrian refugees sheltering in Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq, Angelina Jolie, the United Nations refugee agency's envoy, visited on Sunday Jordan's Za'atari camp, carrying the message that peace in Syria must be built on human rights.

"It is heart-breaking to return to Jordan and witness the levels of [hardship and trauma among Syrian refugees](#) as the war enters its eighth year," said Ms. Jolie, Special Envoy for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

On behalf of UNHCR, she voiced appreciation to the country for its generosity and humanity, says that Jordanians are "an example to the world, at a time when solidarity with refugees is in short supply."

She asserted that the Syrian crisis has raged for years, saying that UNHCR does not have the funds to fully provide even the most basic necessities for survival for many families.

"Last year, the UNHCR response for the Syria crisis was only 50 per cent funded. And so far in 2018, it is only seven per cent funded," she elaborated, adding that there is nothing more devastating for UNHCR staff than to be unable to help the people.

After seven years of war, most Syrian refugees have exhausted any savings and the vast majority live below the poverty line, on less than three dollars a day.

"Imagine what that would mean for your family," implored Ms. Jolie. "Here, it means families going without sufficient food; children unable to get medical treatment; young girls vulnerable to early marriage; and many Syrians facing their seventh winter without proper shelter."

"This is the reality of those displaced by the conflict in Syria," she added.

Thanking the journalists who bring the situation to the world, Ms. Jolie underscored the fundamental issue as being "the lack of a credible political and diplomatic process – based on human rights and international law – to bring the violence to an end."

"A viable political settlement is the only way to create the conditions for Syrians to return to their homes, and to end the human suffering and the strain on host countries," she stressed.

She maintained that humanitarian aid is not a long-term solution, underscoring "and to be clear, no one wants to get off aid relief more than

Syrian families.”

“For such an educated, capable people, it is soul-destroying to be made this dependent,” she elaborated.

Recalling that the war began with Syrians’ demands for greater human rights, she pressed that peace must be built on that.

“It cannot be built on impunity for the targeting of civilians by all sides, the bombing of schools and hospitals, barrel bombs, torture, chemical weapons and rape used as a weapon of war,” she held sway, adding: “It must be built on accountability – for instance, justice and recognition for the years of violence that women in Syria have faced.”

Ms. Jolie summarized her message to the international community to do more to help meet the needs of desperate Syrian families and the hosting countries, but “above all,” to provide the leadership and strength needed to negotiate a principled end to this senseless war – without sacrificing the dignity and human rights of Syrian families.

“That is non-negotiable,” she concluded.

[Hunger continues to intensify in conflict zones, UN agencies report to Security Council](#)

29 January 2018 – Food insecurity – or lack of access to enough food – continues to worsen in places torn by conflict, United Nations agencies reported Monday, listing Yemen, South Sudan and Syria among the countries most affected by acute hunger.

Highlighting the extremely critical importance of humanitarian support for affected communities, the report was generated by the Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) and the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) as part of bi-annual briefings to the UN Security Council on food security.

[Conflict is a common factor](#) undermining food security in all 16 countries covered in the report, according to which the intensification of conflicts is a key reason behind the recent resurgence of world hunger levels, following decades of steady declines.

The 16 countries that are monitored are: Afghanistan, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen.

Among them, Yemen, South Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, CAR, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Somalia have a quarter or more of the population facing crisis or emergency levels of hunger.

In Yemen, 60 per cent of the population, or 17 million people, are affected by acute hunger. These figures are 45 per cent, or 4.8 million, in South Sudan, 33 per cent, or 6.5 million, in Syria, and 33 per cent, or 1.9 million, in Lebanon – a country hosting large numbers of Syrian refugees.

But these are far from being the only countries flagged as cause for concern.

In the DRC, where serious food security concerns have been overshadowed by crises in other parts of Africa, the situation is rapidly deteriorating, the report warns.

There, 11 per cent of the population is now in the crisis phase or above, adding up to 7.7 million people who are coping with acute hunger.

In Sudan, 3.8 million people are in the crisis phase or above. In Iraq, that figure is 3.2 million while in the Lake Chad basin, the number is 2.9 million people. In Burundi and Haiti, it is 1.8 and 1.3 million, respectively.

According to data released last October, the number of hungry people worldwide rose to 815 million people in 2016, up from 777 million the year before. The majority of the hungry, or 489 million people, live in countries wracked by conflict.