

[Bonn: Initiative to increase insurance coverage for climate-related disasters launched at UN conference](#)

14 November 2017 – On the heels of one of the worst – and most costly – Atlantic hurricane seasons on record, a global initiative was launched Wednesday at the United Nations Climate Change Conference ([COP23](#)), in Bonn, Germany, with the aim of providing insurance to hundreds of millions of vulnerable people by 2020 and to increase the resilience of developing countries against the impacts of climate change.

In 2017, extreme weather events are estimated to have caused more than \$200 billion worth of damage worldwide, as hurricanes, droughts and rising sea levels devastated vulnerable communities with increased frequency and intensity. In the face of skyrocketing costs, new forms of financial protection have become an increasingly urgent part of the climate change discussion.

The [InsuResilience](#) Global Partnership is a major scaling-up of an initiative started by the G7 in 2015 under the German Presidency. It aims at meeting the pledge of providing cover and support to an extra 400 million vulnerable people by 2020.

The Global Partnership now brings together G20 countries in partnership with the so called ‘V20’ nations, a group of 49 of the most vulnerable countries including small islands like Fiji, which holds the Presidency of COP23.

“The Global Partnership is a practical response to the needs of those who suffer loss because of climate change,” said the COP23 President and Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama.

This announcement on climate risk insurance was made a day before the high-level segment of COP23, which Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, are expected to attend.

Thomas Silberhorn, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, announced support of 125 million dollar for the new Global Partnership as part of the launch. This follows the £30 million commitment to the initiative made by the British Government in July 2017.

“Climate risk insurance is a response to the simple fact that extreme weather events are constantly increasing in number and intensity, and also a response to our experience that the international community and the countries affected by extreme weather events tend to really act after those incidents occurred and they tend to come too late and to intervene not significantly enough,” Mr. Silberhorn told a press conference.

“So our intention is to act more preemptively, to act in time, and to act decisively in order to reduce the impact of extreme weather events. Insurance is one tool to address this challenge,” he added.

A partnership for climate and disaster risk finance and insurance solutions

The Global Partnership supports data and risk analysis, technical assistance and capacity building according to countries needs and priorities, solutions design of concrete risk finance and insurance solutions, smart support for the implementation for such schemes and monitoring and evaluation efforts.

“This new and higher ambition initiative represents one [shining example of what can be delivered](#) when progressive governments, civil society and the private sector join hands with creativity and determination to provide solutions,” said Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change secretariat ([UNFCCC](#)).

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), for example, is being supported with the help of ‘InsuResilience.’ The most recent example of support was in September 2017, when more than \$55 million was paid out to 10 Caribbean countries within 14 days of hurricanes Irma and Maria, which left an arc of destruction across the region.

The money was used in various ways, for example, to quickly buy urgently needed medicines and to build emergency shelters for the people affected by the storms.

In Zambia, InsuResilience supports the NWK Agri-Services cotton company, which offers direct weather and life insurance to small contract farmers. In 2015, some 52,000 farmers decided to buy insurance. Following a major drought in 2016, more than 23,000 farmers received payments.

[UN warns of trafficking of Rohingya refugees in shadow of humanitarian crisis](#)

14 November 2017 – Human trafficking and exploitation are rife among Rohingya refugees who have fled Myanmar to seek safety in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, the United Nations migration agency has found.

Understanding the scope of [human trafficking](#) is difficult in most settings due to the hidden nature of the crime,” said Kateryna Ardanyan, a counter-trafficking expert of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), in a press release issued Tuesday.

“In the chaos of a crisis like this, trafficking is usually invisible at first, as there are so many other urgent needs like food and shelter. But agencies responding to this crisis should not wait until the number of identified victims increases,” she added.

According to interviews and community focus groups conducted in the district’s makeshift settlements by IOM, desperate men, women and children are being recruited with false offers of paid work in various industries including fishing, small commerce, begging and, in the case of girls, domestic work.

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With almost no alternative source of income, the refugees are willing to take whatever opportunities they are presented with, even ones that are risky, dangerous and that involve their children.

Once they start the job, they usually find that they are not paid what was promised. They are often deprived of sleep, made to work more hours than was agreed, not allowed to leave their work premises and not allowed to contact their family. Women and girls are often physically or sexually abused.

Some report being forced into jobs which they never agreed to do. In one case, a number of adolescent girls, who were promised work as domestic helpers in Cox’s Bazar and Chittagong, were forced into prostitution. Others reported being brought to locations different from the agreed destination.

In one case, a woman reportedly went to work for a family and was brought back to the settlements dead. The family of the victim received a settlement from the employers.

Many of the recruiters are Bangladeshi, while some are Rohingya, and many were established in the area prior to the most recent influx. The number of criminals and trafficking rings operating in the district has expanded with the population.

The abuse mainly occurs in neighbourhoods surrounding the settlements, but recruiters are also taking people to places as far away as Cox’s Bazar city, Chittagong and Dhaka.

IOM is also aware of cases where Rohingya have been trafficked to outside Bangladesh, and is assisting the victims. Most of the trafficking is taking place inside the country, which follows the pattern of trafficking globally.

Forced and early marriages are also taking place among the Rohingya population. For many families, it is a coping mechanism that offers protection and economic advancement for young Rohingya women and girls.

“Rohingya refugees need preventative and proactive action now to

mitigate risks of human trafficking, and the survivors need help, before this spirals out of control,” Ms. Ardanyan said.

Over 617,000 Rohingya refugees have settled in Cox's Bazar since 25 August, but exploitation of the Rohingya population in the district has been occurring since well before this most recent influx of people.

[Largest gathering of defence ministers dedicated to UN peacekeeping to kick off in Vancouver](#)

13 November 2017 – It is extremely critical that “major gaps” in equipment and staff needed to maintain United Nations peacekeeping operations are filled “in the shortest possible time possible” Atul Khare, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, said ahead of a major gathering of global defence ministers in Canada.

On the eve of the second [UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference](#), taking place on Tuesday and Wednesday in Vancouver, British Columbia, Mr. Khare said: “We are trying to make do. We are trying to do the best that we can; we are trying many innovations.”

The Conference, hosted by Canada, is the largest gathering of defence ministers dedicated to [UN peacekeeping](#). It aims to:

- measure the progress made since the 2016 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference;
- encourage new pledges from Member States, particularly in areas where the UN faces gaps, such as rapid deployment, helicopters and francophone units;
- advance peacekeeping reform through the efforts of Member States and the UN to improve the UN's capacity to better plan and perform peacekeeping operations; and
- foster pragmatic and innovative solutions to make peacekeeping operations more effective, by building on the ‘3Ps’ → pledges, planning, performance – with a new focus on partnerships.

“This meeting is critical to our work. We have now indications that about 80 countries – which is quite a large number – are likely to attend at ministerial level [...] This is a very good indication of the importance which countries attach to this meeting,” said Mr. Khare.

In an exclusive interview with *UN News*, the senior official talks more about the importance of the meeting to UN peacekeeping, and what his expectations are for the outcome.

VIDEO: Under-Secretary-General Atul Khare calls for international support as ways to improve and make peacekeeping operations more effective.

AUDIO: Under-Secretary-General Atul Khare says that it is extremely critical to fill major gaps in UN peacekeeping.

UN News will be in Vancouver, British Columbia, covering the Conference and its associated events. Follow [@UN_News_Centre](#) to stay up to date on news and highlights.

Road safety 'morally, economically sound investment,' UN envoy tells global forum

13 November 2017 – Calling for greater efforts to reduce road traffic deaths worldwide, the United Nations envoy for road safety on Monday stressed that a proposed UN fund, along with national investments, would turn the tide of rising fatality numbers.

“If established, a global Fund would be of huge significance in the fight to turn the tide of rising fatality numbers, but only if the catalytic funding is complemented by national investments made by governments towards road safety,” Jean Todt, UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety told a ministerial world conference in New Delhi, India.

He said that road safety receives 1,000 times less than other causes with a similar fatality rate like AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria.

The proposal for a ‘UN Road Safety Fund,’ which is now under the UN Secretary-General’s consideration, provides for the first time a clear indication of the amount of funding required to attain relevant targets under the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Todt, also President of the International Automobile Federation, noted that 1.25 million people die on the world’s roads every year, with 50 million more left seriously injured.

India accounts for more than 10 per cent of all road related fatalities recorded globally, despite having only three per cent of the world’s vehicles, and the reforms put forward by the Government to the Motor Vehicles Act would save many thousands of lives and serious injuries on the country’s roads, he added.

South East Asia accounts for 25 per cent of global traffic deaths, an

estimated 316,000 lives tragically lost.

“The outlook is startling, especially when we take into account the expected rise in urbanization as well as increase in the number of motor vehicles which sadly, is expected to increase road traffic fatalities if no changes are made,” he said. “If we are to make progress towards the global targets, a dramatic upscaling of our efforts is urgently required.”

He said that in France, where he is from, 18,000 lives were lost in the early 1970s before road safety became a national priority. That number has since be reduced to just over 3,000 today despite car numbers going up threefold.

The turnaround is a result of a focus on safer roads, drivers, and vehicles; improved post-crash care and the enforcement of strong legislation, he added.

“The truth is that road safety is morally and economically a sound investment,” he stressed, citing initiatives, such as Mexico’s ‘Vision Zero’ Campaign that aims for a 35 per cent reduction in road traffic fatalities and Malaysia’s public declaration to upgrade 75 per cent of road infrastructure by 2020.

At the conference, transport ministers adopted the Delhi Declaration, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to effectively implement the ambitious road safety-related targets in the 2030 Agenda and welcomed the discussion on the establishment of a UN Road Safety Fund.

[Antibiotic resistance is ‘crisis we cannot ignore,’ UN warns, calling for responsible use of these medicines](#)

13 November 2017 – As World Antibiotic Awareness Week began on Monday, the United Nations, through its Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), called for responsible use of antibiotics in humans and animals to reduce the emergence of antibiotic resistance.

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“Antibiotic resistance is a [global crisis](#) that we cannot ignore,” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. “If we don’t tackle this threat with strong, coordinated action, antimicrobial resistance will take us back

to a time when people feared common infections and risked their lives from minor surgery.”

Antibiotic resistance is rising to dangerously high levels in all parts of the world and threatening our ability to treat common infectious diseases. Infections affecting people – including pneumonia, tuberculosis, blood poisoning and gonorrhoea – and animals alike are becoming harder, and sometimes impossible, to treat as antibiotics become less effective.

“FAO advocates for the [implementation of good practices](#) in terrestrial and aquatic production and health systems,” said Kundhavi Kadiresan, the UN agency’s Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, as she formally opened the Week’s celebrations in the region.

This year’s theme is to seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional before taking antibiotics. For food and agriculture, this means that one of the best ways to tackle AMR is to diminish the need of antimicrobials at farm settings through the promotion of good practices in livestock production, aquaculture farming and crop production.

“[These] are practical steps that would promote prudent use of antimicrobials in the region,” explained Ms. Kadiresan.

To tackle these problems, WHO, FAO and OIE are leveraging their expertise and working together in a ‘One Health’ approach to promote best practices to reduce the emergence and spread of antibiotic-resistant microbes in both humans and animals.

“The overuse of antimicrobials blunts their effectiveness, and we must reduce their misuse in food systems,” said José Graziano da Silva, Director-General of FAO. “Antimicrobial veterinary medicines are a crucial tool for animal health and welfare and safe food production, but they are by no means the only tool.”

“Like in human health, veterinary medicine has tremendously progressed thanks to antibiotics. Preserving their efficacy and availability through their responsible use associated with good husbandry and prevention practices, is therefore essential to preserve animal health and welfare,” highlighted Dr. Monique Eloit, Director-General of OIE.