

[UN concerned for safety of more than five million displaced in northern Iraq](#)

9 October 2017 – As the Iraqi offensive in and near Hawija in Kirkuk Governorate is drawing to a close, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners expressed deep concern on Monday for the safety of civilian populations in the region.

“Protection remains our overriding concern,” said Lise Grande, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, [press release](#).

She said humanitarians are deeply worried about incidents of collective punishment, restrictions on free movement, evictions, forced returns and sexual exploitation and violence, including in emergency sites and camps.

Ms. Grande reported that more than 5.4 million civilians have been displaced since 2014, millions of which have been helped to safety and protected by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Government.

Humanitarian partners working in Iraq characterize the humanitarian crisis as a protection crisis.

“There are heart-breaking cases of children, the elderly and disabled people being separated from their families. Hundreds of thousands of people, including tens of thousands of very young children, have been exposed to extreme danger, stress, and trauma and will require years of specialized support and care,” said Ms. Grande.

[Global unemployment passes 200 million in 2017, UN labour agency reports](#)

9 October 2017 – More than 200 million people are out of work around the world – an increase of 3.4 million since last year, the United Nations labour agency said Monday, calling for policies that can recharge “sluggish” growth of small and medium-sized businesses.

In the new addition of its flagship report, [World Employment and Social Outlook 2017: Sustainable Enterprises and Jobs](#), the International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)) warned that small and medium sized enterprises has “stagnated,” the impact of which is worst in developing economies, where more than one in two workers are employed in small and medium-sized firms.

According to the report, private sector enterprises accounted for the bulk of global employment in 2016; they employed 2.8 billion individuals, representing 87 per cent of total employment. The sector, which also covers medium-sized firms, accounts for up to 70 per cent of all jobs in some Arab States, and well over 50 per cent in parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

But ILO research revealed these companies are struggling to grow. The latest data from more than 130 countries shows that small and medium business had faster job growth than larger firms before the global financial slump in 2008.

From 2009 however, job creation in the small and medium sector was simply “absent”, according to the ILO report, which calls for government intervention to reverse the trend.

“To [reverse the trend](#) of employment stagnation in [small and medium enterprises], we need policies to better promote SMEs and a better business environment for all firms, including access to finance for the younger ones,” said Deborah Greenfield, ILO Deputy Director-General for Policy.

The ILO research shows that full-time female permanent employees in the formal sector are more likely to be found in small and medium enterprises than in large firms. On average, and across all regions, around 30 per cent of full-time permanent employees in these businesses are women, compared with 27 per cent in large enterprises.

As such, greater numbers of women in enterprises may therefore have a positive impact on growth and development, because micro-enterprises and small businesses often offer women an entry point into the formal labour market.

Another aspect of the ILO’s World Employment and Social Outlook report is on how people’s working conditions can play a role in sustainable development. It says that providing training for staff can lead to 14 per cent higher wages and almost 20 per cent higher productivity.

Conversely, relying on short-term contractors tends to be associated with lower wages and lower productivity.

[UN emergency response fund reaches annual goal of \\$450 million, but more needed](#)

9 October 2017 – The United Nations global emergency response fund has reached its 2017 funding target of \$450 million, but much more is required

given that the number of people in need of assistance is at a record high.

“Given the many challenges we face today with 145 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, achieving the target set for 2017 provides a [much-needed boost](#) in fulfilling our mission to reach the world’s most vulnerable people with timely assistance,” UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock said Monday in a press release, acknowledging the generosity of donors.

“But given the increase in needs brought on by ongoing conflict and natural disasters this year, it is more important than ever that donors enable CERF [Central Emergency Response Fund] to reach its 2018 funding target of \$1 billion,” Mr. Lowcock, who is also Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

CERF has been at the forefront in responding quickly when crises emerged in 2017, enabling partners to deliver critical health care, food, clean water, sanitation and much more to people who need it the most, especially women and girls caught up in crises.

The Fund was among the first to provide resources when more than 20 million people this year were in or imminently close to famine in north-east Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen, helping to stave off the worst.

It allocated \$145 million to help critically underfunded responses for 14 neglected emergencies around the world, and provided \$13 million to enable humanitarians to help tens of thousands of people needing assistance following Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean, as well as \$19 million for urgent help to refugees fleeing violence in Myanmar.

Recognizing that a larger and more robust fund is critical, the UN General Assembly last year endorsed the expansion of CERF’s annual funding target from the current \$450 million to \$1 billion in 2018.

CERF’s annual high-level pledging event in December 2017 can be an important milestone towards achieving the new funding target.

“For the sake of millions of people who are suffering, I ask all countries to further stretch their generosity,” said UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres, who added; “A strong United Nations needs a strong, reliable CERF to reach people trapped in crises and to meet the needs of those still left furthest behind.”

[DR Congo: Two UN ‘blue helmets’ killed in attack in North Kivu](#)

9 October 2017 – Two United Nations peacekeepers have been killed and several

injured in an attack on their base in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a UN spokesperson said.

“The injured peacekeepers have been evacuated to Goma for medical assistance,” said spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric at the regular news briefing at UN Headquarters, in New York.

The attack was carried out this morning (local time) by suspected Allied Democratic Forces in Mamundioma, some 1,700 kilometres east of the capital, Kinshasa.

According to the UN Spokesperson, the Organization’s Stabilization Mission in the DRC (known by its French acronym, MONUSCO) has deployed attack helicopters as well as the Force Intervention Brigade in support of operations and to reinforce its presence.

It also deployed forces on the road between Kamango and Mbau to restore order and protect the populations of these towns.

Mamundioma was also the site of an attack on UN peacekeepers last month in which one UN peacekeeper from Tanzania was killed and another injured.

[Rural areas have potential to feed and employ ‘younger, more crowded planet’ – UN report](#)

9 October 2017 – Long seen as poverty traps, rural areas are in fact key to economic growth in developing countries when pegged to food production, according to a new United Nations agriculture agency report released Monday.

With ‘sweeping transformations’ that can unlock the potential of rural areas to help feed and employ a younger, more crowded planet, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report [State of Food and Agriculture 2017](#) argues that millions of youth in developing countries who are poised to enter the labour force in the coming decades need not flee rural areas to escape poverty.

“The overarching conclusion of this report is that fulfilling the [2030 Agenda](#) depends crucially on progress in rural areas, which is where most of the poor and hungry live,” said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva, in his foreword to the report.

The report says that between 2015 and 2030, people aged 15-24 are expected to rise to 1.3 billion, with the lion’s share being in rural zones. However, it continues, lagging growth in the industrial and service sectors in many

developing countries will not be able to absorb the massive numbers of new job seekers – nor will agriculture in its current form.

Rural people who relocate to cities will likely run a greater risk of becoming part of the urban poor, instead of finding a pathway out of poverty. Others will need to look for employment elsewhere, leading to seasonal, or permanent migration.

According to the report, targeting policy support and investment to rural areas to build food systems and agro-industries connected to urban zones – especially small and medium size cities – represents a strategic intervention to create employment that would allow more people to stay, and thrive, in the countryside.

“Too often ignored by policy-makers and planners, territorial networks of small cities and towns are [important reference points for rural people](#) – the places where they buy their seed, send their children to school and access medical care and other services,” noted Mr. da Silva.

“Policy-makers are urged to recognize the catalytic role of small cities and towns in mediating the rural-urban nexus and providing smallholder farmers with greater opportunities to market their produce and share in the benefits of economic growth,” he added.

The report underscores that transformed rural economies won't necessarily be a panacea that solves all the pressures that drive people to relocate, but they will generate much-needed jobs and contribute to making out-migration more of a choice, rather than a necessity.

While urbanization provides a golden opportunity for agriculture, it also presents challenges for millions of small-scale family farmers, the report stated.

As more profitable markets may lead to value chains dominated by large processors and retailers – to the exclusion of smallholders – supportive public policies and investments must be hard-wired into policies to harness urban demand as an engine for transformative and equitable growth, ensuring market participation by small-scale, family-farmers.

The study lays out three lines for action:

- Put in place a range of policies designed to ensure that small-scale producers participate fully in meeting urban food demands;
- Build up the infrastructure to connect rural areas and urban markets, including rural roads, electrical power grids, storage facilities and refrigerated transportation systems; and
- Including not just mega-cities into well-connected rural-urban economies but knitting in smaller, more spread-out urban areas as well.