

‘Don’t turn a blind eye’ to dire situation of children in DR Congo’s Kasai region – UNICEF

7 August 2017 – The world must not turn a blind eye to the dire situation of children and families in the Grand Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said today, stressing that nothing can justify terrible acts of abuse against women and children.

“Children and women tell us of terrible acts of abuse. Many children have been recruited by armed forces, drugged and caught in the violence. Nothing can justify these actions,” said Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, in a statement.

Over the past 12 months, more than 1.4 million people – including 850,000 children – have been forced from their homes, and their lives turned upside down by widespread acts of extreme violence. More than 200 health centres have been destroyed, and one in four health centres is no longer functioning normally. An estimated 400,000 children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition.

Children have lost a year of education, as hundreds of schools have been targeted and looted, teachers killed or fled for safety. Teachers are not able to go to work, while parents are scared to send their children to school.

She urged all parties to the conflict to protect children, end grave violations against children, and preserve schools and health services.

“Humanitarian actors must have unhindered humanitarian access to affected populations so that we can reach all those in need of assistance,” she said.

UNICEF is responding to the escalating humanitarian needs, “but unless this violence stops, our best work will never be enough,” she said. “The lives of many thousands of children are at risk.”

On anniversary of Hiroshima atomic bombing, UN chief calls for

intensified effort on nuclear disarmament

6 August 2017 – With the presence of some 15,000 nuclear weapons on earth, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today urged all States to intensify their efforts in the shared pursuit of a nuclear-weapons-free world.

“Our dream of a world free of nuclear weapons remains far from reality,” said Mr. Guterres in his message delivered on his behalf by High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu at an annual memorial held in Hiroshima, Japan, for the victims of the atomic bomb dropped on the city today in 1945.

“The states possessing nuclear weapons have a special responsibility to undertake concrete and irreversible steps in nuclear disarmament,” Mr. Guterres stressed, warning against the continued presence of some 15,000 nuclear weapons and dangerous rhetoric regarding their use.

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He went on to state that the world looks to Hiroshima, as the city “built on resilience and hope” “has come back from the tragic event 72 years ago. “Your determination for peace is an inspiration to the world,” Mr. Guterres said.

On a positive note, he highlighted a major development in 2017, in particular the adoption last month of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons by UN Member States.

This outcome was the result of a global campaign focused on the unconditional unacceptability of the use of nuclear weapons, the Secretary-General noted, acknowledging the invaluable contribution made by Hiroshima’s message of peace and the heroic efforts of *hibakushas*, or survivors of the atomic bombs.

They have reminded the world of the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, he said, expressing UN support for a global effort towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

UN notified of US intention to

withdraw from Paris climate pact

4 August 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today received a notification from the delegation of the United States expressing the country's intention to withdraw from the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change as soon as it is eligible to do so, his spokesman has confirmed.

The notification came two months after President Donald Trump announced his intention to leave the accord.

"As the Secretary-General said in a statement on [1 June](#) 2017, the decision by the United States to withdraw from the Paris Agreement is a major disappointment for global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote global security," said UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric in a [note](#) sent tonight to correspondents.

Under article 28 of the Paris Agreement, a Party may withdraw at any time after three years from the date on which the Agreement has entered into force for that Party, and such withdrawal takes effect upon expiry of one year from the date of receipt by the Depositary of the notification of withdrawal. The United States accepted the Paris Agreement on 3 September 2016 and the Agreement entered into force for the United States on 4 November 2016. This means that the US must stay in the pact until at least 2019.

The communication says the US intends to exercise its right to withdraw, unless it identifies suitable terms for reengagement.

The Secretary General welcomes any effort to reengage in the Paris Agreement by the United States, Mr. Dujarric said.

"It is crucial that the United States remains a leader on climate and sustainable development. Climate change is impacting now. He looks forward to engaging with the American government and all other actors in the United States and around the world to build the sustainable future for our children and future generations," he added.

The Spokesman said that the Secretary-General is the depositary of the Agreement, and will circulate the text of this communication as a notification, in English and French, early next week.

UN imposes tougher sanctions on DPR Korea over ballistic missile launches

5 August 2017 – In response to the launches of ballistic missiles of possible

intercontinental range by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the United Nations Security Council today moved to strengthen sanctions on the Northeast Asian country's exports.

In a resolution adopted unanimously, the 15-member body strongly condemned the DPRK's ballistic missile launches on 3 July and 28 July, which the country has stated were of intercontinental range.

The Council reaffirmed previous Council decisions that the DPRK not conduct further launches using ballistic missile technology, nuclear tests, or any other provocation.

The Council moved to significantly strengthen the sanctions on the DPRK, imposing a full ban on the export of coal, iron and iron ore from the DPRK. Previously these items could be exported for livelihood purposes, with a cap on the amount.

The Council also prohibited countries from increasing the total number of work authorizations for DPRK nationals. It banned new joint ventures or cooperative entities with DPRK entities or individuals as well as additional investments in existing joint ventures.

Member States are requested to report to the Security Council, within 90 days of the adoption of this resolution, on concrete measures they have taken to effectively implement this resolution.

The Council also designated several additional individuals for a travel ban and assets freeze, as well as designating entities for an assets freeze.

On the political front, the Council calls for their resumption of the Six-Party Talks and reiterated its support for the commitments set forth in the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005 issued by China, the DPRK, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, and the United States.

The commitments included that the goal of the Six-Party Talks is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner, and that the United States and the DPRK respect each other's sovereignty and exist together peacefully.

[UN Latin America commission forecasts low but positive growth for region in 2017](#)

4 August 2017 – With better commodity export prices and an improved international context, the Latin America and the Caribbean region will record

a small positive growth rate this year with the exception of Venezuela and two Caribbean countries, according to a new report of the UN Latin America commission.

The [Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean 2017](#) foresees that, after two years of contraction, nearly all countries in the region will experience, on average, 1.1 per cent positive growth rates in 2017 except for Venezuela, whose gross domestic product (GDP) is seen falling -7.2 per cent; and Saint Lucia and Suriname, which is forecast to contract -0.2 per cent.

To resume medium- and long-term growth, countercyclical policies are needed that not only focus on reducing the cycle's fluctuations, but also on modifying those specific characteristics that negatively influence growth and the productive structure of countries in the region, said Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), during a press conference in Santiago where the document was presented.

The UN body's annual report underscores the importance of macroeconomic policies to invigorate long-term growth and move toward the necessary structural change in the region's economies.

This means moving toward countercyclical frameworks for fiscal policy that defend and promote public and private investment. This involves revising fiscal rules so they continue to serve as pro-stability instruments, but also as pro-investment. This fiscal framework must be accompanied by a financial policy aimed at credit stabilization and a monetary policy that supports investment growth and goes beyond instruments such as the interest rate, she explained.



Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), presents the Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean 2017. Photo: Carlos Vera/ECLAC

The Economic Survey analyzes policy challenges to stimulate investment and growth, indicating that in the process of achieving indebtedness and fiscal balance equilibrium, public investment must not be neglected. In that sense, separating the handling of investment spending and current spending would help eliminate the bias against investment in processes of public spending adjustments.

It also notes the importance of strengthening increased public revenue through tax structure changes, with the establishment of more direct taxes; fortifying tax administrations; and reducing evasion and avoidance.

According to the report, as in prior years, different growth dynamics are projected among countries and sub-regions.

While the gross domestic product (GDP) of South America is expected to grow

0.6 per cent this year, the economies of Central America and Mexico are seen expanding 2.5 on per cent on average, thanks to an increase in remittances income and improved growth expectations for its main trading partner, the United States. Meanwhile, 1.2 per cent growth is forecast for English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean economies, following a -0.8 per cent contraction in 2016.

According to ECLAC, some positive factors affecting the region's performance this year include the moderate recovery of the global economy, which will end 2017 with 2.7 per cent growth, three-tenths of a percentage point higher than in 2016; a slight 2.4 per cent international trade volume rebound; and increased price levels for basic products, which are forecast to be 12 per cent higher on average than last year. At the same time, on spending, a narrow improvement in investment and greater dynamism in private consumption are being observed.

Finally, the 2017 regional account balance is expected to remain similar to that of 2016, around -1.9 per cent of GDP, although with improved trade and an increase in exports, which is forecast at 8 per cent for the entire year.