

[UN agencies aid millions affected by flooding, landslides in South Asia](#)

24 August 2017 – United Nations humanitarian agencies are working with the Government and partners in Nepal to bring in clean water, food, shelter and medical aid for some of the 41 million people affected by flooding and landslides in South Asia.

Nearly a thousand people have been killed, and tens of thousands of homes, schools and hospitals have been destroyed in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

There is the possibility that the situation could deteriorate further as rains continue in some flood-affected areas and flood waters move south, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) today [said](#) in an updated note.

In Bangladesh, nearly 2,000 local medical teams have been deployed, even as one-third of the country is reportedly underwater. Aid workers are concerned about waterborne diseases, such as diarrhoea and malaria.

Their most urgent concern is to accessing safe water and sanitation facilities, OCHA said earlier this week, [citing national authorities](#).

It also warned of dangers to women and children, who are at increased risk for abuse, violence and sexual harassment.

In India, rescue operations are ongoing in many flood-affected areas, with those stranded being rescued by helicopter.

Flood relief camps have been established for those displaced by the disaster where they are being provided with food and shelter, OCHA said.

The Government recently announced additional funding for relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and flood mitigation.

In addition to people suffering, Indian authorities also reported large parts of a famous wildlife reserve park destroyed, with endangered animals killed.

[UN releases \\$2.5 million from pooled fund to tackle energy crisis in Gaza](#)

24 August 2017 – With Gaza entering its fourth month of a serious energy crisis, the United Nations today released a further \$2.5 million from a pooled humanitarian fund to cover urgent needs in the Palestinian enclave.

“The [serious decline in living conditions in Gaza](#) continues,” said UN Coordinator for Humanitarian Aid and Development Activities for the occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), Robert Piper, in a press release.

The disbursement from the Humanitarian Fund for the oPt will bolster the UN’s emergency fuel operation which primarily supplies fuel to generators to maintain operations in around 190 critical health, water and sanitation installations. Virtually all the two million Palestinians living in Gaza benefit from this fuel operation.

The funding will also provide essential life-saving medical equipment and supplies. Solar panels, cash assistance and agricultural supplies that are also included to improve food security and reduce food production costs for 2,200 small-scale farmers who irrigate by pumping from small wells.

Gaza has been experiencing a severe electricity crisis since mid-April, when the Gaza Power Plant went offline due to a factional dispute between the Palestinian Authority and the rival Hamas group in Gaza over tax rates for the fuel needed at the plant.

Power supply to households and services has barely covered 25 per cent of needs over the last six weeks.

Hospitals and other facilities are operating almost 24/7 on generators that are not designed for continuous use in this way.

The last bulk shipment of essential drugs from the West Bank was in March 2017; an estimated 40 per cent of essential drugs are unavailable already, or will be totally depleted within four weeks. There is a large backlog of patients requiring urgent medical referral to hospitals outside the strip.

The Fund is operated from donations currently from the Governments of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

In early July, humanitarian partners in the Occupied Palestinian Territory identified an urgent set of top-priority interventions to respond to the current crisis and appealed for \$25 million. To date, this urgent funding appeal is only 30 per cent funded.

“The humanitarian plight and the human rights of Gaza’s civilian population – over half of them children – appear to have disappeared from view,” Mr. Piper said.

[Emigration and food insecurity in](#)

Central American 'dry corridor' focus of new UN-backed study

23 August 2017 – A new inter-agency study released today found a correlation between prolonged droughts in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras exacerbated by El Niño phenomenon from 2014 to 2016 and the increase in irregular migration from these countries to the United States, the United Nations food relief agency reported.

The study provides an important insight into why people flee and the impact on the family members staying behind, said World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Miguel Barreto.

It is perhaps this second aspect which makes this study stand out from much of the analysis conducted on migration from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to date, he added.

[Food Security and Emigration](#) shows the need to invest in long-term programmes to discourage people in the Dry Corridor from emigrating, and to reduce the risks for emigrants and the impact on the families left behind.

The study indicates that a trend of younger and more vulnerable people are leaving food-insecure areas especially in the Dry Corridor, a drought-prone area that crosses these countries.

Family members left behind face the burden of paying the debts of those who have migrated. If the emigration is unsuccessful, the family faces the problem of growing debt and of how to meet their food needs, the report said.

The document also pointed out that 47 per cent of the families interviewed were food-insecure, noting that these levels have never been previously recorded in the region even in assessments carried out over the past three years in the Dry Corridor.

Source: FOOD SECURITY AND EMIGRATION – Why people flee and the impact on family members left behind in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

Additionally, some 72 per cent of the families interviewed said they were applying emergency coping strategies, such as selling their land, farm animals and tools to buy food.

Meanwhile, the study reveals that in the cases of successful emigration, 78 per cent of households in the home country receive monthly remittances, of which 42 per cent indicate that remittances are their only source of income.

Indeed, more than half of the money received from emigrants is used by family members to buy food, followed by agricultural investments like buying land and animals and investing in small businesses.

This study was funded and jointly produced by WFP, the International Fund for Agricultural Development ([IFAD](#)) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with the collaboration of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)) and the Organization of American States (OAS).

The research is a follow-up to the results and recommendations of the 2015 exploratory study on the links between migration, violence and food security, *Hunger without Borders*.

[Australian Jane Connors appointed first UN rights advocate for victims of sexual exploitation](#)

23 August 2017 – [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has appointed Jane Connors, Australian law professional and long-time human rights advocate, as the first United Nations advocate for the rights of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The [appointment](#) is in line with the Secretary-General's pledge – made in his report on '[Special measures](#) for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: a new approach' – that the UN will put the rights and dignity of victims at the forefront of its prevention and response efforts.

Ms. Connors, currently International Advocacy Director, Law and Policy, for Amnesty International in Geneva, brings to the position a long and multi-faceted career in human rights advocacy, as well as human rights and humanitarian assistance in the academic, UN and civil society spheres.

As Victims' Rights Advocate, Ms. Connors will support an integrated, strategic response to victim assistance in coordination with relevant UN system actors.

She will work with government institutions, civil society, and national and legal and human rights organizations to build networks of support and to help ensure that the full effect of local laws, including remedies for victims, are brought to bear.

Before joining Amnesty International, she was Director of the Research and Right to Development Division at the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)). She also worked in OHCHR's Human Rights Treaties Division and as Chief of the Special Procedures Branch.

From 1996 and 2002, she was the Chief of the Women's Rights Section in the Division for the Advancement of Women in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in New York.

On Day of Remembrance, UN says history of slave trade can help combat social injustice

23 August 2017 – Remembering the universal demand for freedom that led to the 1791 insurrection by slaves in what is now Haiti, the head of the United Nations cultural and educational agency today marked the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition by underscoring the importance of teaching this history to young people.

“We are counting on the teaching of this history to place tomorrow’s citizens on the path to peace and dignity,” said Irina Bokova, in a [message](#) to mark the Day, which is observed annually on 23 August.

Ms. Bokova is the Director-General of UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), which has played a leading role within the UN system in fostering understanding and recognition of the slave trade.

“Everyone must know the scale of the crime of the slave trade, the millions of lives broken and the impact on the fate of continents up to this very day. Everyone must be fully informed of the struggle that led to its abolition, so that together we can build societies that are fairer, and thus freer,” the senior UN official said.

She pointed to modern slavery and human trafficking, as well as ongoing social injustices, racism and racial discrimination, and said the legacy of the 1791 insurrection offer hope to eradicating those scourges.

Ignorance is our enemy: it is used as an alibi by the indifferent who state that ‘we cannot change anything’ UNESCO chief Irina Bokova

“Freedom of rights, hardwon by force, must be translated into real freedom through public policies that guarantee to people of African descent the full exercise of economic, social and political equality, and full and equal participation in society,” Ms. Bokova said.

“The 1791 uprising, like so many others across the world, shows us the way, but the path ahead is still long, she said, adding: “Ignorance is our enemy: it is used as an alibi by the indifferent who state that ‘we cannot change anything,’ and sanctions the lies of those who claim that ‘they did not know.’”

Everyone, continued the UNESCO chief, must know the scale of the crime of the slave trade, the millions of lives broken and the impact on the fate of

continents up to this very day. Everyone must be fully informed of the struggle that led to its abolition, so that together we can build societies that are fairer, and thus freer.

To honour the history of the slave trade and its abolition, UNESCO earlier this year added to its World Heritage List the Mbanza Kongo, Vestiges of the Capital of the former Kingdom of Kongo (Angola) and the Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site (Brazil), as an acknowledgement of their outstanding universal value.

In 2015, the Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site was recognized as a site of memory associated with the UNESCO Slave Route Project: Resistance, Liberty, Heritage. Recognition of this heritage is decisive in raising the awareness of the general public, educating young people and in the processes of conciliation and social cohesion.

The [Slave Route](#) project, established in 1994, consists of creating opportunities to promote mutual understanding and international reconciliation and stability through consultation and discussion. It also raises awareness, promotes debate and helps build consensus on approaches to be taken on addressing the issue of the slave trade and slavery.

This year, the [International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition](#) is also part of the [International Decade for People of African Descent](#), which began in 2015, and seeks to help boost political commitments in favour of people of African descent.