

UN will accompany Haiti in shaping a sustainable future, deputy Mission chief says

25 October 2017 – The United Nations will remain side by side with Haiti on the country's path to sustainable development, the Organization's senior official in the island nation has said.

"Haiti is one of the 193 countries that have adopted the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and has set itself the goal of becoming an emerging country and economy by 2030,' Mamadou Diallo said Tuesday in his first press conference as the Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti ([MINUJUSTH](#)).

"Not only are these objectives possible, but they represent the commitment of Haiti with its children and grandchildren for a better future, and the United Nations will remain side-by-side with Haiti on this path," he told reporters in the country's capital, Port-au-Prince.

Regarding MINUJUSTH, which began its mandate on 16 October 2017, he said the operation represents a new window of opportunity to foster sustainable development in the country.

"MINUJUSTH [can assist the country] to consolidate the political stability achieved during the last years towards a democratic, stable and prosperous future for all Haitians," he stated.

Mr. Diallo called on Haiti's youth and women to help address the challenges facing the nation.

"I would like to stress that the United Nations regards youth and women as a priority sector of the population and driving forces for the country's development," he emphasized.

In his capacity as UN Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator, Mr. Diallo affirmed that the UN system in Haiti remains engaged with the Haitian people to provide humanitarian assistance and support development.

"Nevertheless, the UN's priority and approach will strengthen the resilience of institutions and the population to better prevent, respond to and overcome external shocks and humanitarian situations. We are convinced that this is the way to gradually reduce the need for humanitarian assistance and build a solid foundation for development," he explained.

UN Economic and Social Council urges 'action now;' long-term measures to tackle natural disasters

25 October 2017 – The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on Wednesday called on UN Member States and the international community to ensure that in the wake of the devastating floods, hurricanes and earthquakes that impacted numerous countries, the humanitarian response is complemented by medium- and long-term recovery and reconstruction efforts.

Following yesterday's ECOSOC [Special Meeting](#) on the 'Aftermath of recent hurricanes: Achieving a risk-informed and resilient [2030 Agenda](#),' Council President Marie Chatardová issued a Statement expressing the UN body's deepest condolences to the victims, and extending solidarity to all the affected people and Governments in the hurricane-hit Caribbean, Central America and the United States, as well as in Mexico, which was struck by successive earthquakes, and in Africa and South Asia, where severe flooding wreaked havoc.

"Early [humanitarian response has been critical](#) for saving lives and livelihoods and the provision of essential services," said the Statement. "Preparedness and partnerships played an essential role as prepositioned personnel, logistics and stocks allowed the humanitarian response and emergency supplies to arrive more quickly."

As assessments continue amid displacement and disruptions to livelihoods, immediate needs concentrate in the sectors of health, water, sanitation and hygiene, food security and shelter.

The Statement emphasized that the international community must ensure that a humanitarian response is complemented by medium- and long-term recovery and reconstruction efforts to put countries "on a sustainable path to achieve a risk-informed and resilient 2030 Agenda."

It stressed that efforts build on existing initiatives to help affected countries reconstruct with resilience and called for greater investment in disaster risk reduction, including preparedness, early warning and early action, while urging greater risk-informed investment in infrastructure and housing.

"We call for stronger collaboration, connectivity and complementarity between humanitarian, development, disaster risk reduction and climate action to define and deliver collective outcomes to reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years," said the Council, indicating that specific attention must be given to the most vulnerable people facing climate change and extreme weather events.

Elaborating on the measures needed in both the medium and long term, the

Council called for longer term recovery, development and reconstruction programmes, pointing to, among others, the regeneration of industries, including tourism, agriculture and fisheries.

“Importantly, key industries and livelihoods must be made sustainable and resilient to the impacts of future extreme weather events and other hazards. We must support efforts of affected and vulnerable countries to diversify their economies and harness the benefits of digital economy to enhance their economic resilience,” the Statement continued.

“We need to act urgently,” the members of the Council asserted, adding: “The Council is committed to continue to promote coordination in the work of the UN development system and intends to follow-up in 2018 to ensure strong progress on the ground.

[Poor maritime connectivity hurting weaker, smaller nations – UN report](#)

25 October 2017 – A United Nations report out Wednesday revealed the poor maritime connectivity continues to keep smaller and weaker economies from reaching world markets, highlighting the need for evidence-based improvements to trading systems and procedures to address these challenges.

“Planning and forecasts can be significantly improved if data on maritime transport networks are included in the relevant policy processes, such as negotiating trade deals and transport infrastructure development plans,” said Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)), in a [news release](#) announcing the findings.

According to the UNCTAD [Review of Maritime Transport](#), lack of access is particularly challenging for landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and least developed countries leading to fewer, unreliable and expensive transport connections.

These obstacles also further widen the rift between the best- and worst-connected countries, added the news release, calling for increased interconnectedness between national, regional and intercontinental liner shipping services.

“In many countries, domestic shipping services for [transport of goods] are protected from foreign competition. Such market restrictions can lead to unnecessary inefficiencies and a loss of maritime connectivity,” it noted.

Furthermore, well-designed policies allowing – under clearly defined conditions – international shipping lines to also carry domestic or international cargo from feeder vessels can enhance both the competitiveness

of a nation's seaports and the access of importers and exporters to international shipping services, highlighted UNCTAD.

Explaining the benefits, Shamika N. Sirimanne, the Director of the Technology and Logistics Division at UNCTAD said: "Fostering competition among ports is important to ensure that port operators maximize efficiency and pass on efficiency gains to their clients."

Equally important is improving multimodal transport links: efficient regional trucking markets, inland waterways, rail and road infrastructure, and transit regimes all have an important role to play.

Importance of direct connections

UNCTAD research also revealed that four in five trading country-pairs do not have a direct connection between them which in turn leads to lesser trade between them.

"A key question for trade and transport analysts is whether there are no direct connections between the two countries because there is not enough demand, or [...] because the two trading partners are not well connected," highlighted Jan Hoffmann, the Chief of the Trade Logistics Branch at UNCTAD.

Improving links can, therefore, help boost trade between countries, lower costs associated and also help improve connectivity.

Source: Review of Maritime Transport 2017 report | UNCTAD

[In Saudi Arabia, UN envoy seeks to further initiatives to end violence in Yemen](#)

25 October 2017 – A United Nations envoy has met with senior Yemeni and Saudi officials to discuss his initiatives to end fighting in Yemen, stressing that "this is at heart a political conflict so it can only be solved with political negotiations."

These discussions took place in Saudi Arabia's capital, Riyadh, where UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed wrapped up a four-day visit Wednesday.

In 2015, Yemen plunged into civil war between Houthi rebels and supporters of Yemen's internationally recognized Government.

"We are currently exploring significant steps that each side can take to

restore confidence and move towards a viable negotiated settlement,” said Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed at the end of the visit during which he met with Yemeni President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and Foreign Minister Abdel-Malek Al-Mikhlafi.

The UN envoy added that these steps include a renewed ceasefire, confidence-building measures to alleviate the humanitarian suffering and the return to the negotiation table towards a comprehensive peace agreement.

During the visit, the UN envoy also met with Saudi officials, including Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir and Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs David Satterfield, as well as Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Abdullatif Al-Zayyani.

“This large-scale suffering must end. I appeal to the parties to make the necessary concessions that can help paving the way for a long-lasting peace, and to the international community to ensure unity of purpose in supporting these much-needed initiatives,” Mr. Ould Cheikh Ahmed said.

[Peru must place human rights at heart of development, urges UN rights chief](#)

25 October 2017 – While Peru has made great strides over the past decade in reducing poverty, it needs to stand up firmly for human rights to ensure an economy that is sustainable and benefits all, according to the United Nations human rights chief.

“I welcome Peru’s efforts to fight poverty and exclusion, and its economic progress is undeniable,” said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein on Tuesday at the end of a [two-day](#) visit to the country – where he met with President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, authorities from Congress and the Judiciary, civil society representatives and the private sector.

“The country must now consolidate such advances by continuing to strengthen the rule of law and the protection of human rights,” he added.

“Development, to be truly sustainable, should not leave anyone behind, and should never be at the expense of the rights of some members of society,” the High Commissioner stressed.

The High Commissioner highlighted the Government’s development of a National Human Rights Action Plan and called for the meaningful participation of all sectors, particularly civil society groups.

“It is our sincere hope that the resulting National Action Plan can adequately address Peru’s human rights needs, particularly those of the most

vulnerable groups,” he said, reiterating his office’s readiness to continue providing support and technical expertise.

Mr. Zeid also urged the Government to protect human rights defenders, saying “Peru is no exception to a trend across the Americas – and indeed the world – of harassment, intimidation and alarming attacks on human rights activists.”

The implementation of the 2016 legal framework and National Plan to search for people missing between 1980 and 2000 is also urgent, according to the High Commissioner who voiced concern that “the recommendations made more than a decade ago by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have to date been insufficiently implemented.”

“The high level of impunity for violations committed during this period is deeply troubling,” the High Commissioner recalled, saying that victims’ needs must be addressed, including their right to truth, justice and reparations and “resources must be made available to ensure that the search for the missing can be fully carried out.”

Turning to the presidential pardon for former President Alberto Fujimori, who was sentenced in 2009 to 25 years in prison, Mr. Zeid stressed: “Fujimori was convicted of crimes amounting to crimes against humanity, that is, crimes of interest to the international community as a whole. The international community must be approached and engaged in this highly important matter.”

Mr. Zeid acknowledged that with women and girls at high risk of gender-based violence, laws designed to prevent and punish those crimes, including domestic violence and femicide, are important, however rigorous implementation and strong preventive measures are also required to ensure punishment for the perpetrator.

“I urge the Government to address the social and cultural attitudes that continue to be used to justify violence against women,” he said.

Mr. Zeid also appealed for improvements in women’s sexual and reproductive rights, calling the country’s recent amendments aimed at promoting gender equality and LGBTI a “setback.”