

[South-South cooperation key to overcoming inequalities, says UN deputy chief](#)

12 September 2017 – Underscoring the importance of South-South cooperation, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed today urged sustained commitment to mutually beneficial approaches that will ensure shared prosperity and make sustainable development a reality.

[“Solutions and strategies created in the South are delivering lasting results around the world,”](#) she said at an event marking the [United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation](#), held at the UN Headquarters in New York.

“Nearly every country in the global South is engaged in South-South cooperation,” she added, noting China’s Belt and Road Initiative, India’s concessional line of credit to Africa, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the Strategic Association Agreement by Mexico and Chile as few examples.

The deputy UN chief, however, also cautioned that progress has been uneven and extreme poverty, deep inequality, unemployment, malnutrition and vulnerability to climate and weather-related shocks persist, and underscored the potential of South-South cooperation to tackle these challenges.

South-South cooperation not a substitute for North-South cooperation

Also in her remarks, the Deputy Secretary-General highlighted that the support of the North is crucial to advance sustainable development.

“South-South cooperation should not be seen as a substitute for North-South cooperation but as complementary, and we invite all countries and organizations to engage in supporting triangular cooperation initiatives,” she said, urging all developed nations to fulfil their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitments.

She also urged strengthened collaboration to support the increasing momentum of South-South cooperation as the world implements the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Paris Agreement](#) on Climate Change.

Further, noting the importance of the upcoming high-level UN Conference on South-South Cooperation, to be hosted by Argentina on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, she said:

“It will enable us to coordinate our South-South efforts, build bridges, cement partnerships, and establish sustainable strategies for scaling up impact together.”

To mark the importance of South-South cooperation, the UN General Assembly

decided to observe this Day on 12 September annually, commemorating the adoption in 1978 of the [Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries](#). Ahead of the upcoming UN conference, more than 120 high-level experts from government, academia, civil society, the private sector and multilateral organizations gathered in Buenos Aires recently for a three-day Development Cooperation Symposium, convened by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Government of Argentina, to discuss challenges and opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development.

“There are new challenges to all States: among them, the real threat to multilateralism. South-South and triangular cooperation can contribute to a new multilateralism and drive the revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development,” Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin said at the gathering.

[**PODCAST: How the UN’s cybercrime unit is helping to track paedophiles and protect children**](#)

12 September 2017 – Not everyone online is who they say they are. That is the message from the latest *UN News* podcast, *The Lid is On*.

Adults posing as young people are using chat apps and social networks to befriend children with the goal of sexually exploiting them – a concept known as grooming – but such abuse can be limited by educating children and their caregivers about the threats online, said Neil Walsh, the head of the global cybercrime programme at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)).

“You don’t give out your real name, you don’t give out your date of birth, you don’t give out where you live, who you go to school with,” Mr. Walsh advises in the [podcast](#).

“If you have your own social media, maybe your own Facebook, maybe your own Twitter, proactively, objectively, have a look at what information are you giving out there. Is your photo on the profile? Is your location? Is your date of birth? Do you have pictures of your family? Of your friends? Of your kids? If there is someone who wanted to do anything against you, what could they learn about you by looking at that profile?”

Mr. Walsh, a former police officer who has fought paedophilia for decades, said criminals are increasingly using newer technologies to evade police, so children need to be empowered to understand the risks.

“Cybercrime, cyber-enabled crime, but especially online child abuse, it’s one

of the most preventable bits of crime, if we do it properly,” he said. “It’s about education. It’s about understanding what that risk is and being conscious in our decisions.”

In the video below, Mr. Walsh gives advice to caregivers on what they can do to keep children online safe.

VIDEO: Neil Walsh, the head of global cybercrime for the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), gives tips for keeping children safe online.

A paedophile – before he or she is detected and arrested – is active an average of 13 years, Mr. Walsh said, citing figures from the United States Department of Justice. When arrested, an average offender is in the process of grooming or abusing up to 70 children.

Sonya Ryan, whose 15-year-old daughter was killed by a man who groomed her for 18 months, said parents need to know what their children are doing online and understand the media they are using.

“Connection, communication and discussion,” she said in the podcast. “And being up to date with what kids are doing, who they’re talking to, and getting the kids to understand that what motivates this is love and care for them, it’s never about being nosy. It’s getting them to understand that not everyone online is who they say they are.”

Since her murder in 2007, Ms. Ryan set up The Carly Ryan Foundation in her daughter’s name, and pushed through a new law in Australia that makes it a crime for people, like the killer, to use the internet to prepare to hurt a child.

Passing tough legislation is part of what Mr. Walsh does, along with a team of colleagues spanning the globe. As one of the UN agencies working to protect children from online abuse, UNODC is putting in place education systems in schools, and helping governments to build up national efforts to fight these crimes.

“[There are] governments who say, this doesn’t exist for us. This doesn’t happen in our communities. This doesn’t happen in our country,” Mr. Walsh said. “Our role is to help governments understand that that risk is there and to help them carefully, diplomatically to grow their ability to address this threat. Because this threat exists in every country.”

We have seen where images, where written material child abusers use is hosted. It happens in every country. And if a specific country says this doesn’t happen here, actually you create a jurisdiction of risk where if I was a child abuser, I would think about where I would want to host my material. Well let’s do it in the country where there’s no law. Let’s do it where there’s no policy, where the government says this doesn’t exist because maybe culturally or politically, it’s uncomfortable.”

The full interview with Mr. Walsh and Ms. Ryan is available on [soundcloud](#).

UN trade report highlights impact of loss of land and resources to Palestinian economy

12 September 2017 – Agricultural output in the Occupied Palestinian Territory decreased by 11 per cent and the sector's gross domestic product (GDP) share fell 0.5 per cent between 2015 and 2016 on the back of sparse utilization of cultivatable land, lack of irrigation and a ban on the import of suitable fertilizers by Israel, according to a report released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD](#)).

"The fact that, today, real GDP per capita in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is at the same level as in 1999 is a clear indication of the human cost and lost economic potential resulting from occupation," UNCTAD said in a news release on the report on *Assistance to the Palestinian People: Developments in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*.

According to the UN agency, economic growth in all sectors is constrained by the loss of land and resources to Israeli settlements and the annexation of land in the West Bank. The situation is further exacerbated by restrictions on the import of essential inputs, driving up production costs, depressing investment, and leading to high unemployment and widespread poverty.

"This looks set to continue in 2017," it added.

In the news release, UNCTAD also noted that reconstruction activities have been slow, with only half of the \$3.5 billion pledged at the 2014 [Cairo Conference on Palestine – Reconstructing Gaza](#), disbursed. Additionally, 84 per cent of total recovery needs remain unmet.

Furthermore, about 80 per cent of Gaza's population receive food assistance and other forms of social transfers, half of the population is food insecure and only 10 per cent have access to an improved water supply, noted UNCTAD, highlighting that the region's electricity crisis has left people without power for up to 20 hours per day in early 2017.

"This cripples all economic activities and the delivery of vital services, especially health services, water supply and sewage treatment," it noted.

UNCTAD also reported that the Palestinian economy saw a 38 per cent drop in donor support between 2014 and 2016, due in part to the occupation preventing previous aid flows from translating into tangible development gains.

Much of the planet's land severely degraded owing to increased consumption, UN warns

12 September 2017 – A new United Nations report warns that a third of the planet's land is now severely degraded thanks to a doubling in the consumption of natural resources over the past 30 years.

Some 15 billion trees and 24 billion tonnes of fertile soil are lost each year, according to the *Global Land Outlook* (GLO), launched today by the secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), at the meeting of States parties taking place in Ordos, China.

The GLO takes a critical look at financial and socio-economic values of land, and its impact on the poor. It marks the first in-depth analysis of land functions viewed from multiple lenses such economic growth and global trade patterns, highlighting the inextricable links between land, these sectors, and the people that can work to save it.

“Smallholder farmers, women and indigenous communities are the most vulnerable, given their reliance on land-based resources, compounded by their exclusion from wider infrastructure and economic development,” stated a news release issued by UNCCD.

Monique Barbut, the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, said at the launch that land degradation and drought are global challenges and intimately linked to most, if not all aspects of human security and well-being, particularly food security, employment and migration.

“As the ready supply of healthy and productive land dries up and the population grows, competition is intensifying, for land within countries and globally,” she pointed out.

More than 60 countries have established national land degradation baselines and set neutrality targets.

In an effort to slow land degradation and maintain productive soil, over 110 countries have joined a global campaign to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal target of reaching land degradation neutrality by 2030 a national target for action.

Brazil, China, India, Nigeria, Russia and South Africa are among those that have committed to the national targets during the meeting in Ordos, a significant move for some of the world's largest and most populous nations that could mean regaining resources, job security and resilience to climate change.

Ms. Barbut noted that with the human population growing an extra 200,000 people daily, and 20 countries declaring drought emergencies over the last 18

months, there are unforeseeable challenges.

“We were clearly not sufficiently prepared for these challenges,” she said. “Hundreds of millions of people go to bed desperate, hungry and thirsty as a result. Under business-as-usual scenarios, there is no future relief.”

General Assembly opens 72nd session with focus on the world's people

12 September 2017 – The United Nations General Assembly today opened its 72nd session, with an emphasis on striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet.

“The UN was created for people,” Miroslav Lajčák said in his first address as President of the General Assembly. “The people who need the UN the most are not sitting in this hall today. They are not involved in the negotiation of resolutions. They do not take the floor at high-level events. It is one of the tasks of the General Assembly to make sure that their voices can still be heard.”

Ahead of today's opening, the career diplomat from Slovakia spoke to *UN News* about his hopes for his one-year tenure, and said that conflict prevention and migration would top his agenda. [Check out the full interview.](#)

In today's address, he noted that while it was “impossible” to select one priority for the UN to focus on this year, his aim will be to strive for balance, so that all points of view are represented.

He also stressed quality and transparency in his future work.

Mr. Lajčák takes the reins one week before the start of the high-level General Assembly debate, and said he hoped the 193 UN Member States participating would treat each other with diplomacy and mutual respect.

Speaking to reporters later in the day, Mr. Lajčák reiterated the importance of using the world body to assist people around the world.

Addressing the opening of the General Assembly, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres also emphasized the importance of focusing on people in the UN's work and underscored his proposed reforms to streamline the Organization.

“People around the world are rightly demanding change and looking for governments and institutions to deliver,” he [said](#). “We all agree that the United Nations must do even more to adapt and deliver. That is the aim of the reform proposals that this Assembly will consider.”

He added that one key change within and beyond the UN must be the empowerment

of women and girls around the world, and highlighted his own roadmap for achieving gender parity.