

[UN must lead global battle against counterfeit medicines, Congo tells General Assembly](#)

20 September 2017 – The Republic of Congo today called for a United Nations-wide global battle against the proliferation of counterfeit and sub-standard medicines, warning the General Assembly on the second day of its 72nd annual General Debate that Africa was particularly vulnerable.

“The proliferation of counterfeit and sub-standard medicines presents more and more a serious and multi-tentacled threat to the world, and in particular for developing countries, President Denis Sassou Nguesso said, noting that the scourge claims 800,000 lives a year, according to the UN World Health Organization, and the traffic also funds international terrorism.

“About 10 per cent of medicines currently in use in the world are believed to be counterfeit, with the figure rising to 40 percent in Africa and the countries of the South, and even 60 per cent in some regions,” he said.

“In addition to the efforts of the World Health Organization, far-reaching action should be taken at the level of the UN General Assembly to draw up a global strategy to fight this peril,” he added, stressing the need for substantial funds.

On other challenges, he cited the growing reach of terrorism, new tensions on the Korean peninsula, fighting in Syria and Iraq, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as crises in Africa in Burundi, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Libya and South Sudan.

[Full statement \(in French\) available here](#)

[At UN Assembly, South American leaders urge commitment with global development goals](#)

20 September 2017 – Addressing the general debate at the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, leaders from South American countries urged the global community for greater cooperation and collaboration in addressing a range of pressing issues – from poverty to security challenges.

Underscoring the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)),

David Granger, the President of Guyana, said that the Goals represent the international community's collective desire and determination to eradicate hunger and poverty, and ensure equal opportunities in education, employment and social justice for both men and women.

However, advancement of these Goals, he noted, is obstructed by violations of human rights, as well as by conflicts and violence that is displacing many from their homes, adding that the challenge before the UN is "to resolve to reinforce respect for the rights of citizens within the governance structures of [its] Member States."

He also underscored the need to combat the impact of climate change, and expressed his country's commitment to the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change.

"Climate change is not a fiction of a few extremists," said the President, noting that most recently, Caribbean islands and North American countries had felt the devastating impact of five successive hurricanes.

Also in his remarks, the Guyanese President reiterated that humanity must continue to striving for peace and highlighted the important role the UN through the International Criminal Court and the Security Council have in ensuring peace and respect for justice.

"Peace for the world's peoples is the mandate of the UN. It can be achieved by addressing the world's humanitarian crises, promoting justice within and between nations and resolving long-standing conflicts between states," he concluded.

[Full statement available here](#)



Horacio Manuel Cartes Jara, President of Paraguay, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also speaking today, Horacio Manuel Cartes Jara, the President of Paraguay, underscored the importance of the UN in confronting global challenges such as poverty and inequality, climate change, transnational crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

Reaffirming his country's commitment for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, President Cartes Jara urged all States, and in particular those with greater responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, to take all necessary measures to preserve the planet from the consequences of global warming.

"In Paraguay, we have taken a social responsibility perspective, by fostering greater production of clean and renewable energy," he said.

The President also informed the Assembly of Paraguay's efforts to implement the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, including building an innovative and inclusive institutional architecture to advance progress towards the [SDGs](#)

and targets.

He also spoke of work in his country to combat poverty, build opportunities for the indigenous and rural communities, promote greater investments, as well as increase transparency and efficiency in Government processes.

Turning to the crisis emanating from the nuclear weapon development programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the President reiterated Paraguay's condemnation of the nuclear tests conducted by the DPRK, in clear defiance of its international obligations, and urged a "firm rejection" by the UN General Assembly of such acts by the country.

[Full statement available here](#)



Lenin Moreno Garcés, Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, addresses the general debate of the General Assembly's seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the General Assembly today, President Lenín Moreno Garcés of Ecuador said the road to achieving peace and successfully implementing the SDG's depends on cooperation and dialogue.

Reflecting on misuse of resources, the President asked: "How could it be possible that resources allocated to implementing the SDG's have been wasted on the absurdity of war?"

He added that fallout from conflicts extends beyond economic damages – they also rob people of "true freedom and democracy."

For this reason, he said, it is important to respect sovereignty of States and reject the notion that militarism is the solution, which, he stressed "brings suffering, pain and death."

Also in his remarks, Mr. Garcés informed the General Assembly of a temporary bilateral ceasefire signed just a few days ago in the Ecuadorian capital, Quito, between Government of Colombia and an armed group, as an example of regional strides towards achieving peace.

In conclusion, the President expressed optimism about coexisting in "a more human, and just world," can be attributed to the power of dialogue, political decision-making power, and collective action.

[Full statement \(in Spanish\) available here](#)

UN has 'narrow window of opportunity' to turn the tide on raft of global ills, warns Ukraine President

20 September 2017 – Transnational terrorism and use of force international relations, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, human rights violations and environmental fragility are but a few of today's global challenges, the President of Ukraine to the United Nations General Assembly, calling on the world body to "act now" to tackle those and pressing concerns.

"Now is the time to act, and although only a narrow window of opportunity exists, the United Nations should be at the forefront of that process," Petro Poroshenko told delegates in New York for the Assembly's 72nd annual general debate.

He said Ukraine could not have agreed more with the call for the universal respect of sovereignty, as expressed in the General Assembly Hall yesterday. And while the UN was founded on the principles of peace and security, based on sovereignty and respect for borders, those principles had been flagrantly violated by a permanent Security Council member against his country.

"Ukraine has suffered from conflict for the last three years, resulting in the deaths of 10,000 people and the occupation of seven per cent of its territory, while 20 per cent of the economy has been seized, destroyed or simply stolen," Mr. Poroshenko explained, adding that the "most horrific [action] was the Kremlin's tactic to increase human suffering."

He said Russia has violated Security Council resolutions and ignored requests from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) for full access to the occupied parts of Crimea. "The situation requires a proper response from the international community," he said, noting that Russia is not contributing to international security, but is rather its biggest threat, "as it is in conflict with almost all its neighbours and has undermined every effort to restore Ukraine's sovereignty."

For decades, Ukraine had been a resolute contributor to global peace and security, he said, notably by giving up its nuclear arsenal. An advocate for non proliferation, Ukraine resolutely condemned the recent actions by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, he said, also expressing deep concern over the conflict in Syria. Concerned by the numerous, unresolved conflicts in Africa, he expressed Ukraine's commitment to the [2030 Agenda](#) and implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#).

European Union and UN launch new initiative to eliminate gender violence

20 September 2017 – The European Union and the United Nations today launched a joint initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, one of the most widespread and devastating human rights violations across the globe.

“It is a harsh but true reality – one in three women will face violence throughout their lifetime,” UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres [said](#) at the launch event, held on the margins of the General Assembly’s high-level annual debate.

“Violence against women and girls devastates lives, and causes pain across generations,” he added.

The [EU-UN Spotlight Initiative](#) is supported by a multi-stakeholder trust fund, with the EU as its main contributor in the order of half a billion Euro, which is open to other donors.

“The European Union is committed to combatting all forms of violence against women and girls, as they undermine our core fundamental rights and values, such as dignity, access to justice and gender equality,” EU High Representative Federica Mogherini told the event.

“We need first to ensure that we keep women and girls safe, in order to empower them to deploy their full potential.”

VIDEO: Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls.

Over the next few years, comprehensive programmes will be implemented to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, such as sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices; trafficking and economic exploitation; femicide; and domestic and family violence.

Core areas of intervention will include strengthening legislative frameworks, policies and institutions, preventive measures, access to services and improving data gathering in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean.

Consistent with the principles of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, the initiative will apply a rights-based approach, and give particular attention to the most marginalised women and girls in order to ‘leave no-one behind.’

The Spotlight Initiative is “truly historic,” said Mr. Guterres. “When we

shine a spotlight on the empowerment of the world's women and girls, everyone's future is brighter."

[World leaders gathered at UN commit to boosting investment in education](#)

20 September 2017 – World leaders today pledged to tackle the education crisis that is holding back millions of children and threatening economic development, at a high-level event at United Nations Headquarters in New York aimed at securing finance for this critical goal.

"Financing education is indeed the best investment we can make for a better world and a better future," stressed UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in his [remarks](#) to the event, titled "Financing the Future: Education 2030," held on the margins of the General Assembly's annual debate.

"I started as a teacher. I saw for myself decades ago in the schools and slums of Lisbon why education is a basic human right, a transformational force for poverty eradication, an engine for sustainability, and a force for peace," he said.

More than 260 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school. Despite some progress in achieving gender equality in the world's poorest countries, far more girls than boys still do not have access to a quality education, according to a news release.

Also addressing the event was UN Messenger of Peace Malala Yousafzai, who said girls in many parts of the world are pushing back against poverty, war and child marriage to go to school.

"We have big goals, but we will not reach any of them unless we educate girls," she said, referring to the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by UN Member States in 2015.

The event – co-organized by governments, the private sector, civil society and UN agencies – was held to boost political commitment and investment in quality early-childhood, primary and secondary education.

"Delivering an education to all – and not just some children – is the civil rights struggle of our time," said Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education.

"Confronted by the largest refugee crisis since the close of the Second World War, and with education receiving less than 2 per cent of humanitarian aid, it is vital we marshal the funds to provide an education for all children – especially those left out and left behind: refugee children," he added.