

## [PODCAST: Tea and empathy – Refugee ZamZam Yusuf’s extraordinary journey](#)

15 January 2018 – Somali refugee ZamZam Yusuf has a message for any neighbours who think she doesn’t have the right to call Leicester, in the English Midlands, home.

“I would like to offer you a cup of tea” at my house, says the 30-year-old mother-of-four, who came to United Nations Headquarters in New York in January, as world leaders prepare to debate the first-ever [Global Compact for Migration](#).

Her university, De Montfort, in the United Kingdom, has taken the academic lead in furthering the UN’s [Together](#) campaign on behalf of the millions who are on the move, whose basic rights are being denied.

A summit in New York on 9 January aimed to raise awareness and encourage debate on the current challenges faced by refugees in local communities. Led by De Montfort, the universities shared ideas for practical ways they can use skills, experience and voluntary power on their campuses to support those in need in their local areas.

Too often, said UN chief António Guterres – launching his 2018 report, [Making Migration Work for All](#) – their positive contribution is being overshadowed by the plight of a “desperate minority” forced to live in the shadows by countries that violate their rights.

ZamZam came in to our the [Lid is on](#) studio in New York to describe her extraordinary journey – just one of the millions that are being taken each year, in search of a better life.

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## [OECD-UN forum on strengthening collection and use of migration data kicks off in Paris](#)

15 January 2018 – International organizations, policy experts, statisticians and civil society came together on Monday at a United Nations-supported forum in Paris to answer the global call for more accurate and timely information on migration flows and examine how improved data collection can feed into better policymaking.

[Organized jointly](#) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD), the United Nations International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the first [International Forum on Migration Statistics](#) will also explore innovations in data collection and strengthening capacity in developing countries to produce and improve migration statistics.

“It is important that we speak today about the fundamental need for better migration data,” said William Lacy Swing, the Director-General of the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM), at the Forum.

“We also need urgently, however, to engage a dialogue on a Global Action Plan – a plan to ensure the availability to policymakers and others comprehensive national, regional and global data and statistical analysis of trends in migration – a phenomenon as old as humankind and, today, one of the defining phenomena of our time.”



IOM Director General William Lacy Swing (at podium) at the first International Forum on Migration Statistics in Paris, organized jointly by IOM, OECD and UNDESA. Photo: OECD

Running through Tuesday, the Forum will [explore](#) improvements the production and use of migration data and overcoming challenges in the sector, as well as also delve deep into specific themes.

Also on the agenda is a specific plenary session is devoted to exploring how public opinions on migration and migrants are formed, and how these can change by facing well-communicated facts.

Other topics include use Big Data for migration, as well as building the capacity for emerging economies and developing countries to produce migration statistics.

According to IOM, the Forum aims to become a bi-annual event for producers and users of migration-related data to share their views, identify gaps and highlight needs for training and capacity building.

#### ***Policies concerning migration must be grounded in data***

In a related [statement](#), Mr. Swing also underscored that accurate and complete migration data is critical for sound policies concerning it.

“We are finding that without access to reliable, comprehensive and global data, managing migration policy becomes a game of blind man’s bluff,” he stressed. in a recent statement, underscoring the importance of data for sound policies.

However, he added, despite efforts by Governments and the international community, “significant gaps” in migration data remain globally.

National population censuses – traditionally the main source of data on

migration – are infrequent and cannot therefore provide timely information. Furthermore, migrants, especially those on irregular status, often are absent from household surveys, or are hard to track through administrative data sources.

In the statement, Mr. Swing noted that the volume of data available today is larger than at any point in human history. While there are incredible possibilities of the use of this so called “Big Data” – data generated, often inadvertently, by users on digital devices, web-platforms or other “smart” sources – there are also significant challenges, in particular those over privacy, ethical and human rights given the way they are generated or collected.

“Concerns over the use of Big Data for any purpose, including research, need to be identified and adequately addressed by policy-makers, for instance through the creation of a regulatory system setting out conditions and limits to access to and use of certain kinds of data,” suggested Mr. Swing.

The [Portal](#) aims to serve as a unique access point to timely, comprehensive migration statistics and reliable information about migration data globally.

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## [In Afghanistan, Security Council reiterates support for efforts to restore peace and progress](#)

15 January 2018 – The United Nations Security Council, during a weekend mission to Afghanistan, reiterated its support for the Central Asian country’s efforts to restore peace, stability and progress.

Council members aimed to get a first-hand account of progress made by the Afghan National Unity Government, with the assistance of the international community, in addressing a wide range of interconnected challenges and to learn how the Security Council could further assist efforts on the ground.

According to the UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA), despite assurances of continued international assistance for its security and development needs, Afghanistan remains [a country undergoing conflict](#), which threatens the sustainability of its achievements.

DPA says peace negotiations between the Afghan Government and armed opposition groups are the only alternative for ending the conflict and the region and the broader international community have a stake and a role to play to help to create the conditions for peace.

The Council's visit, from 13 to 15 January, was the first one since 2010 and came ahead of the Kabul Process meeting, scheduled for February 2018, where the Government is expected to present its plans for a more structured peace and security process, coordinated with the wider region.

In the capital, Kabul, the delegation held meetings with senior officials, including Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah.

The delegation also met with the leadership of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan ([UNAMA](#)) and the Resolute Support Mission of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

According to a note issued by UNAMA, discussions during the visit focused on the political, security, socio-economic and human rights situation in the country, with all parties underlining the importance of an inclusive Afghan-led and -owned peace process for long-term stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Council members also reiterated their support for the Government's reform initiatives, particularly to counter corruption and accelerate regional cooperation.

They expressed concerns about the security environment in Afghanistan, including the presence of Al-Qaeda, Taliban and ISIL-Khorasan Province-affiliated fighters, as well as about the nexus of terrorism and organized crime. All parties reiterated the need for greater international and regional security cooperation.

The delegation was briefed on the preparations for the upcoming parliamentary and district council elections in 2018. Council members underscored the importance of continued progress on electoral reforms and towards the holding of free and fair, as well as timely, credible and inclusive parliamentary and presidential elections in 2018 and 2019, respectively. They reiterated the need to increase women's participation in the election.

#### ***Need for regional and integrated security and development approach***

Council members emphasized the need to adopt a regional and integrated security and development approach, which Kazakhstan is proposing as the path to sustainable development, durable peace and stability in the region.

Discussions in Kabul stressed the need to view Afghanistan not as a threat to security in the region but as an important partner. It is critical to integrate the economies of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, including Central Asian States, through enhanced interaction and connectivity, by implementing regional infrastructure, trade, investment, transit and transportation projects.

Afghan authorities expressed hope for the rapid implementation of those projects.

Led by Kazakhstan, the delegation included representatives of the United

States, Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and China.

Kazakhstan, the first Central Asian country elected to the Security Council, holds the body's presidency in January 2018.

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## [Progress against hunger, poverty hinges on empowering indigenous women – UN agriculture chief](#)

15 January 2018 – Empowering indigenous women – who have higher malnutrition rates than any other social group and typically earn far less than men – is key to successfully fighting hunger and extreme poverty, the United Nations agriculture chief has said.

“Indigenous women [face a triple discrimination](#) – poverty, gender and ethnicity, both within and outside their communities – making them highly vulnerable,” Jose Graziano da Silva Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) told the Forum on Indigenous Women in Mexico City this past Friday.

They confront far higher rates of poverty, chronic malnutrition and illiteracy while having the least access to health care and political life, he said to the participants from a dozen countries.

About five per cent of the global population and 15 per cent of the world's poorest, or some 370 million people, self-identify as indigenous. In Latin America and the Caribbean region, 15 per cent of the approximately 45 million indigenous peoples face insecurity and extreme poverty.

Indigenous women in the region encounter higher poverty and malnutrition rates than any other social group, and typically earn four times less than men, according to FAO's new [Regional Atlas of Rural Women](#).

The situation is even worse for women in the more than 5,000 indigenous groups, spread across over 90 countries around the world.

“Their social and economic empowerment is not only an excellent way to support them, but a necessary condition to eradicate hunger and malnutrition in their communities,” underscored Mr. da Silva.

He noted that the UN's decision to begin a Family Farming Decade in 2019 offers a platform to focus on rural livelihoods – where most indigenous peoples work.

The FAO-organized three-day forum aims to develop public policy recommendations to empower indigenous women, strengthen their decision-making and recognize their rights.

### *Cultivating leadership*

Although indigenous women are key actors in protecting biodiversity, adapting to climate change and varying nutritious diets, they are often forgotten in development plans.

“They have fundamental roles in the spiritual, social and family arenas and are seed guardians – critical carriers of specialized knowledge,” underscored Mr. da Silva.

“With political will, we can put an end to discrimination against indigenous women,” he affirmed.

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## [In strife-torn Afghanistan, people need support ‘more than ever’ says senior UN aid official](#)

15 January 2018 – Amid continuing violence in Afghanistan, the United Nations and the humanitarian community has appealed for \$430 million to provide assistance to some 2.8 million people across the country who have been affected by conflict and natural disasters as well as families returning home after years in Iran and Pakistan.

“In many parts of Afghanistan, violence continues unabated and people need support more than ever,” [said](#) Toby Lanzer, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Afghanistan, underlining the needs in the country.

“Today I call on international donors to stand by 2.8 million people whose lives have been ruined by conflict or natural disaster, and to help people returning to Afghanistan from neighbouring countries.”

According to a [news release](#) issued by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), the plan includes activities of more than 150 national and international humanitarian organizations as well as the UN to deliver assistance to families and communities in need.

There are however, substantial challenges, including difficult access conditions as well as increasing violence against aid workers. Last year, armed clashes were the highest in a decade and civilian casualties remained near record levels.

In addition to more than two million people directly affected by the conflict including almost half a million displaced, 2017 also saw about 500,000 Afghans returning to their homes after seeking refuge in Iran, Pakistan or other countries.

The [2018 Humanitarian Response Plan](#) focuses only on providing life-saving emergency assistance such as food and shelter, medical treatment and nutrition interventions for malnourished child to people caught up in current or very recent disasters.

Besides the 2.8 million people the plan is designed for, another 8.7 million people are estimated to live with high level of needs as a result of long-standing and unresolved issues such as lack of jobs and livelihoods, long-term displacement, an underfunded healthcare system or the effects of climate change.

Humanitarian emergency assistance cannot provide a solution for such chronic needs, like land for housing or jobs and vocational training to lift them out of poverty and fragility, read the news release, underlining the need to improve the underlying conditions.