

# Breastfeeding is 'smartest investment' families, communities and countries can make – UN

1 August 2017 – Kicking off World Breastfeeding Week, the United Nations today stressed that although breastfeeding has cognitive and health benefits for infants and mothers, investment shortcomings impede the practice.

“Breastfeeding gives babies the [best possible start in life](#),” said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

He added that breastmilk works like a baby’s first vaccine, protecting infants from potentially deadly diseases and giving them all the nourishment they need to survive and thrive.

The *Global Breastfeeding Scorecard*, a new report by the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and WHO in collaboration with the [Global Breastfeeding Collective](#) – an initiative launched today that aims to increase global breastfeeding rates – points out that breastfeeding not only helps prevent diarrhoea and pneumonia, two major causes of death in infants, it also helps reduce mothers’ risk of ovarian and breast cancer, two leading causes of death among women.

Yet, the scorecard, which evaluated 194 nations, reveals that no country in the world fully meets recommended breastfeeding standards.

It found that only 40 per cent of children younger than six months are given nothing but breastmilk and only 23 countries have exclusive breastfeeding rates above 60 per cent.

## ***Global investment in breastfeeding 'far too low,' says UN***

The scorecard was released at the start of World Breastfeeding Week alongside a new analysis, *Nurturing the Health and Wealth of Nations: The Investment Case for Breastfeeding*, demonstrating that an annual investment of only \$4.70 per newborn is required to increase the global rate of exclusive breastfeeding among children under six months to 50 per cent by 2025.

The analysis suggests that meeting this target could save the lives of 520,000 children under the age of five and potentially generate \$300 billion in economic gains over 10 years, as a result of reduced illness and health care costs and increased productivity.

“Breastfeeding is one of the most effective and cost effective investments nations can make in the health of their youngest members and the future health of their economies and societies,” said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. “By failing to invest in breastfeeding,

we are failing mothers and their babies &#8211 and paying a double price: in lost lives and in lost opportunity.&#8221

The investment case shows that in five of the world's largest emerging economies, namely China, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Nigeria, the lack of investment in breastfeeding has resulted in an estimated 236,000 child deaths per year and \$119 billion in economic losses.

Globally, investment in breastfeeding is far too low. Each year, governments in lower- and middle-income countries spend approximately \$250 million on breastfeeding promotion &#8211 donors provide only an additional \$85 million.

Co-led by UNICEF and WHO, the Global Breastfeeding Collective is calling on countries to increase funding to raise breastfeeding rates from birth through two years of age; enact paid family leave and workplace breastfeeding policies, building on the UN International Labour Organization's maternity protection guidelines as a minimum requirement; improve access to skilled breastfeeding counselling as part of comprehensive breastfeeding policies and programmes in health facilities; and strengthen links between health facilities and communities, and encourage community networks that protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

Both UN agencies emphasize that breastfeeding is critical to achieve many of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), asserting that it improves nutrition, [SDG 2](#); prevents child mortality and decreases the risk of non-communicable diseases, [SDG 3](#); and supports cognitive development and education, [SDG 4](#). Breastfeeding is also an enabler to ending poverty, promoting economic growth and reducing inequalities.

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## [UN migration chief visits Nigeria's northeast; new fund allocates \\$10.5 million](#)

1 August 2017 – The United Nations has scaled up its efforts to tackle the humanitarian crisis in northeast Nigeria, through a visit by its top migration official and the allocation of \$10.5 million from a new fund.

According to the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), nearly two million people fled their homes to escape Boko Haram violence in northeast Nigeria. More than half of the displaced are children and 133,000 infants.

&#8220We've seen the suffering of the people. We've seen their resilience. We've seen their courage. We've seen their patience,&#8221 [said](#) IOM Director General William Lacy Swing during his visit to the area from 28 July to 30 July.

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This crisis is competing with about eight others, including that of Syria, Yemen and South Sudan, for the world's attention," he added.

IOM's emergency response is based in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno and the birthplace of Boko Haram. Mr. Swing's visited Maiduguri and other main cities that have been devastated by the whole Boko Haram conflict, and the first camp for the internally displaced in the region.

Mr. Swing met with the deputy governor of Borno state and discussed IOM's increasing focus on livelihood interventions for displaced Nigerians, such as sewing, knitting and barbershop work.

IOM has built tarpaulin shelters for nearly 11,000 families, about 102,000 people in Borno state. A few hundred other households were given shelter kits to expand or repair their spaces in Adamawa, the other state devastated by the conflict.

Mr. Swing also met with Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, in Abuja to discuss ways to prevent irregular migration.

According to IOM, about 37,000 Nigerians arrived in Italy by sea last year and more than 9,000 so far this year. Most travel to find work in Europe. But more than 2,000 migrants have died on the precarious Central Mediterranean route they follow from Libya to Italy in 2017.

The idea is not to stop migrants. It's about trying to save lives by counselling them about the risks of putting their lives in the hands of a smuggler," Mr. Swing said, explaining that IOM opened a migrant information office in Agadez, Niger, last year to try to engage migrants heading north from Nigeria to Libya and the Mediterranean Sea on the dangers many face.

IOM has helped more than 1,800 Nigerians return home safely from Libya this year through the organization's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme.

#### ***\$10.5 million in relief aid allocated from new fund***

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Humanitarian Fund (NHF) managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) [has allocated](#) \$10.5 million to life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable, including those in the hard-to-reach and newly accessible areas.

It will fund about 15 different projects, including the provision of safe drinking water, emergency shelter and health services.

Some 8.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the three worst-affected Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe; of them, 6.9 million people are targeted for humanitarian assistance.

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## [Mobile broadband subscriptions on track to hit 4.3 billion in 2017 – UN report](#)

31 July 2017 – Mobile broadband subscriptions are expected to reach 4.3 billion globally by the end of 2017, according to a new report released by the United Nations telecommunications agency.

New data from the International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)) also show that 48 per cent of the world's population now uses the Internet. The proportion is 71 per cent for the group of young people aged 15-24.

ITU's [ICT Facts and Figures 2017](#) shows that great strides are being made in expanding Internet access through the increased availability of broadband networks, [said](#) ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao in a press release.

Digital connectivity plays a critical role in bettering lives, as it opens the door to unprecedented knowledge, employment and financial opportunities for billions of people worldwide, he added.

Of the 830 million young people online worldwide, 320 million, or 39 per cent, are in China and India, the report finds.

### ***Youth at forefront of Internet adoption***

In the least developed countries (LDCs), 35 per cent of the individuals using the Internet are young people aged 15-24, compared with 13 per cent in developed countries and 23 per cent globally.

In developed countries, 94 per cent of the youth population uses the Internet, while the proportion is 67 per cent in developing countries and only 30 per cent in LCDs.

The report also reveals that mobile broadband subscriptions have grown more than 20 per cent globally in each of the last five years.

Between 2012 and 2017, the LDCs saw the highest growth-rate of mobile broadband subscriptions. However, the number of mobile subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in these countries remained the lowest, at 23 per cent.

The number of fixed-broadband subscriptions has increased by nine per cent annually in the last five years.

There has been an increase in high-speed fixed broadband subscriptions parallel to the growth in the number of fibre connections. Most of the increase in high-speed fixed broadband subscriptions in developing countries

can be attributed to China, which accounts for 80 per cent of all fixed-broadband subscriptions at 10 Mbit/s or above in the developing world.

Mobile broadband prices, as a percentage of gross national income per capita, dropped by half between 2013 and 2016.

Mobile broadband is more affordable than fixed broadband in most developing countries.

### ***Digital gender divide***

While the Internet user gender gap has narrowed in most regions since 2013, the proportion of men using the Internet remains slightly higher than the proportion of women using the Internet in two-thirds of countries worldwide.

In 2017, the global Internet penetration rate for men stands at 50.9 per cent compared to 44.9 percent for women.

In the Americas, the number of women using the Internet is higher than that of men.

### ***ICTs for sustainable development***

The report demonstrates that ICTs continue to play an increasingly critical role in achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“ICTs continue to be a key enabler of economic and social development, bridging the digital divide and fostering an inclusive digital economy,” ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau Director Brahim Sanou.

The [World Telecommunication Development Conference 2017](#) will take place 9 to 20 October in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the theme ‘ICT for Sustainable Development Goals.’

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## **[DRC’s Kasai region one of world’s ‘largest displacement crises’ for children – UNICEF](#)**

31 July 2017 – Waves of violent conflict in the Greater Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have forced more than one million people, including hundreds of thousands of children from their homes, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has reported.

“The lives of hundreds of thousands of children and their families in Greater Kasai have been [turned upside down by this brutal violence](#),” said Tajudeen Oyewale, UNICEF Acting Representative in the DRC in a press

statement issued late last week, calling the situation in the restive region of the DRC one of the largest displacement crises for children in the world.

A total of 1.4 million people, including 850,000 children, have been displaced, with at least 60,000 uprooted in the month of June alone, he added.

Most of the displaced, who have lost or left behind all their essential goods and personal belongings, live now with foster families and relatives in communities that are among the poorest in the country.

A smaller number of displaced families have fled to improvised huts in the bush near their villages. These families are the most vulnerable and least accessible to humanitarian workers. They suffer from lack of adequate food, shelter, healthcare, water and sanitation.

This is a rapidly growing humanitarian crisis, and with our partners, we are working amid great insecurity to try to help these highly vulnerable families, said Mr. Oyewale.

UNICEF and its partners have implemented a cash assistance programme for displaced people that provides households with \$100 cash support, which can be used for basic necessities. To date, UNICEF has supported 11,225 households through this programme.

In addition to the cash programme, a flexible multi-sectoral programme called Rapid Response Mechanism pre-positions materials and aid partners to rapidly respond to the needs of displaced populations. The assistance includes healthcare, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, and essential non-food items such as shelter materials, kitchen utensils, buckets of water, blankets. Some 50,000 households are expected to benefit from this programme over the coming months.

Thanks to donor support, UNICEF and its partners have so far this year, assisted 157,490 people in urgent humanitarian need.

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## **UN joins international community to salute park rangers' dedication and commitment**

31 July 2017 – Park rangers across the world face increasing challenges and risks due to a surge in poaching and illicit trafficking in wildlife, the head of the United Nations entity on protection of endangered species today said, honouring the work of park rangers in protecting wild animals, plants and culture.

Honest and hardworking park rangers devote their lives [to protecting our natural resources and cultural heritage](#) and, in some areas, these brave men and women regularly encounter well-resourced groups of poachers, equipped with high caliber weapons, who do not hesitate to use violence or threats of violence against them,&#8221 said John Scanlon, Secretary-General of the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

In recent years, rangers have increasingly been targeted by criminals seeking some of the world's most iconic animal species, such as elephants and rhinos, and plants, such as rosewood.

Mr. Scanlon added that the &#8220illegal trade in wild animals and plants is occurring at a scale that threatens wildlife, people and their livelihoods&#8221 and is being driven by transnational organized crime groups and rebel militia groups, as well as rogue elements of regular military forces.

&#8220The dedication and commitment shown by these honest hard working park rangers on a daily basis is worthy of much greater public recognition,&#8221 Mr. Scanlon said, welcoming World Ranger Day which is marked by the international community but not by the UN specifically.

**VIDEO:** Message from Black Mamba Anti-Poaching Unit

World Ranger Day takes place annually on 31 July to recognize the park rangers around the world who have been injured or killed in the line of duty.

In the past year, at least 105 rangers were killed doing their job, according to the International Ranger Federation.

The UN Environment Programme's ([UNEP](#)) Wild For Life programme added its voice today to celebrate rangers' work.

Praising park rangers for facing an array of challenges, including natural disasters like avalanches and floods, Wild For Life called rangers &#8220hands-on heroes.&#8221

&#8220Fighting crime, educating the public, and protecting our heritage... all in a day's work for the rangers [that safeguard](#) the earth's most treasured locations,&#8221 the campaign said.

It noted that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at least 140 rangers [were killed](#) in the past 15 years in the Virunga National Park.