

Antalya: UN-backed fund combatting poverty and hunger across Global South launches annual report

27 November 2017 – Three countries at the forefront of South-South cooperation and some \$33 million in contributions are helping 15 of the world's least developed countries advance towards achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

India, Brazil, and South Africa – three nations from different economies and different continents, but working together to drive the exchange of resources, technology, and ideas between countries of the Global South – launched today the A

[HREF="https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-buqyoV0jpsMDZsNEhNR2YxS2s/view">late](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-buqyoV0jpsMDZsNEhNR2YxS2s/view)st report of the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation, known as the IBSA Fund, after the three lead partners, and which is a remarkable example of cooperation among developing countries for the benefit of other southern States in partnership with the UN system.

“We have quite innovative projects in Africa in Latin America in the Middle East, and so far, the Fund has been doing quite well, and we hope that in the near future we are able to double the support that we are providing,” said Pule Isaac Malefane, Ambassador of South Africa to Turkey, on the sidelines of the [Global South-South Development Expo 2017](#), hosted by Turkey, which opened today and will take running in Antalya through 30 November.

The [IBSA Fund](#), which is managed by the UN Office for South-South Cooperation ([UNOSSC](#)), was established in 2004 and has since supported projects through partnerships with local governments and institutions. Its objectives range from promoting food security and addressing HIV/AIDS, to extending access to safe drinking water.

“On the 11th of December, we will announce the inauguration of the cardiological wing of the Cultural and Hospital Centre for the Palestinian Red Crescent Society and the Atta-Habib Medical Center in the Gaza Strip. These two projects will illustrate the way we work. A little bit with money but also with technological capacity, communication and other fields of the South-South Cooperation,” said Miguel Griesbach de Pereira Franco, Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Brazil in Ankara.

The Atta-Habib Medical Center, destroyed in the 2014 Gaza conflict, serves around 30,000 people and is the only health institute at the eastern side of Gaza City. The Fund hopes that its reconstruction will help in Gaza's recovery plans and will aid restoring a sense of normalcy among the population.

The Fund, according to its representatives, looks not only to help out financially, but to share capacities, experiences, and knowledge.

Among other examples of the Fund's activities, in Sudan, a project piloted a labor-intensive working model to rapidly create employment opportunities for 2,000 unskilled and semi-skilled young laborers; in Fiji, the Fund is teaching women to manufacture and maintain their own rocket cookstoves so that they can switch from open fire cooking and increase their knowledge about climate change adaptation and mitigation; and in Haiti, teenagers are being trained in entrepreneurial capacities so that they can start their own business and have a wider access to the labour market.

"The South-South Cooperation based on what we have, we favor a broader view, a border scope of this interpretation. We don't look for monetary accountability, for us it is important the threshold of knowledge and the threshold of capacity in order to make the local population more independent to develop their own way to make their own region better," concluded the Brazilian Minister Counsellor.

IBSA called for greater efforts to combat poverty and hunger across the global South during the South-South Development Expo 2017.

[Partnerships 'the only way' to tackle global challenges, says UN industrial development chief](#)

27 November 2017 – The Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization's (UNIDO) was reappointed for a second term on Monday as the 17th [UNIDO General Conference](#) opened in Vienna, Austria.

In his opening speech to the General Conference, Director General LI Yong said he was humbled by the trust placed in him to lead UNIDO for another four years, adding that he felt "[a sense of profound responsibility](#)."

"The global community is still facing a number of unresolved and urgent challenges," added Mr. Li. "Poverty, unemployment, and hunger remain the most persistent and daunting tasks for our world. Climate change, resource-depletion and environmental degradation, as well as the potential impact of the latest technological revolution, add another dimension," he said.

Mr. Li stressed that "the only way to solve the challenges ahead of us is in partnership...in partnership with governments, UN sister agencies, the private sector, and civil society."

In a video message, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres congratulated the Director General on his re-appointment, calling UNIDO "a key voice on technology transfer, investment flows and skills development."

“Your efforts can help support economic transformation in Africa and in other regions, and, as we combat climate change, your work can facilitate the transition to low-carbon growth,” underscored the Secretary-General.

The UN General Assembly president also congratulated Mr. Li, saying that he looked forward to working with him.

Speaking to the General Conference, President Miroslav Lajčák said: “Industrialization of the past may have earned a bad name. It may have made us think of pollution, wastewater or labour exploitation. But when industrialization is inclusive and sustainable, [the results are positive.](#)”

He pointed out that it leads to decent jobs and improved livelihoods; fosters youth employment; and enable resource preservation and environmental protection, “these outcomes propel us towards eliminating poverty and hunger and reducing inequalities,” he asserted.

Under the theme ‘Partnering for impact – achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,’ hundreds of participants, including UN senior representatives; Heads of State, ministers and other high-level government officials; and prominent leaders from the private sector, civil society and academia gathered to showcase UNIDO’s initiatives, achievements and partnerships.

As its highest policymaking organ, the General Conference assembles UNIDO’s member States and approves the programme and budgets for the forthcoming biennium.

It will also use interactive discussions to explore issues, such as gender, circular economy, and industry 4.0 and will spotlight UNIDO’s leading role in the Third Industrial Development Decade for Africa.

The Conference will offer a fully immersive experience for participants, including innovative formats for the events, integrated exhibitions and networking spaces.

[Yemen’s Sana’a airport opens after blockade; UNICEF says vaccine delivery ‘cannot be a one-off’](#)

27 November 2017 – The United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) on Monday warned that more than 11 million Yemeni children – almost every single Yemeni boy and girl – are in acute need of humanitarian assistance, despite the successful delivery of 1.9 million doses of vaccines to Sana’a airport on Sunday.

[“Yesterday’s success](#) cannot be a one-off,” Geert Cappalaere, UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa said Sunday at a press briefing in Amman, Jordan, welcoming the reopening of Sana’a airport, which enabled the agency’s first humanitarian delivery in three weeks.

Vaccines are urgently needed for a planned campaign to vaccinate 600,000 children across Yemen against diphtheria, meningitis, whooping cough, pneumonia and tuberculosis.

“Today, it is fair to say that Yemen is one of the worst places on earth to be a child,” he said. “The reason behind this is very straightforward: decades of conflict, decades also of chronic underdevelopment.”

Today it is estimated that every 10 minutes a child in Yemen is dying from preventable diseases, he added, noting that the outbreak of acute watery diarrhea and cholera this year is not a surprise, because the water and sanitation system throughout the country is almost entirely devastated and the health system is on its knees.

“The war in Yemen is sadly a war on children,” he said, calling on all parties to the conflict to stop fighting.

VIDEO: UN flights to the Yemeni capital resumed on 25 November, bringing vaccines that will immunize 600,000 Yemeni children against preventable diseases.

Nearly 5,000 children have been killed or seriously injured over the last two and a half years alone, thousands of schools and health facilities have been damaged or completely destroyed, and two million children suffer acute malnutrition.

Unfortunately, the vaccines stocks, despite the 1.9 million that UNICEF delivered on Sunday, are running out, Mr. Cappalaere said, calling for more vaccines to be delivered.

He also stressed the urgent need for affordable fuel, as pumping water requires using generators in the absence of a national power grid.

Meanwhile, on Saturday, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) said that following the announcement on 22 November by the Saudi-led coalition that Sana’a airport and Al Hudaydah seaport will be reopened for humanitarian and relief efforts, the UN submitted [notification](#) of humanitarian movements and static locations to the coalition to resume the transport of aid personnel and humanitarian cargo to northern parts of Yemen.

Almost three weeks after the blockade was imposed, essential commodities like food, fuel, safe water and medical supplies have started running low in the country or have seen their prices skyrocket.

There continues to be a grave risk of further death, disease and starvation. On 20 November, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FewsNet) warned

that should the blockade continue, many areas of Yemen are likely to experience famine within three to four months, said OCHA.

[Feature: Six months after ISIL, life is returning to Mosul despite hidden bomb threats](#)

27 November 2017 – Mosul's Al Qasoor Water Treatment Plant is on the eastern bank of the Tigris River which bisects the city that was, until about six months ago, one of the last strongholds of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The water treatment facility – which looks from the air like two dark-green turn tables – today holds about 12,000 cubic metres of fresh water pumping to 300,000 people in 24 neighbourhoods; but shortly after ISIL fell, no one wanted to go near the site for fear that it was riddled with explosives.

“The explosive contamination [in Iraq] is very extensive. It is on an industrial scale,” Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager for United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), told UN News by phone from Iraq. “I’ve worked in 14 countries, I’ve worked with this my whole life, but I’ve never seen the complexity or the variety.”

He described improvised explosive devices combined with the ammunition that has been fired but failed to detonate.

“All the improvised explosive devices are with homemade explosives, different types of switches, ranging from pressure plates, anti-lift devices, infrared devices and even remote-control devices,” he said, adding that there are also belts that go on for kilometres with tens of thousands of attached explosives that will set off like dominos.

The water treatment plant was, unlike the hospital in west Mosul or the University of Mosul, without explosives. Once UNMAS confirmed it was safe, the facility was rebuilt – most of the plant's pumps, valves, switches and control panels were destroyed, as was its chlorination system and filtration pools. It opened this past August.

Despite this danger, life is returning to Mosul and services are being re-established – school classes are resuming, hospitals are starting to treat patients, people play football in open areas.

This return to life was captured through the lens of Jarvis Yar, a documentary photographer based in the Middle East and on assignment for UNMAS in Mosul.

See the photos and hear from Mr. Yar and Mr. Lodhammar in the video below.

VIDEO: Six months after ISIL, life is returning to Mosul despite hidden bomb threats. Jarvis Yar, a documentary photographer, and Pehr Lodhammar, Senior Programme Manager for United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), narrate.

[‘No preconditions’ accepted from Syrian parties, UN envoy says ahead of Geneva talks](#)

27 November 2017 – Ahead of fresh [intra-Syrian talks](#) on Tuesday in Geneva, the United Nations mediator said Monday that the crisis now has the potential to move towards “a genuine political process.”

“International players are [clearly looking for some common ground](#) based on the implementation of Security Council [resolution 2254 \(2015\)](#), and are urging Syrians to begin to find some common ground too,” UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura told a Security Council meeting in New York via video link from Geneva.

As mandated by resolution 2254, the talks focus on governance, a schedule and process to draft a new constitution and the holding of elections as the basis for a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned process to end the conflict.

Mr. de Mistura said that in preparing for the eighth round of intra-Syrian talks, he called for “real” diplomacy, with his messages focused on several points, such as that the Government and a united opposition should engage in negotiations in Geneva without any preconditions and that all other initiatives should support this UN mediation process.

He noted that some important meetings have recently taken place in Viet Nam’s DaNang, Russia’s Sochi, and Saudi Arabia’s Riyadh that might help the Geneva process.

In DaNang, Russian President Vladimir Putin and United States President Donald Trump affirmed that the political process “must include full implementation of Council resolution 2254.

In Sochi, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad expressed, after meeting President Putin, his intention to “talk with anyone who is really interested in a political settlement.”

Mr. de Mistura, however, noted the Government has not yet confirmed its participation in the new round of the UN-facilitated Geneva talks.

In Riyadh, an expanded opposition conference was convened last week, with all three groups mentioned in resolution 2254 present. The Syrian Negotiations Commission formed in Riyadh is travelling to Geneva.

United support of international community and Security Council, vital for progress

“Assuming that both parties arrive in Geneva, we will be looking to move them into beginning serious discussions and hopefully negotiations. Let me make one thing clear: we will not accept any preconditions from either party,” he said.

He also stressed that more than 200 civil society actors will be engaged in the UN-led political process in Geneva over the next weeks.

He said he is invited to participate in a preparatory meeting on Tuesday that France organized to bring together representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council – China, France, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States – in Geneva.

As for a large gathering on Syria in the near future that Russia is planning, Mr. de Mistura said it is premature for him to say anything about that initiative.

“I will continue to view this proposal and all other initiatives through the same prism: does it contribute to effective UN-led intra-Syrian negotiations in Geneva to implement resolution 2254,” he said.

Syria has been at war for the last six years. Half of its population have fled their homes, and, [according](#) to the UN’s relief wing, some 13 million people require humanitarian aid, including nearly three million trapped in besieged and hard-to-reach areas. Reconstruction will cost at least \$250 billion.

“We see the emergence of international consensus, and we must begin to stitch the process into concrete results, enabling Syrians to determine their own future freely,” Mr. de Mistura said. “The united support of the international community, centred on this Council, will be vital if negotiations are to move forward in a concrete way.”