

Three multinationals join UN global network on disability inclusion

23 October 2017 – Three multinational enterprises – Capgemini, Legrand and the Savola Group – today became the latest members of a United Nations global network that promotes equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in the workplace.

“People with disabilities constitute some 15 per cent of the world’s population,” pointed out Guy Ryder, Director-General of the UN International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)), at the annual meeting in Geneva of the [Global Business and Disability Network](#).

“In striving to achieve full and equal rights and participation in society for all women and men with disabilities, we are pleased to [forge and strengthen](#) such as the Global Business and Disability Network,” he added.

The Network serves as a platform for companies for peer-to-peer support on disability inclusion policies and practices, with the goal to promote the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities in the private sector, including in developing countries.

Participants at the meeting discussed the business case of digital accessibility and how to become more accessible for employees and clients with disabilities. Moreover, the meeting showcased good business practices on advertising that is inclusive and contributes to a positive image of persons with disabilities.

The meeting, among other things, also highlighted ways to prepare companies for the [future of work](#) by addressing their internal skills gaps through tapping into the professional potential of people with disabilities.

Representatives from Capgemini, Legrand and the Savola Group, together with other disability champions among the business community, also shared their success stories and challenges in putting principles of the Network into practice.

Road accidents in Africa among deadliest worldwide, UN official says, urging more action

23 October 2017 – Some 650 people are killed each day in road accidents

throughout Africa, a senior United Nations official today said, calling for more to be done to keep drivers – as well as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists – safe.

“There is projected increase in urbanization, motorization, infrastructure development projects and vehicle ownership in the region over the coming decades. Road traffic fatalities and injuries will continue to take a rising toll on countries if no significant changes are made,” warned the Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt, addressing the [2017 Africa Road Safety Conference](#) in Cape Town, South Africa.

To change this trend, Mr. Todt urged participating governments to implement the Global Plan for the Decade of Action and the African Road Safety Action Plan, which focuses on safer roads, vehicles and road users. It also details improved post-crash care and stronger road safety governance, including the enforcement of strong legislation.

He also called for implementing basic laws not obeyed in some countries, such as using seat belts and helmets, child safety seats, and prohibiting drunk drivers.

“As much as strong legislation is important, a national vision and leadership are essential to lasting improvements in road safety,” he said, also citing opportunities to place road safety higher on global and national agendas.

The third area which could lead to reduced road traffic fatalities is to place more resources in collecting data, which can then lead to the development of strategies, monitor needs and assess impact.

“At the very basic level – within how many days after a crash can a death be classified as a road traffic fatality? Can we as a global community come to an agreement on data issues like these,” Mr. Todt said.

He added that reliable data is also urgently needed to achieve the Decade of Action for Road Safety, which runs through 2019, and the Sustainable Development Goals, which include a target calling for road fatalities and injuries to be halved by 2020, and another target related to safe and affordable access to sustainable transport systems for all by 2030.

“The continent suffers from the highest road traffic fatality rate than any other region – despite having less than five per cent of the world’s registered vehicles,” Mr. Todt said, noting the particular importance that improving road safety has in changing the lives of Africans.

He noted that 90 per cent of people and goods on the African continent are moved by road, adding that road crashes “can strip a country from realizing their true development potential.”

Rohingya crisis: Donors pledge \$344 million at UN-backed conference to support aid efforts

23 October 2017 – A United Nations-supported humanitarian conference today raised more than \$344 million to fund critical relief programmes for Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh.

The exodus – which began in late August – continues unabated, making the crisis the fastest growing refugee emergency in the world today. As of Sunday, some 603,000 refugees are estimated to have arrived in Bangladesh and thousands more reportedly remain stranded in Myanmar without the means to cross the border.

“Humanitarian donors have today expressed their solidarity and compassion with the families and communities in need,” said Mark Lowcock, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator.

“These very generous pledges must now quickly translate into life-saving relief for the vulnerable refugees and support to host communities who have been stretched to the limit,” he added.

Since the crisis began, UN agencies have ramped up their relief efforts, including conducting a massive immunization campaign that inoculated more than 700,000 people against cholera, as well as providing food assistance to hundreds of thousands of refugees.

However, the scale of the crisis has overwhelmed the response, and emergency shelters, blankets, clean water, health care and other forms of aid are urgently needed. Adding to the complexity is that Bangladesh was already hosting about 200,000 Rohingya refugees prior to the crisis.

“More than 800,000 stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh aspire to a life that meets their immediate needs for food, medicine, water, and shelter. But beyond that, a life that has hope for the future where their identity is recognised, they are free from discrimination, and are able to return safely to their homes in Myanmar,” said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi.

“As we come together in solidarity, I want to thank Bangladesh and its refugee-hosting communities and the donors for supporting them,” he added.

There were a total of 35 pledges made today, including money pledged and committed since 25 August as well as new announcements. Several donors also announced in-kind assistance worth more than \$50 million. Fundraising campaigns are also underway in several countries.

One such initiative is the UN World Food Programme's app *ShareTheMeal*, which launched a worldwide campaign on Sunday to raise funds to feed Rohingya refugee children and provide them with vital nutrition with a simple tap on their phones.

The [pledging conference](#) was co-organized by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) and the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)). It was co-hosted by the European Union and the Government of Kuwait.

No durable humanitarian solutions to political crises – IOM chief

Also speaking today, IOM Director General William Lacy Swing underscored that while sustainable life-saving assistance for the refugee population in Bangladesh needs to be ensured, the root causes of the crisis need to be addressed.

"We must urge international leaders to support the peaceful resolution of this decade-long crisis in Myanmar and insist that the authorities create conditions of safety, security and dignity in Rakhine state to one of the world's most persecuted populations," he [said](#).

Adding that the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission offer a way forward to peaceful co-existence, Mr. Swing underscored that the implementation must start immediately and that the first step is to allow humanitarians to resume their work in the northern part of Rakhine state.

[Wildlife conservation, sustainable development in spotlight at UN-backed conference](#)

23 October 2017 – Unless the international community integrates wildlife conservation with sustainable development, it will not be able to protect the remaining animal species on Earth, the head of a United Nations-backed environmental treaty today said at the opening of a wildlife conference in the Philippines.

"Development without a regard for the environment is not sustainable. Their future is our future," [said](#) the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), Brandee Chambers, in a press conference on the opening day of the Twelfth Meeting of countries that have

joined CMS.

The week-long event is being billed as “the year’s largest wildlife conference,” and is for the first time being convened in Asia since the treaty was adopted in Germany in 1979.

More than 1,000 delegates from 120 countries are expected for the five-day conference that will focus on protecting some of the most vulnerable animals in the world, such as the whale shark, which is the world’s largest fish with a rapidly declining population due to fishing, illegal poaching, and other human activity.

Among other animals that the hundreds of governments, civil society and private sector representatives, and experts will discuss are ten species of vultures and the Steppe Eagle, which are threatened with extinction, and the giraffe, which is not safeguarded by any convention.

Participants are also expected to strengthen their work with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), to conserve African carnivores, such as the African lion, the cheetah, the leopard, and the African wild dog.

These proposals are among the 31 to be discussed at the conference, affecting at least 35 different species.

The theme of this year’s conference is the “Their Future is Our Future – Sustainable Development for Wildlife & People,” and links to the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to alleviate poverty and hunger, while improving health and education, and protecting oceans and forests.

At today’s press conference, Mr. Chambers spoke alongside Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment, CITES Secretary General, John Scanlon, and UN Environment Goodwill Ambassadors, Nadya Hutagalung and Yann Arthus-Bertrand, along with the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources Director, Roy Cimato.

“Our wildlife is not an optional extra, but the basis upon which all our livelihoods and progress depend,” Mr. Chambers [said](#) in a press release later in the day.

[UN, African Union pledge to help Kenya ensure credible rerun of presidential poll](#)

23 October 2017 – The heads of the United Nations and the African Union have

expressed their organizations' commitment to assist Kenya in ensuring a credible and transparent process in the rerun of the recent presidential election.

In a [joint statement](#) issued Sunday by the two organizations, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres and AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat urged all political actors, parties and their supporters to create conditions for a peaceful election and refrain from any act of violence.

On 1 September, the Supreme Court of Kenya nullified the August 2017 election and ordered the holding of a new one.

It is critical that all concerned work towards the preservation of calm and peace in the country, the statement said.

The two leaders said that they continue to closely monitor developments in Kenya, in the light of the forthcoming election, calling on all stakeholders to cooperate with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the constitutionally-mandated body to conduct the election.

They stressed the need for the Kenyan security services to exercise restraint, use minimal force in performing their duties and respect the freedom and political liberties of all Kenyans.