

Human security approach 'central' to achieving sustainable development – UN officials

7 July 2017 – United Nations officials today highlighted the benefits of a human security approach to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as tackle a range of other issues, during a high-level event held at Headquarters.

“The human security approach is instrumental to sustainable development, inclusive peace, justice and the well-being and dignity of all people. It is in fact central to the [2030 Agenda](#),” [said](#) Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, addressing the event.

As outlined by the General Assembly, human security is a people-centred framework based on national ownership, which according to Ms. Mohammed, aims to support governments in responding to threats impeding their people from living free from fear, want and indignity, while recognizing the complexity and interconnected nature of today’s challenges.

“It really does compel us to find coherent, comprehensive and integrated solutions that combine the expertise and resources of the United Nations system with those of governments, regional and sub-regional organizations, the private sector, civil society and communities on the ground,” she explained.

Based on lessons learned from over 15 years of supported programming by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, the approach promotes greater coordination, advancing integrated actions for concrete results in improving the lives of peoples and communities.

At the UN, [said](#) Ms. Mohammed, the Secretary-General has embarked on a series of review processes and reforms, including management, development and the peace and security architecture, to fulfil his vision of a UN system that is less fragmented and much more efficient.

“Their underlying premise – and promise – is prevention,” she noted. “Human security is an essential part of these processes.”

By considering current and emerging risks and vulnerabilities, human security is an effective tool for prevention, she added. The human security approach can also help guide efforts to bridge the gap between humanitarian assistance and longer-term development aid.

She went on to say that programmes supported by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security have illustrated “the power of catalytic interventions that pool resources and establish strong partnerships and better coherence of results on the ground.”

“Let us work together to advance prevention and promote inclusive solutions that enhance people’s ability to live together in peace and well-being, with much stronger confidence in a sustainable future,” she stated.

General Assembly President Peter Thomson opened the event [saying](#), “human security provides us with a focussed, analytical lens and programming framework to aid the actions we are taking towards achieving the [SDGs](#).”

He added that with its direct focus on people, “the concept of human security finds in the SDGs an agenda that is ultimately about creating the conditions – social, economic and environmental – in which humanity can flourish.”

Today’s event was organised by the [UN Human Security Unit](#), in partnership with the Government of Japan and the Human Security Network (Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Panama, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand and South Africa, as an observer).

Also addressing the event, Yukio Takasu, the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Human Security, said that it is essential to identify and address the root causes of human insecurity, which are often interlinked and multifaceted.

“There is no simple, straightforward solution. Through the human security approach, we will be able to address deep-rooted insecurity and implement the SDGs effectively,” he stated.

“We have to identify first who has been left out in equitable progress and are at the greatest risk of falling behind... and take action on what needs to be done.”

He added that there is a consensus on the need to adopt an integrated approach to achieve the SDGs, which no single government, entity or international organization can do alone.

“We must strengthen a multi-stakeholder framework of cooperation at the national, regional and global levels. Partnership of all stakeholders, civil society and the private sector is absolutely essential for success.”

[Reconsider charges against Palestinian human rights defender, UN experts urge Israel](#)

7 July 2017 – Voicing concern over the reactivation of charges— some of which date back a number of years – against a Palestinian human rights defender, two independent United Nations experts have called on Israel to

strictly abide by international law in its dealings with rights defenders.

“On the information available to us, many of the charges against [Issa] Amro appear to be directed squarely at his lawful right to peacefully protest against the 50-year-old Israeli occupation,” said the Special Rapporteur [on the occupied Palestinian territories](#), Michael Lynk, and the Special Rapporteur [on human rights defenders](#), Michel Forst, in a [news release](#) today.

“If the Israeli military court convicts Mr. Amro on any of the charges against him, the convictions will be stained by reasonable doubts about the system’s ability to ensure justice,” they added.

According to the experts, the Israeli military court system – which all Palestinians in the West Bank are subject to – has a conviction rate above 99 per cent, which raises serious concerns about the system meeting many of the international standards of due process required under international human rights and humanitarian law. Further, stating that Palestinian human rights defenders, including Mr. Amro, have faced a long pattern of harassment, intimidation, discriminatory treatment and physical interference from Israeli military and settler groups, the two experts underscored that the non-violent work of human rights defenders must not be disrupted and attacked by the authorities, even under a military occupation.

“Their rights to freedom of expression and assembly must be respected and protected,” they stressed.

According to the news release, Mr. Amro and Youth Against Settlements have campaigned against the Israeli military’s shutdown of the once-thriving Palestinian neighbourhood around Shuhada Street in Hebron, and against illegal Israeli settlements in and near the city.

Their activities have included running a community centre, organizing protest marches and opposing the many restrictions placed by the military on daily Palestinian life, it added.

Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based UN [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.

[Antibiotic resistance making gonorrhoea ‘sometimes impossible’ to treat – UN health agency](#)

7 July 2017 – Gonorrhoea is becoming harder to treat due to antibiotic

resistance, the United Nations health agency today cautioned, adding that there is a need for better prevention and treatment of the disease that infects an estimated 78 million people each year.

“The bacteria that cause gonorrhoea are [particularly smart](#). Every time we use a new class of antibiotics to treat the infection, the bacteria evolve to resist them,” said Dr. Teodora Wi, Medical Officer, Human Reproduction, at the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

Data from 77 countries show that “antibiotic resistance is making gonorrhoea – a common sexually-transmitted infection – much harder, and sometimes impossible, to treat,” according to the agency.

WHO noted that the current “last-resort treatment” in the form of extended-spectrum cephalosporins (ECS) has now shown resistance in more than 50 countries. As a result, the agency issued updated global treatment recommendations in 2016, advising doctors to give 2 antibiotics: ceftriaxone and azithromycin.

The development of a new antibiotic for gonorrhoea “is not attractive for commercial pharmaceutical companies,” WHO said, noting that only three candidate drugs are currently in the research-and-development pipeline.

The treatments are taken only for short periods of time, unlike medicines for chronic diseases, and they become less effective as resistance develops, meaning that the supply of new drugs constantly needs to be replenished, according to the agency.

Gonorrhoea can be prevented through safer sexual behaviour, WHO stressed. It pointed to decreasing condom use, increased urbanization and travel, poor infection detection rates, and inadequate or failed treatment for the estimated 78 million people infected each year.

“These cases may just be the tip of the iceberg, since systems to diagnose and report untreatable infections are lacking in lower-income countries where gonorrhoea is actually more common,” said Dr. Wi.

Women are particularly at risk, potentially leading to pelvic inflammatory disease, ectopic pregnancy and infertility, as well as increased risk of HIV.

Earlier this year, WHO announced that it is classifying antibiotics into three categories – Access, Watch and Reserve – to preserve the effectiveness of “last resort” antibiotics.

[Strengthening UN peacekeeping tops](#)

agenda as chiefs of defence meet in New York

7 July 2017 – In the ongoing effort to improve the overall performance of United Nations peacekeeping missions, the heads of the armed forces of around 100 countries met at UN Headquarters in New York today to discuss issues such as rapid deployment, training, increasing the number of female peacekeepers, and conduct and discipline.

“Our partnership has never been more important. Across the globe, armed conflict scars countless civilians and destabilizes entire regions,” [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres told participants at the Chiefs of Defence Conference, via a [video message](#).

Expressing gratitude to the men and women serving in peacekeeping, Mr. Guterres noted that UN “blue helmets” brave danger so others can enjoy safety.

He also welcomed the Conference’s focus on gender, with a view to increasing the number of female peacekeepers, and integrating a gender perspective into UN peace and security actions.

“When we have greater gender balance in our forces, we boost our protection outreach – and we reduce the chances of sexual exploitation and abuse,” he highlighted, urging all troop-contributing countries to deploy more women as well as to help integrate a gender-sensitive perspective in strengthening peace.

[With] greater gender balance in our forces, we boost our protection outreach – and we reduce the chances of sexual exploitation and abuse
Secretary-General Guterres

In the same vein, Jane Holl Lute, the Special Coordinator on improving UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse, also underscored the need to stand together against the individual misconduct of some troops, which she said “seriously injures the vulnerable and undermines the mission and name of the United Nations.”

“Only through the continued personal leadership of the chiefs of defence forces, and others, will we effectively prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse,” she said, adding: “We are in this endeavour together, and together, we can root out this scourge.”

Trust of those served must not be broken

In his opening remarks, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, highlighted that recent developments – whether geostrategic shifts, emergence of new threats or large budget cuts – call for

greater urgency to strengthen the performance of peace operations.

“Now, more than ever before, peacekeepers need to be up to the challenge of the mandates they are given,” he said, calling for continued support for peacekeeping operations.

Success of our missions depends upon the confidence and trust placed on us by the populations we serve
Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN peacekeeping chief

Stressing the need to eliminate sexual exploitation and abuse, he called for putting in place measures to ensure that only troops with impeccable backgrounds are deployed, and that rigorous and consistent measures are employed to make certain that those responsible are held accountable for their acts.

VIDEO:The 2017 Chiefs of Defence Conference will take place between 6 – 8 July. The UN peacekeeping chief, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, talks about the importance of the meeting amid new challenges facing peacekeeping.

“The success of our missions depends upon the confidence and trust placed on us by the populations we serve. When this trust is broken, our credibility is indelibly damaged,” he underscored.

More needs to be done to overcome the scale of challenges

Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Field Support – which provides administrative, finance, logistical and technical support to peacekeeping and political missions around the world – spoke of efforts underway to improve service delivery and to produce better value for money.

In particular, he noted a new environmental strategy to guide UN efforts to deliver support in a responsible manner as well as steps to improve medical support to peacekeepers to prevent the avoidable loss of lives.

“But we need to do more together,” he added. “We simply cannot accept that 30 of the 287 military medical facilities in peacekeeping missions either have not deployed or are deployed with sub-standard equipment.”

In particular, Mr. Khare highlighted the need for more female participation in peacekeeping, urging the chiefs of defence to redouble their efforts to contribute female personnel to serve in missions.

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Atul Khare, Head of Field Support

He also called on them to ensure that uniformed contingents deploy rapidly

and with the equipment and training required to carry out the tasks that they have been mandated.

Held under the theme *Meeting the Challenges*, the conference also included the participation of military representatives from the African Union, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as the Force Commanders of the UN peacekeeping missions in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)), Central African Republic ([MINUSCA](#)), South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo ([MONUSCO](#)).

DR Congo's economy loses over \$1 billion to child undernutrition, finds UN-backed study

7 July 2017 – The economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is losing as much as 4.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to the effects of child undernutrition, according to a United Nations-backed study released today.

The social and economic costs of undernutrition are estimated at 1.637 billion Congolese francs, or more than \$1 billion a year.

“These results call on all of us to act now to avoid future losses caused by hunger,” [said](#) UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) Country Director Claude Jibidar in a news release.

“I’m convinced that with the understanding we now have of the terrible economic and social impact of malnutrition on children, we and our partners can work with the Government to make a real difference to this alarming situation.”

The Cost of Hunger in Africa study was undertaken by the Government of DRC in collaboration with WFP, the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ([ECLAC](#)).

The study shows that the losses are incurred each year through increased healthcare costs, additional burdens to the education system and reduced workforce productivity.

According to the report, DRC could save up to around \$383 million by 2025 if the prevalence of underweight children is reduced from 11 to 5 per cent, and if stunting – low growth for age – is reduced from 43 to 10 per cent.

“Africa has the potential to reap a demographic dividend from a young,

educated and skilled workforce,” said Kefilwe Moalosi, speaking on behalf of AUC and NEPAD. “But this potential can only be harnessed if we continue to invest in the health and nutrition of its people, particularly its women and children, and secure the necessary economic growth.”

The Cost of Hunger in Africa study has been conducted in 11 African countries. Their economies suffer an estimated annual loss associated with child undernutrition that is equivalent to between 1.9 per cent and 16.5 per cent of GDP. Results are due to be released soon in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The study is being planned for Mali and Mauritania.