

UN labour agency launches global panel to address rapid transformations in the world of work

21 August 2017 – The United Nations labour agency has launched a high-level international body that will chart the course towards a future of decent and sustainable work opportunities for all, and to tackle the challenges of delivering social justice in today's rapidly transforming world of work.

“It is fundamentally important that we confront these challenges from the conviction that [the future of work is not decided](#) for us in advance,” said Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) at the launch of the [Global Commission](#) on the Future of Work.

According to ILO, the global body is expected to undertake an in-depth examination of the future of work that can provide the analytical basis for the delivery of social justice in the 21st century. It will in particular on the relationship between work and society, the challenge of creating decent jobs for all, the organization of work and production, and the governance of work.

Mr. Ryder reminded the audience attending the launch ceremony in Geneva that these are key issues of our time, which increasingly occupy political life and define hopes, and sometimes fears, of families across the world.

“It is a future that we must make according to the values and preferences that we choose and through policies that we design and implement,” he added.

Co-chairs Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, the President of Mauritius, and Stefan Löfven, the Prime Minister of Sweden, announced the 20 members of the Commission, as the ILO chief underscored that the membership “reflects a balance of geographical regions, of different disciplines. There is gender balance and there is representation of workers and employers.”

The Commission was set up under the ILO's Future of Work Centenary Initiative launched in 2013 by Mr. Ryder.

Over the past 18 months, in the run-up to the launch of the Global Commission, the ILO's tripartite constituents “governments, employer and worker organizations” have held national dialogues in over 110 countries. Their outcome will feed into the independent report that will be submitted to the Centenary Conference of the ILO in 2019.

[UN health agency rushes to prevent malaria, cholera outbreaks in flood-hit Sierra Leone](#)

21 August 2017 – The United Nations health agency is working closely with the Government of Sierra Leone to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as malaria and cholera in the wake of last week's mudslides and flooding in the country's capital, Freetown.

"The [mudslides have caused extreme suffering](#) and loss of life, and we must do all we can to protect the population from additional health risks," said Alexander Chimbaru, Officer in Charge of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Sierra Leone, in a press release.

With damage to water and sanitation facilities, residents of affected areas are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of pre-existing infectious diseases including malaria and diarrheal conditions such as typhoid and cholera. The most recent cholera outbreak in the country occurred in 2012.

Cholera response kits, including rapid testing tools, are being distributed to areas at risk, while health and community workers are being trained to recognize the signs of priority diseases.

"While the Government and WHO are working hard to strengthen health services in the affected areas, we also urge the population to take the following precautions to help avoid a possible outbreak: hand washing, drinking only water that has been properly boiled or treated, use of latrines for sanitation, and adherence to good food hygiene practices," added Dr. Chimbaru.

Around 500 people are known to have died as a result of the flooding and mudslides that devastated whole communities in and around Freetown, and hundreds more are still missing.

[Following El Salvador visit, UN right expert urges authorities to protect people from gangs](#)

21 August 2017 – El Salvador is suffering a 'hidden tragedy' due to gang-related violence, an independent United Nations human rights expert today said, urging national authorities to intensify efforts to help and protect

people affected by gangs.

El Salvador is suffering a [hidden tragedy](#) of people who have had to leave their homes because of the high levels of gang-related violence,” said Special Rapporteur Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, who examines the human rights of internally displaced persons, after visiting violence-hit areas including Mejicanos in San Salvador.

The problem is more significant and widespread than the Government is currently accepting,” she added. “The Government needs to acknowledge the full extent of internal displacement and act to tackle it and the gang violence which is driving it.”

The UN expert noted that gangs dominate people through threats, intimidation and “a culture of violence” that infects entire communities and every day interactions.

Killings are commonplace and extortion is widespread. If people are under threat from gangs, they and their families leave their homes to seek safety elsewhere,” she said.

Young people, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to such violence, including also rape, as are members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex communities.

Young people are particularly affected by violence,” said Ms. Jimenez-Damary who visited El Salvador at the invitation of the Government.

One young woman told me: 'It is a crime and dangerous to be a young person in El Salvador today'. This situation is due not only to the gang violence, but in some cases is the result of oppressive police and military operations.”

During her five-day visit, from 14 to 18 August, the expert met senior State and Government officials, United Nations and other humanitarian partners, representatives of civil society organizations, and people who had fled their homes.

Her full findings and recommendations will be included in a report to the Human Rights Council in June 2018.

UN Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.

Thousands flee as Iraqi forces advance on ISIL-held Tal Afar – UN

21 August 2017 – The top United Nations humanitarian official in Iraq has warned against the consequences of displacement as thousands of civilians are expected to flee from Tal Afar and surrounding communities during the Iraqi military operation to retake these areas from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) terrorist group.

“Thousands of people are fleeing Tal Afar for safety,” said Lise Grande, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, in a press release issued yesterday. “Families are trekking for 10 to 20 hours in extreme heat to reach mustering points. They are arriving exhausted and dehydrated.”

More than 30,000 people have already fled the district, said Ms. Grande, noting that it is not known how many civilians are still in the areas where fighting is occurring, but preparation is under way for thousands more to flee in coming days and weeks.

“Food and water are running out, and people lack the basic necessities to survive,” she said, stressing that nothing is more important than protecting civilians during the conflict while urging the parties to the conflict to avoid civilian casualties.

“The Government is leading the humanitarian operation, providing transport and aid. Humanitarian partners are helping to cover gaps by providing life-saving assistance at mustering points and supporting families when they reach emergency sites and camps,” said Ms. Grande.

As of 20 August, less than 50 percent of the funding requested in the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq has been received, she said, underscoring the need for additional resources.

‘UN stands in solidarity with Finland in its fight against terrorism,’ says Guterres

19 August 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today condemned the terrorist attack in south-western Finland which killed at least two people.

“The United Nations [stands in solidarity](#) with the Government of Finland

in its fight against terrorism and violent extremism,” the Secretary-General said in a statement from his spokesperson.

He extended his heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Finland, and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

According to media reports, an assailant killed at least two people and wounded a half-dozen others on 18 August in an attack in Turku, Finland.