

## [UN maritime agency spotlights link between shipping and sustainable development](#)

28 September 2017 – Marking the World Maritime Day, the head of the United Nations maritime agency today highlighted contributions the shipping industry can make to the achievement of the global development goals.

[“Shipping and ports can play a significant role](#) in helping to create conditions for increased employment, prosperity and stability through promoting maritime trade. The port and maritime sectors can be wealth creators, both on land and at sea,” said Kitack Lim, the Secretary-General of International Maritime Organization (IMO), in his message for the Day, observed annually on 28 September.

To highlight this potential, the theme of the [Day](#) for this year is ‘Connecting Ships, Ports and People.’ “It will enable us to shine a spotlight on the existing cooperation between ports and ships to maintain and enhance a safe, secure and efficient maritime transportation system,” Mr. Lim said.

The benefits of a free and efficient flow of goods and trade extend far beyond the ships and ports themselves, and an effective interface between them can improve the lives of people everywhere, especially in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), adopted by UN Member States in 2015.

But, to be sustainable, human activities have to be balanced with the oceans’ capacity to remain healthy and diverse in the long term. The so-called ‘blue economy’ is a large and growing industrial sector; and, as it grows, it must remain safe and secure and not threaten the environment, he noted.

Ultimately, more efficient shipping, working in partnership with a port sector supported by governments, will be a major driver towards global stability and sustainable development for the good of all people, he concluded.

---

## [On World Day, UN announces global initiative to end deaths from dog-transmitted rabies by 2030](#)

28 September 2017 – The largest global anti-rabies initiative to end human

deaths from dog-transmitted rabies by 2030 was announced, today, World Rabies Day, making it a priority disease for key international organizations and governments, according to the United Nations health agency.

“The plan [ensures support](#) to countries in developing national plans, and provides innovative training and education tools across regional rabies networks,” said Dr. Bernadette Abela-Ridder today in a press statement on behalf the United Against Rabies collaboration, consisting of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)), Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN ([FAO](#)), World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC).

The plan [Zero by 30](#): The Strategic Plan centres on a ‘One Health’ approach, addressing the disease in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner while highlighting the important role veterinary, health and educational services play in rabies prevention and control.

“Vaccines are a key component of the global plan and a trigger for national programmes. The United Against Rabies collaboration provides leadership and advocates for resources critical to reaching zero human rabies deaths by 2030,” Dr. Abela-Ridder added.

[Rabies](#) – a viral disease that occurs in more than 150 countries and territories – is usually fatal once symptoms appear. Dog-transmitted rabies accounts for about 99 per cent of human rabies cases. It is estimated that 59,000 people die every year from the disease. The statement pointed out that rabies is 100 per cent preventable, saying that the world has the knowledge, technology and vaccines for its elimination.

The alliance aims to prevent and respond to dog-transmitted rabies by improving awareness and education, reducing human rabies risk through expanded dog vaccinations and improving access to healthcare, medicines and vaccines for populations at risk.

**VIDEO:** Rabies Vaccination can save lives/FAO

Dr. Ren Minghui, WHO Assistant Director-General for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases maintained, “Working across sectors to eliminate human rabies aligns with WHO’s mission to leave no one behind by building a better, healthier future for people all over the world.”

The plan will generate and measure impact by implementing proven effective guidelines for rabies control, and encouraging the use of innovative surveillance technologies to monitor progress towards ‘zero by 30.’

“Eliminating human rabies contributes to the goal of providing affordable and equitable health care, while working with partners to prevent the disease in dogs, which is the most frequent source of infection,” underscored Dr. Minghui.

The plan will also demonstrate the impact of the United against Rabies

collaboration in national, regional, and global rabies elimination programmes to ensure the continued engagement and sustained financing of stakeholders at all levels.

Expressing FAO's enthusiasm in being part of the development of the initiative, Ren Wang, FAO Assistant Director-General said, "Rural communities suffer the most from this preventable disease. Rabies puts not only their own health and wellbeing at risk, but also that of their animals, which can be a major or sole source of their livelihoods."

"FAO has been supporting vaccination campaigns and the development of community-based programmes to prevent and eliminate rabies. This new initiative will enhance that work and can play an essential role in FAO's overall goal to build stronger rural communities," Mr. Wang stressed.

---

## [Some 25 million unsafe abortions occur each year, UN health agency warns](#)

28 September 2017 – About 25 million unsafe abortions, accounting for 45 per cent of all abortions, occurred every year from 2010 to 2014 worldwide, with 97 per cent of those unsafe procedures occurring in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, a new United Nations study has found.

Increased efforts report are needed, especially in developing regions, to ensure access to contraception and safe abortion, says Bela Ganatra, a scientist and the lead author of the study, *The Lancet*, released today by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Guttmacher Institute.

Despite recent advances in technology and evidence, too many unsafe abortions still occur, and too many women continue to suffer and die, added Ms. Ganatra of WHO's Department of Reproductive Health and Research.

For the first time, the study includes sub-classifications within the unsafe abortion category as less safe or least safe. The distinction allows for a more nuanced understanding of the different circumstances of abortions among women who are unable to access safe abortions from a trained provider.

The risk of severe complications or death is negligible if procedures follow WHO guidelines and standards. About 55 per cent of all abortions from 2010 to 2014 were conducted safely.

Some 31 per cent of abortions were less safe, meaning they were either performed by a trained provider using an unsafe or outdated method such as sharp curettage, or by an untrained person using a safe method like misoprostol, a drug that can induce an abortion.

About 14 per cent were ‘least safe’ abortions provided by untrained persons using dangerous methods, such as introduction of foreign objects and use of herbal concoctions. Complications from ‘least-safe’ abortions can include a failure to remove all of the pregnancy tissue from the uterus, haemorrhage, vaginal, cervical and uterine injury, and infections.

The study also found that in countries where abortion is completely banned or permitted only to save the woman’s life or preserve her physical health, only one in four abortions were safe; whereas, in countries where abortion is legal on broader grounds, nearly 9 in 10 abortions were done safely. Restricting access to abortions does not reduce the number of abortions.

Most abortions that take place in Western and Northern Europe and North America are safe. These regions also have some of the lowest abortion rates.

The proportion of abortions that were safe in Eastern Asia, including China, was similar to developed regions. In South-Central Asia, however, less than one in two abortions were safe. In Latin America, only one in four abortions were safe. Less than one in four abortions in Africa, excluding Southern Africa, were safe.

---

## **Syrian parties should join next round of Geneva talks ‘without preconditions’ – UN envoy**

27 September 2017 – The United Nations is set to convene the next round of the [intra-Syrian talks](#) in Geneva by the end of October or in early November, the UN mediator told the Security Council today.

“The time has come for the focus to return to Geneva, and the intra-Syrian talks under the auspices of the United Nations,” said UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, urging the Government and the opposition to assess the situation with realism and responsibility to the Syrian people and prepare to participate in the talks without preconditions.

Mr. de Mistura said the Government should show a genuine interest in having negotiations about credible, inclusive local and central governance, a schedule and process for a new constitution, and UN-supervised elections.

For its part, the opposition should show its unity and readiness to speak in one voice, he said, urging opposition groups to seize the opportunity presented by Saudi Arabia to convene a conference for them to overcome differences.

“Let me caution both sides and their backers against illusions of victory or dreams of shortcuts,” he said. “There is no substitute for an internationally supported process based on a comprehensive and inclusive approach that also helps Syrians to re-discover a modicum of trust and social cohesion after the bitterest of conflict.”

Following the 10-15 July round of the UN-facilitated talks, the envoy said the conference ended with incremental progress but no breakthrough.

Intra-Syrian talks focus on the “four baskets”: a credible non-sectarian transitional government; a future constitution; early and free parliamentary elections within 18 months; and a united war against terrorism within Syria.



Mark Lowcock, new UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. UN Photo/Mark Garten

Also briefing the Council on the humanitarian situation there, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock said “Syria continues to face deep and difficult challenges, and the Syrian people remain trapped in a cycle of violence that must be broken.”

Following a comprehensive UN review, Deir ez-Zor and the 93,500 people in the city are being removed from the list of those besieged, he said, explaining that after three years of besiegement by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da’esh), Syrian Government forces in early September gained road access, marking the end of costly airdrops.

Now an estimated 419,920 people remain besieged in 10 locations across Syria. Of these, 95 per cent are besieged by the Government, two per cent by non-State armed groups, and three per cent by both non-State armed groups and the Government of Syria. “These sieges must be lifted,” said Mr. Lowcock, who is also UN Emergency Relief Coordinator.

So far in September, 9,000 people in the three besieged towns of Foah, Kefraya and Yarmouk have been reached, and 25,000 people were reached in East Harasta, Misraba and Modira. In total, under the August and September access plan, the UN has reached 280,500 of the 1.23 million people it requested to provide assistance to, he added.

---

**France must bring counter-terrorism law in line with international rights**

## obligations – UN experts

27 September 2017 – Warning of possible “discriminatory repercussions,” especially for Muslims, two United Nations rights experts expressed concern over a new law that may perpetuate the emergency measures France introduced in 2015 – establishing a permanent state of emergency.

“The normalization of emergency powers has [grave consequences](#) for the integrity of rights protection in France, both within and beyond the context of counter-terrorism,” said the Special Rapporteur on the protection of human rights in the context of countering terrorism, Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, today in a statement calling on France to honour its international human rights commitments and obligations while debating the new draft law.

The draft law “to Strengthen Internal Security and the Fight Against Terrorism” was approved by the Senate on 18 July and is currently being debated by the National Assembly.

On 22 September in a letter to the French Government, Ms. Ní Aoláin drew attention to several provisions of the draft that may adversely impact people’s rights to liberty and security as well as freedoms of movement, peaceful assembly, expression and religion.

Echoing these concerns, the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, Michel Forst, reiterated his fear that, if adopted, the law would impair rights to liberty, security, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and others.

“As France is strengthening its fight against terrorism, the draft bill includes a number of security measures, which will incorporate into ordinary law several restrictions on civil liberties currently in place under France’s state of emergency,” Ms. Ní Aoláin pointed out.

She underscored that both regional and international human rights institutions affirm that the means open to the State to regulate terrorism by law are limited by its compliance with international human rights standards. The duration of the state of emergency must be time-bound, revised regularly, and meet the criteria of necessity and proportionality.

The two UN experts expressed concern about the vague wording in certain provisions of the draft bill – particularly the definitions of terrorism and threats to national security – that gives the authorities powers that may be used in an arbitrary manner and non-judicial officers – specifically prefects and police officers – broad discretion and a wider scope for control practices, which may have discriminatory repercussions for French residents, particularly Muslim.