

On International Day, UN highlights rural women's participation in sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural

15 October 2017 – Women and girls are central to the sustainability of rural households and communities, improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing, but their role and significance is often overlooked, the head of the United Nations entity for women's empowerment today said.

In her statement for International Day of Rural Women – marked annually on 15 October – Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka noted that women farmers are just as productive and enterprising as male counterparts, but often lack equal access to land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets and high-value agrifood chains.

Rural women are highly capable and knowledgeable custodians of their land, and can move further ahead to more fully and effectively participate in green value chains, including by profitably and sustainably linking rural and urban markets, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka said Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka in her statement for the Day.

Globally, women comprise 43 per cent of the agricultural workforce, according to UN figures, with smallholder agriculture farmers producing nearly 80 per cent of food in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and support the livelihoods of some 2.5 billion people.

According to some estimates, closing the gender gap in access to land and other productive assets could increase agricultural outputs by up to 20 per cent in Africa.

Noting this year's theme for the Day, which focuses on opportunities and challenges in climate-resistant agriculture, the head of UN Women called for more training and skills development for rural women and girls so that they can play a greater role in the development of green food and agricultural value chains.

In addition, she highlighted the role that women farmers can play in protecting biodiversity through the use of indigenous crops and agro-ecological farming methods that are environmentally friendly and free of toxic chemicals.

All this relies on the Governments, however, – providing the social and physical infrastructure that enables rural women's participation in sustainable, climate-resilient agricultural production, processing, transport and marketing.

But she stressed that life in a rural setting should not automatically lead to agriculture.

Rural girls have an equal right to their urban peers to a good education, careers in STEM and a thriving role in the digital revolution, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka said referring to the acronym for vocations related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

She added that girls should also not automatically end up in unpaid positions caring for family members.

Only once these inequalities are purposefully levelled, will both women and girls, whether rural or urban, be able to take their place at the heart of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the growth of a better future for us all, the senior UN official said.

International Day of Rural Women is marked one day before World Food Day, which will focus this year on investing in food security and rural development in the context of migration, and on 17 October, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

[Parliamentary forum opens in Russia; discussions to include UN cooperation](#)

14 October 2017 – A committee to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) will discuss its work at the annual IPU forum, which began today in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Ahead of today's opening, IPU said that its 2,000 delegates will focus discussions this week on overcoming intolerance, xenophobia and extremism.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, new technologies and migration are breaking down old barriers and bringing people together in different ways, IPU said in the opening press conference in Russia, which featured Martin Chungong, the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

During the Assembly, the parliamentarians are expected to sign a petition promoting democratic societies. They will also discuss a number of global issues, including prohibition of nuclear weapons, cyber-security, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) and promotion of renewable energy.

"We can no longer address global solutions without global reflection and consensus," Mr. Chungong said.

Among other issues, the IPU's Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

will discuss its work and look at ways to bring a more robust parliamentary contribution to the major global processes, according to IPU.

I hope in the future all UN Member States will become IPU members, as well, Valentina Matvienko, the Chairwoman of the Federation Council, said on the opening day, which included a forum for women parliamentarians.

The IPU is not a member of the United Nations, but following an agreement in July 2016, the two organizations agreed to strengthen collaboration on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

[UN in Somalia condemns 'barbaric' bombings in Mogadishu](#)

14 October 2017 – The United Nations in Somalia strongly condemned today's blasts in the capital, Mogadishu, which reportedly killed or injured dozens of people.

In a tweet, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia ([UNSOM](#)) denounced the barbaric bombings in Mogadishu targeting civilians.

The head of UNSOM and UN Special Representative of Secretary-General in the country Michael Keating tweeted that he was horrified by the attacks.

He extended his deepest condolences to the families and friends of the dead and injured.

According to media reports, a massive car bomb detonated outside the entrance to a hotel in the city's K5 junction, which is home to government offices, hotels and restaurants.

Later in the day, a second bombing was reported in the city's Madina district.

[In Kyoto, Japanese comedians tackle UN](#)

Global Goals

13 October 2017 – Japanese comedians on Friday competed to make people laugh by weaving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) into their performance at a United Nations-supported special event in Kyoto, the country's cultural centre.

“It is fascinating to see so many people take interest in [SDGs](#) with today's comedy show as an entry point, thanks to the influence of entertainment,” said Kaoru Nemoto, Director of UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Tokyo. “Laughter can open up people's minds, and comedy and entertainment can break barriers.”

This creative experiment was made possible by UNIC Tokyo's special collaboration launched earlier this year with Yoshimoto Kogyo, an entertainment troupe with some 6,000 comedians under its management.

Jeff Brez, Chief, NGO Relations, Advocacy and Special Events of UN Department of Public Information, said that the UN needs the help of the creative community to spread the word about this master plan to guide the planet to a sustainable future through 2030.

“The challenge of SDGs is that it is complex and that we need time to address. We would like to help bring everybody on board and engage in this important agenda, through simple and down-to-earth messages,” said Yoshimoto Kogyo President and Chief Executive Officer Hiroshi Osaki.



UN staff join Kagamiwari ritual to celebrate the opening of the Kyoto International Film Festival. Photo: UNIC Tokyo/Takashi Okano

According to a news release from the festival's organizer, five groups took to the stage wearing a rainbow of colored t-shirts emblazoned with a SDG's logo. Each group had to choose at least three of the 17 Goals in to their routine.

Last up were Non-Style, who managed to incorporate 11 Goals as they portrayed a baseball player and his girlfriend as the player plans to give her a birthday present. Ms. Nemoto, who served as the judge, decided to award Non-Style the prize of United Nations goods.

The event was part of the 4th Kyoto International Film and Art Festival.

The festival opened on Thursday and runs through Sunday, at the Nishi Hongwanji Temple, a World Heritage site designated by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)).

SDGs-themed events during the festival also include a screening of a short promotional movie on SDGs produced by top Japanese creators, and a game for

children to collect 17 SDGs stamps featuring the comedians' messages.

People's lives continue to worsen, but they live with hope, says UN official in Ukraine

13 October 2017 – Concluding her visit to Ukraine, the United Nations Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator underlined on Friday the urgent need for humanitarian funding to address the dire situation faced by millions of civilians during the coming winter months.

“I met people who showed incredible resilience. [Their lives continue to worsen, but they live with hope](#),” said Ursula Mueller, who is also the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, in a news release.

“Their only wish is for peace, to be able to return home and live a normal life.”

During her three-day visit, Ms. Mueller met with officials as well as with those affected by the conflict, witnessing first-hand the human face of the conflict on both sides of the “contact-line,” the news release noted.

The UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator also met with leaders of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, where she stressed the need for increased cooperation to align relief and development efforts. In meetings with the de facto authorities in Donetsk, she called for sustained humanitarian access to all areas in eastern Ukraine.

The news release also noted that during her meeting with the Deputy Minister of Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons, in Kyiv, the challenging situation facing 1.6 million displaced Ukrainians and providing them with services and benefits was discussed.