

Repair 'world in pieces' and create 'world at peace,' UN chief Guterres urges global leaders

19 September 2017 – Addressing the annual gathering of world leaders at the United Nations Headquarters, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today spotlighted several threats – including the nuclear peril, climate change, and ongoing conflicts – that must be overcome to create a better world for all.

“We are a world in pieces. We need to be [a world at peace](#),” said Mr. Guterres as he presented his annual [Report on the work of the Organization](#) ahead of the general debate of the UN General Assembly, in which Heads of State and Government and other high-level representatives from around the world discuss key global issues.

He said that the world is seeing insecurity rising, inequality growing, conflict spreading, climate changing, societies fragmenting and political discourse polarizing.

The UN chief noted that global anxieties about nuclear weapons are at the highest level since the end of the Cold War due to provocative nuclear and missile tests by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

“The solution must be political. This is a time for statesmanship. We must not sleepwalk our way into war,” he warned, as fiery talk can lead to fatal misunderstandings.

On terrorism, the Secretary-General stressed the need to address the roots of radicalization. “It is not enough to fight terrorists on the battlefield,” he said.

Stressing the need for “a surge in diplomacy today” and “a leap in conflict prevention for tomorrow,” he said that it is possible to move from war to peace, and from dictatorship to democracy. Only political solutions can bring peace to the unresolved conflicts in Syria, Yemen, South Sudan, the Sahel, Afghanistan and elsewhere. That was why he announced the creation of a high-level advisory board on mediation, he added.

On Myanmar, Mr. Guterres said the Asian country’s authorities must end the military operations in Rakhine state, allow unhindered humanitarian access, and address the grievances of the Rohingya Muslims, whose status has been left unresolved for far too long.

He went on to take note of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi’s address today – and her intention to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State that was chaired by Kofi Annan within the shortest time possible.

On the Israel-Palestine conflict, the two-state solution remains the only way forward, he said.

Turning to climate change, Mr. Guterres urged Governments to implement the historic [Paris Agreement](#) with greater ambition.

"We should not link any single weather event with climate change. But scientists are clear that such extreme weather is precisely what their models predict will be the new normal of a warming world," he said, noting that mega-hurricanes, superstorms and rain bombs are added to the vocabulary to describe what is happening.

While explaining how globalization and technological advances have brought uneven benefits, he also highlighted the dark side of innovation, such as cybersecurity threats as well as the possible negative implications of artificial intelligence and genetic engineering.

Lastly, Mr. Guterres said safe migration cannot be limited to the global elite and stressed the need to do more to face the challenges of migration. Refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants are not the problem; the problem lies in conflict, persecution and hopeless poverty.

To tackle these challenges, he said, the UN has launched initiatives to reform itself.

Looking over the packed General Assembly Hall, he said that the UN is needed, and "multilateralism is more important than ever" when there are competing interests and even open conflict.

"We call ourselves the international community; we must act as one," he concluded.

[UN and partners launch initiative to reach equal pay for women at work](#)

18 September 2017 – Striving to raise up women's pay across the world to equal men's, a new global coalition – which includes the United Nations labour agency and Organization's entity promotion of women's rights – launched today on the eve of the General Assembly debate.

The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) includes the UN International Labour Organization ([ILO](#)), UN Women, and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

"One hundred years is too long to wait, and we must all work together to make equal pay for work of equal value a reality," [said](#) Guy Ryder, the Director-

General of the ILO, noting that equal pay for equal work is enshrined in the ILO Constitution of 1919.

Median monthly earnings for women in 2014 were on average 17 per cent below those of men, according to OECD. In addition, in many countries, the higher the level of earnings and skills, the larger the differences in pay between men and women.

Equal pay for women translates into lifelong benefits for them as well as their families, ILO said in a press release, boosting career prospects and lifetime earnings, greater independence, and higher investments in their children's education and health.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, said "there is no justification for unequal pay for a woman when her job is of equal value to a man's. This injustice has been unseen for too long, and together we are changing that."

In addition, equal pay empowering women, impacts other key goals, such as promoting inclusive societies, reducing poverty, and creating conditions for decent work and gender equality, EPIC will "bring together a diverse set of actors at the global, regional and national levels to support governments, employers and workers and their organizations, and other stakeholders, to make equal pay between women and men for work of equal value a reality," according to the press release.

The aims tie in to the UN Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), in particular the target under [Goal 8](#), which calls for equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.

[UN General Assembly's annual debate to 'focus on people,' ensuring decent life for all](#)

18 September 2017 – Global leaders gathering at United Nations Headquarters in New York this week for the annual round of top-level diplomatic talks known as the [General Debate](#) will shine a spotlight on the needs of the world's people, with discussions on vital issues such as sustainable development and climate change, and set the stage for what the President of the UN General Assembly has dubbed a "year of firsts," which will see the negotiation of the first intergovernmental compact on migration and the signing of the first agreement on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The theme of the Debate of the 72nd session of the UN [General Assembly](#) is 'Focusing on People – Striving for Peace and a Decent Life for All on a

Sustainable Planet,' and in that spirit monarchs, presidents and prime ministers are also expected to launch discussions that will define international responses to many of the global challenges of the day, including protracted conflicts, extreme poverty and hunger, and the refugee crisis.

On Tuesday, ahead of the Debate, which runs through 25 September, UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres will present his annual [Report on the work of the Organization](#). This year's Assembly President, Miroslav Lajčák of Slovakia, will then deliver the keynote opening speech. This will then be followed by Brazilian President Michel Temer, whose country holds the traditional role of first national speaker. He will be followed by United States President Donald Trump, as leader of the host nation.

Mr. Guterres began this week of intense diplomatic activity Monday with a round of high-level events, among others, on [UN reform](#), financing the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, and on the [prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse](#) .

Other highlights include a an event tomorrow on women's economic empowerment; a ministerial-level Security Council debate, set for Wednesday 20 September, on [reform of UN peacekeeping operations](#); as well as, immediately after the debate, a special meeting of the Assembly to commemorate the [International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#) and a two-day high-level meeting on the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, set for 27-28 September.

VIDEO: Explainer: What is the General Assembly?

[Conflict keeps 27 million children out of school, with girls at high risk of abuse – UN report](#)

18 September 2017 – Some 27 million children are out of school due to conflict, with girls facing a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence, the United Nations said in a report released today, calling on States and international organizations to integrate all uprooted children into the education system where they live.

“Many of the [50 million uprooted children](#) in the world are in desperate need of education – not despite being uprooted from their homes but because they are uprooted from their homes,” the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) stressed in the report.

“For without education, how will they gain knowledge and skills to rebuild their lives? How will they be able to chart a path to a more peaceful and prosperous future for themselves, their families, their communities and the world?” queried the agency.

“Finding ways to provide education for uprooted children will require funding, creativity and commitment. Together, we can, and must, find solutions so every child can go to school and learn. Children’s futures – and our own – depend on it,” said UNICEF.

In 2015, nearly 50 million children were uprooted, more than 28 million of them forced from their homes because of violence and insecurity, with 27 million children of primary and lower secondary school age out of school in 24 conflict-affected countries, the report noted.

According to UNICEF, refugees are five times more likely to be out of school than other children, with only 50 per cent of refugee children enrolled in primary school and less than 25 per cent in secondary school.

In countries affected by conflict, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys and are more likely to become victims of sexual and gender-based violence.

Xenophobia, exclusion and stigmatization can create inhospitable, even dangerous environments for children seeking to join a new school system, while only 10 European Union Member States recognize the right of undocumented migrant children to enter the school system and five explicitly exclude them.

Integrate uprooted children in education systems where they live – UNICEF

In 2016, UNICEF reached 11.7 million children in emergencies, providing learning opportunities and materials, teacher training and offering life skills classes and is currently hosting the secretariat of Education Cannot Wait, which has mobilized over \$113 million from government donors and a pledge of \$100 million in both financial and in-kind support from the private sector.

The agency called on its partners to integrate all uprooted children into the education system where they live, invest in high-quality learning opportunities, provide psychosocial counselling and language instruction, and engage with partners including the private sector to provide technical assistance, expertise and talent that can be tailored to needs of uprooted children.

“UNICEF seeks partners willing to tackle the specific challenges of providing learning opportunities that deliver the skills and knowledge children need to rebuild their lives and prepare for the future,” the report concluded.

“The job requires resources, creativity and a commitment to high-quality education for every child, especially children who have been uprooted from their homes.”

As climate change makes bad weather worse, countries must strengthen resilience, UN officials urge

18 September 2017 – Noting the ever-increasing impact of extreme weather events, top United Nations officials, including [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres and Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly today urged efforts to boost resilience and strengthen damage mitigation measures.

“[This year’s hurricane season] fits a pattern: changes to our climate are making extreme weather events more severe and frequent, pushing communities into a vicious cycle of shock and recovery,” said Mr. Guterres at a high-level event on Hurricane Irma, recalling that the past month alone saw four major hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, causing much damage and destruction.

“[Extreme weather linked to climate change has an impact all over the world](#), including floods in southern Asia and landslides and droughts in Africa,” he added, noting also the impact of rise in ocean surface temperature on weather patterns.

In addition to controlling the carbon emissions to help control the rising temperatures, as well as adaptation methods, he urged better preparation ahead of storms, for mitigating their effects and to recover from them.

Such efforts, he noted, are also important to protect the progress made towards agricultural and economic development as well as to contribute to the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

Also speaking today, Miroslav Lajcak, the President of the General Assembly also [highlighted the growing impact of climate change](#) and that the current trend of greenhouse gases emissions would increase likelihood of severe weather events.

“The impact of Irma, Maria and other recent systems reminds us of the importance of adaptation and resilience to climate change and further strengthening mitigation efforts, through the implementation of the [Paris Agreement](#) [on Climate Change], which is a milestone for collective engagements towards the planet’s sustainability,” he said, adding:

Let us be inspired to take personal and collective action to support the victims and survivors rebuild their communities, homes and lives, stronger than even before
Miroslav Lajcak, President of the General Assembly

“Let us not let the lives lost be in vain. Rather, let us be inspired to take

personal and collective action to support the victims and survivors rebuild their communities, homes and lives, stronger than even before.”

The high-level meeting was co-hosted by the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, and saw the participation of a number of top Government officials from UN Member States, including Gaston Browne, the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda; Darren Henfield, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bahamas; Bert Koenders, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands; Alistair Burt, the Minister of State for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

It was also attended by Achim Steiner, the Administrator of the UN Development Programme; Mark Lowcock, UN Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Kristalina Georgieva, the Chief Executive Officer of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association at the World Bank.

Hurricane Irma left a wake of destruction on several islands in the Caribbean, affecting Antigua and Barbuda, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, St. Barthélemy, St. Martin, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, the Bahamas, Turks and Caicos and other islands in the Caribbean Sea, [affecting](#) hundreds of thousands of people and resulting in massive economic damage across the region.

UN agencies have been assisting with response and recovery efforts since the storm struck and last week, the Organization launched a \$15.1 million [regional humanitarian response plan](#), covering the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations impacted.

The plan aims to reach an estimated 265,000 affected people until the end of this year.

UN emergency relief fund releases \$10 million to assist with Irma response

In related news, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund ([CERF](#)) allocated \$10 million to enable humanitarians to help tens of thousands of people in need of assistance following the devastating category five hurricane.

According to a [news release](#) issued by the Fund, the allocation will enable UN and other organisations support the national and regional response, including providing immediate food, critical health care, clean water and other urgently needed aid to the people most affected by Irma, in particular women and girls.

“We will continue to stand in solidarity with the people of the Caribbean to ensure maximum support is available to the commendable national and regional efforts,” Mr. Lowcock, who manages CERF on behalf of the Secretary-General, said in the release.