

One year on from Hurricane Matthew, Haiti's children still incredibly vulnerable to disasters – UNICEF

5 October 2017 – One year has passed since Hurricane Matthew made landfall in southwest Haiti – leaving terrible destruction in its wake – but children and adolescents on the island still remain highly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters and extreme weather events, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has warned.

"Hundreds of thousands of children had their lives turned upside down by Hurricane Matthew," said Marc Vincent, the head of the UNICEF country office in Haiti, in a news release issued by the agency.

"The courage and determination of families to recover and begin to rebuild their lives is admirable and [we are] proud to be one of the organizations continuing to support them."

In the immediate aftermath of the storm, UN mobilized its staff on the ground to respond to the most urgent needs, sending emergency aid for affected children and families, including clean water and sanitation.

Working together with the Haitian Government and partner organizations, over the past 12 months, the UNICEF rehabilitated 120 schools damaged by the hurricane, enabling the return of more than 30,000 children to school. It also provided school furniture to some 139 schools and provided another 26,000 children with psycho-social support.

In the Sud and Grand'Anse departments – two of the worst hit parts of the island – UNICEF helped screen 160,000 children for malnutrition in an ongoing programme, and organized a series of consultations with adolescents to enable them to express their concerns and ideas about risk and disaster management, with the results shared with local authorities.

Recalling the destruction and feeling of despair, Bernard, a fourteen-year-old child from Roche-à-Bateau (in southern Haiti) said: "After [Hurricane] Matthew passed, I thought it would be virtually impossible to continue living. All the trees were uprooted."

"But people are beginning gradually to recover," he added.

Hurricane Matthew (Category 4) made landfall in Haiti on 4 October 2016. At the time, the ["very powerful and slow moving"](#) storm was described as the ["worst storm the country had seen in decades"](#). As it passed over the country, the storm claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed critical infrastructure, including key bridges, communication links, and water and sanitation systems.

Source: UNICEF [[see in full screen](#)]

[Expert meeting at UN aspires to create 'space' for women in science and technology](#)

4 October 2017 – A three-day event on how to, among other things, improve women's involvement in the aerospace sector as well as in the fields of science, technology and mathematics, kicked off today under the leadership of two United Nations offices.

The UN Office for Outer Space Affairs ([UNOOSA](#)) and [UN Women](#) have teamed up in organizing a ['Space for Women'](#) Expert Meeting at UN Headquarters in New York to share expertise, enhance partnerships and promote efforts to encourage women and girls to become involved in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education – especially in developing countries.

"Space for Women is really a gender mainstreaming project where we will like to work with Member States; not only for STEM education but also to [help young girls when they graduate](#) to then find their place in their own society without being obliged to leave their own country," Simonetta Di Pippo, Director of UNOOSA, said prior to the event.

The meeting will also delve into the role of space technology and science to fulfil Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality.

"And this has to be done with each Member State, and we will start with a small group of champions – as I like to call them – so, pilot countries with which we will develop this medium to long-term project," she added.

With the most cross-cutting thematic priority of "capacity-building for the twenty-first century," the event is discussing innovative approaches to meet the [2030 Agenda](#).

Astronauts, diplomats, decision makers and experts from around the globe have converged in to discuss the creation of a dedicated 'Space for Women' Project.

In line with UNOOSA's vision to bring the benefits of space to humankind, the focus of the Project is to realize that women and girls are included in those benefits and that they play an active and equal role in space science, technology, innovation and exploration.

On the final day of the event, a high-level panel on 'Space for Women,' which will include UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, Ms. Di Pippo and UN Women's Deputy Executive Director Laskhmi Puri, will make recommendations to UNOOSA.

The proposals, which will focus on using space to empower women, women's involvement in the aerospace industry and STEM fields, and how alliances can be made to move forward the project, will feed into the development of the 'Space for Women' project.

The first UN Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the global governance of space activities, known as UNISPACE, was held in 1968 – with subsequent others in 1968, 1982 and 1999. June 2018 will mark its 50th anniversary with a special segment of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which will set the future course of global space cooperation to advance humanity.

In December 1999, the General Assembly declared World Space Week to be celebrated internationally each year from 4 to 10 October.

Libya: UN Mission condemns deadly bombing in Misrata

4 October 2017 – Condemning an attack against a court house in the Libyan city of Misrata, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya ([UNSMIL](#)) underscored that those behind the incident must be held accountable.

At least three individuals were killed and more than 15 injured in the attack today, the responsibility for which is claimed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist group.

“Indiscriminate attacks against civilians, including employees of the judicial institutions, are violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and cannot be justified,” the Mission said in a [statement](#).

“Those behind today's bombing and other such despicable acts must face justice.”

In the statement, the Mission also expressed its solidarity with the Government and people of Libya.

It added that the Special Representative for the Secretary-General for the country and the head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salame, expressed his condolences to the families of those killed and wished a swift recovery to the injured.

Switzerland needs to do more to keep 'dirty money' at bay, urges UN expert

4 October 2017 – Highlighting the problems posed by illicit financial flows globally, including undermining rule of law and human rights, a United Nations human rights expert has called on Switzerland to ensure that so-called dirty money – which stems from tax evasion and corruption – does not enter its financial market.

“Despite significant efforts in adopting legislation and improving procedures to detect suspicious transactions, the [risk that the Swiss financial market is used for money laundering remains](#),” said Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, the UN [Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights](#), in a news release issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)).

Facilitated by weak institutions and lack of good governance in countries of origin and financial opacity in countries of destination, illicit financial flows, such as money laundering are a particular concern in developing and under developed countries, syphoning money and resources which could have otherwise used for public services.

In the case of Switzerland, the UN expert noted that the risk of money laundering is particularly highlighted by the involvement of several banks in the Petrobas corruption scandal and in the suspicious cash flows linked to the Malaysian sovereign fund IMDB.

“It is especially troubling that these events are not from years ago – the money was still being accepted until quite recently,” added Mr. Bohoslavsky, who today concluded his first official visit to the European nation.

In the news release, the expert also underlined that criminal sanctions in Switzerland for assisting foreigners to evade taxes remained relatively weak noting that criminal liability arises only if the tax evaded in a foreign jurisdiction exceeds 300,000 CHF (about \$307,500).

He also urged that the staffing, resources and powers of the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority needed to be proportional to the size of the Swiss financial market, and those who infringed standards needed to be named to ensure individual corporate accountability.

Further, noting that favourable tax arrangements in Switzerland made it attractive for multinational corporations to establish their headquarters in the country, but also provided incentives for profit-shifting, affecting tax revenues in foreign countries.

“I call upon the Swiss authorities to carry out a social and human rights impact assessment of the proposed corporate tax reform package, which should include an analysis of how the reforms will impact on tax revenues available for the realization of economic and social rights within Switzerland and for

individuals living abroad, in particular in developing countries,” said the UN expert.

Mr. Bohoslavsky visited the country at the invitation of the Swiss authorities, where he met with Government officials as well as with leaders in the banking, financial and trading sectors, civil society and the academia in Bern (the capital), Basel, Geneva and Zurich.

His findings and key recommendations will be presented in a comprehensive report to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council – the highest UN intergovernmental forum on rights issues – in March 2018.

Independent Experts and Special Rapporteurs are appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

[Rohingya refugees living in ‘dire’ conditions, senior UN officials warn, appealing for assistance](#)

4 October 2017 – The human tragedy unfolding in southern Bangladesh is staggering in its scale, warned two senior United Nations officials today as they wrapped up a mission to the Cox’s Bazar with calls for a “significant increase in assistance” for the hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas have settled in the area after fleeing violence in neighbouring Myanmar.

“We leave Bangladesh [...] all the more determined that the United Nations do all it can to assist the Government of Bangladesh in [coping with this crisis](#),” said Mark Lowcock, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and Anthony Lake, Executive Director of the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)).

In the last few weeks, well over half a million Rohingya people have crossed the Myanmar border in to Bangladesh, making this the world’s fastest developing refugee emergency.

“People arrive fearful, exhausted and hungry, and in desperate need of immediate help including shelter, food, clean water and sanitation, and healthcare,” they asserted. “They bring with them terrible accounts of what they have seen and suffered – stories of children being killed, women brutalized, and villages burned to the ground.”

The UN officials lauded the Government and people of Bangladesh for its “extraordinary spirit of generosity” in opening the country’s borders and their providing relief to the refugees as “an inspiring example of humanity.”

Explaining that the refugees are living in flimsy shacks in sprawling, densely-crowded sites that have sprung up to accommodate them – with ever-growing risks for a disease outbreak – they underscored the urgency for funding so that all refugees have access to food, shelter, water, sanitation facilities, health care and protective services.

“Conditions in the temporary settlements are dire. Without a significant increase in assistance, the refugees, who have suffered so much already, could face another catastrophe on top of the tragedies that caused them to flee their homes,” they stressed.

Today an update to the UN and the international aid community’s [response plan](#) was released, seeking \$434 million to scale up the relief operation supporting the refugees and host communities. In support of this, an additional \$12 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) has been allocated to help establish additional sites for newly arrived refugees.

Source: 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan

While the two senior UN officials welcomed assurances of close cooperation with the Government, they underscored that the “appalling situation” is not over as people continue to flee for their lives, crossing from Myanmar into Bangladesh – and requiring immediate support.

“We call again on the Myanmar authorities to allow the full resumption of humanitarian action across all of Rakhine state, and will continue to advocate for conditions to be created that allow for people to safely, securely and voluntarily go home,” they concluded.