

As crises multiply, UN revises annual aid appeal to assist over 100 million around the world

21 June 2017 – As the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance around the world reach record levels, United Nations and relief partners have revised their global aid appeal to \$23.5 billion – up nearly 6 per cent from the original \$22.2 billion announced late last year.

According to a news release issued by the UN Office for Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), [new natural and man-made disasters as well as deteriorating protracted emergencies](#) have resulted in an additional 8 million people around the world needing assistance.

Since its launch on 5 December 2017, donors have provided about \$6.2 billion for the 2017 global appeal. However, with more than half of the year still remaining and needs rising, more is needed.

With generous donor support, humanitarian partners have swiftly scaled up to deliver record levels of life-saving assistance in challenging and often dangerous environments, Stephen O’Brien, the UN Emergency Relief Coordination and head of OCHA, said on the first day of the annual Economic and Social Council Humanitarian Affairs Segment in Geneva.

[But] we are in a race against time. People’s lives and well-being depend on increasing our collective support, he added.

Some of the crises that pushed up the requirements include the rapid escalation of violence in Kasai province in the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as a drought in Kenya, tropical cyclones in Madagascar and Mozambique, and flooding in Peru, as well as looming famines across north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen.

The revised appeal aims to reach over 101 million highly vulnerable people among the estimated 141 million people across 37 countries in need of humanitarian assistance.

Funding to response plans is a high-impact investment as they are prioritized on the basis of thorough needs assessment and analysis. Supporting the plans also provides the most neutral and impartial aid, Mr. O’Brien noted, calling on the international community to step up assistance: We now need donors to set the bar higher and increase their support.

The Humanitarian Affairs Segment, being held from 21-23 June is a major global platform to discuss activities and issues related to strengthening UN’s humanitarian response around the globe.

The forum also provides a key opportunity for UN Member States,

Organizational entities, humanitarian and development partners and the affected communities to discuss emerging and pressing humanitarian issues.

Coinciding with the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, OCHA today also launched the [Global Humanitarian Overview 2017 Status Report](#), which documents evidence humanitarian efforts to assist the world's most vulnerable people.

According to the Status Report, UN and partners have provided life-saving assistance to 5.8 million people in Yemen and over 3 million people in South Sudan. Also 2.7 million people in Somalia and 2.2 million affected by the Syria crisis have received food. In north-eastern Nigeria, over 2.3 million people have received both emergency food assistance and livelihood support through UN-coordinated plans.

[Protection of civilians in Syria must be ensured, stresses UN chief Guterres](#)

21 June 2017 – Expressing alarm over the suffering of people Syria, in particular those in Raqqa and in other locations where fighting continues, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has called on all those conducting military operations in the country to ensure the safety and protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure.

“Civilians continue to be killed, injured and displaced at a terrifying rate [and] places of refuge, such as hospitals and schools continue to be targeted,” said the Secretary-General in a statement today.

“I [make an urgent appeal](#) to all those conducting military operations in Syria to do everything in their power to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure,” he added.

In the statement, the UN chief voiced particular concern for the civilians in Raqqa as well as those stuck in other besieged and hard-to-reach areas, some of whom have been deprived of food and basic medical assistance for years on end.

According to estimates, more than 430,000 civilians are in need across the larger Raqqa governorate, in areas either cut off from relief or where transporting aid is extremely difficult. In all, [the crisis now it in its seventh year](#) has left more than 13.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, displaced 6.3 million internally, and forced more than 5.1 million to flee across Syrian borders.

Further in the statement, Mr. Guterres hailed the efforts of UN and humanitarian workers, who he said are “all they can do to stem the suffering in Raqqa and across Syria, often at great personal risk.”

It is critical for all parties [to the conflict] to facilitate improved humanitarian access to allow aid to reach those in urgent need of life-saving assistance without delay," he said.

Heading to Uganda for 'solidarity summit,' UN chief marks World Refugee Day with calls for action

20 June 2017 – Refugee protection is not a matter of solidarity or generosity, but an obligation under international law, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today said, detailing five strong appeals to the international community for respecting refugees' rights.

"We are still witnessing many remarkable examples of [solidarity in today's world](#). But at the same time, we are seeing more and more borders being closed, we are seeing more and more refugees being rejected and, namely in countries of the developed world," Mr. Guterres said in his first press conference in New York since becoming Secretary-General.

Among his calls on Member States, Mr. Guterres urged Governments to manage their borders but to increase their resettlement quotas and protect asylum seekers and people who deserve protection; to seek political solutions to world's conflicts which are spurring the record 65.6 million refugees; and to fund humanitarian aid work.

In line with [World Refugee Day](#), marked annually on 20 June, Mr. Guterres, who was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees for a decade prior, announced that he would be leaving later today for Uganda, which this week hosts a UN-backed summit to support the more than 1.3 million refugees within its borders for the next four years.

Some 950,000 refugees from South Sudan have crossed into Uganda since the start of the conflict in the world's newest country in December 2013. The figure is three times higher than the number of refugees who crossed the Mediterranean Sea into Europe last year, Mr. Guterres said, adding that Uganda not only provides protection but land for the refugees.

I also think it's important to underline that the difficulties faced by refugees are also linked to the fact that the migration debate has become quite irrational in today's world.

In contrast, the UN chief had sharp words for developed countries not doing enough to provide support for refugees or take them in despite heart breaking

pleas for food, water and other basics.

Some 80 per cent of the world's refugees are hosted by developing countries with a dramatic impact on their economy, society and security, he noted.

This is particularly worrying, especially when associated to forms of political populism, xenophobia, racism, in which refugees become a target, Mr. Guterres said, many times being accused of being part of the terror threat when refugees are not terrorists they are the first victims of terror, they are fleeing terror; that is why they are refugees.

RELATED: [Sheer scale of influx into Uganda means Africa's largest refugee crisis now a 'children's crisis,' UNICEF warns](#)

Speaking alongside Ninette Kelley, the Director of the NY Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Mr. Guterres lashed out at the irrational debate surrounding migration, calling it a necessary element of establishing different forms of equilibrium in the global society and the global economy.

Stressing that Governments need to apply their own migration policies in their countries, he urged world leaders to respect human rights and to create opportunities within their borders so that people migrate out of choice and not out of necessity.

Addressing the difference between [refugees and migrants](#), Mr. Guterres said that the UN General Assembly will next year hold two key debates with the aim of agreeing on two compacts one on refugees and one on migration.

We are talking about two different situations: refugees crossing borders, fleeing conflict or prosecution, [and] economic migrants who aspire legitimately to have a better life and move from one country to another, aiming at a better future for them and their children, the Secretary-General said.

He added that migration is necessary: If something is necessary, it's better to control it and to do it regularly than to let smugglers and traffickers be in charge of these movements.

[On World Refugee Day, UN urges support, solidarity for record number](#)

of displaced people

20 June 2017 – With a record 65.6 million people last year forcibly uprooted from their homes by violence and persecution, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today called on the international community to provide support and solidarity.

“We reflect on the courage of those who fled and the compassion of those who welcome them,” the Secretary-General said in his video message for [World Refugee Day](#), marked annually on 20 June.

He noted that more people than ever in our lifetimes are fleeing war, disasters and persecution.

“Hardship, separation, death,” Mr. Guterres said, recalling nightmare stories heard from refugees and displaced persons, whose number rose 300,000 since the end of 2015.

Conflicts have displaced 12 million Syrians, 7.7 million Colombians, 4.7 million Afghans and 4.2 million Iraqis, according to a [report](#) released yesterday by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)).

Despite the hardships of fleeing with nothing, “they never lose their dreams for their children or their desire to better our world,” Mr. Guterres said. “They ask for little – only our support in their time of greatest need and our solidarity.”

The UN chief said it is “so inspiring to see countries with the least doing the most for refugees.”

According to the report, about 84 per cent of the people were in low- or middle-income countries as of end 2016. Of that figure, one in every three people, roughly 4.9 million people, were hosted by the least developed countries.

To mark the Day, Mr. Guterres, will hold a press conference in New York later today.

When we stand #WithRefugees, we also stand for respect and diversity for all

In his remarks, UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said the Day is also a moment to [recognize those communities and people](#) around the world who receive refugees and the internally displaced in their midst, offering them a safe place, and welcoming them in their societies.

In a world in which uncertainty often abounds; economic instability, political upheaval and violence close to home “can make us want to shut our eyes or close our doors. But fear and exclusion will not lead us to a better place – they can only lead to barriers, alienation and despair,” he stressed.

“It’s time to change this trajectory. And for the better,” he stated, noting that in countless communities, including in the poorest countries that host the vast majority of the world’s refugees, business people, faith communities, teachers, journalists and many more are joining together to provide refuge to the displaced and foster their inclusion in their societies.

“Inclusion requires opening our minds, hearts and communities to refugees. It requires a whole of society approach,” Mr. Grandi underscored.

World Refugee Day is a moment to ask what each of us can do to overcome indifference or fear and embrace the idea of inclusion, “to welcome refugees to our own communities, and to counter narratives that would seek to exclude and marginalize refugees and other uprooted people,” he emphasized.

[Disarming and reintegrating fighters into society key to sustaining peace – UN officials](#)

19 June 2017 – Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the development of United Nations standards for having former combatants lay down weapons and reintegrate into society, senior UN officials today highlighted how crucial the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes are to sustaining peace.

“Over the past three decades, [DDR](#) has become an integral part of peace operations across the globe. DDR has played a key role in violence prevention, stabilization and support to political processes,” High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu told a high-level roundtable, titled ‘Tenth anniversary of the Integrated DDR Standards and the experience of Côte d’Ivoire.’

The UN peacekeeping mission in Côte d’Ivoire, known by its French acronym, UNOCI, which was set up in April 2004, will [close at the end of this month](#).

“This crucial contribution to sustaining peace is manifested in successful DDR programmes, as witnessed in Central America, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and of course Côte d’Ivoire,” Ms. Nakamitsu said, speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General.

The heightened political and security challenges in recent times have made peacekeeping, and more specifically DDR, more challenging. These include contexts in which there is no peace agreement or inclusive political process,

a rising number of armed groups with regional agendas and links to transnational criminal networks as well as a large number of illicit arms within communities exacerbating the threat of violent extremism.

The past decade of implementing the Integrated DDR Standards has taught us that as complex as DDR appears, it is a tool that can adapt to realities on the ground

UN disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu

Community Violence Reduction (CVR), including community security measures, are examples that can complement classic DDR programmes to create the space for stability, recovery and sustainable peace, she noted.

The 2017 revision of the [Integrated DDR Standards](#) and development of new guidance including on disarmament and arms control will help ensure that DDR remains relevant to contemporary and future peace operation contexts, and that Integrated DDR Standards continue to be the living and dynamic tool it was meant to be.

Standardizing guidance on DDR operations in 2006 was a major step towards improving the 'One UN' approach to carrying out its DDR mandate, she said, adding that it is now crucial that we use the revision to take UN DDR to the next level.

Echoing Ms. Nakamitsu's key points, Fabrizio Hochschild, Assistant Secretary-General for Strategic Coordination in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, stressed that 10 years after the publication of the Integrated DDR standards, its revision is an excellent opportunity to reflect the wider reform efforts by the Secretary-General.

Statistically speaking, there has never been a moment in history where more people have enjoyed as much prosperity and security. Nevertheless, there is truth to the common perception that the multilateral system has not dealt with the current transnational challenges effectively in light of new signs of fragility and unpredictability, he said.

This is what has brought the Secretary-General to start his term with a strong emphasis on prevention and reform, he added.

Primacy of national ownership is essential for a successful DDR process

Also speaking at the roundtable was Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, who highlighted four key points.

He said that first, reintegration needs to ensure that the political, social and economic grievances of former combatants are properly addressed. Second, DDR initiatives cannot be sustained if they are not supported by well-funded, long-term reintegration programmes for ex-combatants. Third, there is a need to re-think partnerships more strategically.

Lastly, the primacy of national ownership is essential for a successful DDR

process, he said, and in that regard, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire had been exemplary through its strong commitment to complete the DDR process, which had been fully led by the personal vision of President Ouattara and effectively implemented by the national *Autorité pour le DDR* headed by Fidèle Sarassoro. "This was critical in mobilizing funding and partners had confidence in the Government's visible commitment," he said.

Other speakers included Ambassador Claude Stanislas Bouah-Kamon; Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations; El Ghassim Wane, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; David Clay, Deputy Political Coordinator, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations; and Jean-Paul Laborde, Assistant Secretary-General & Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate.

The meeting was moderated by Dmitry Titov, outgoing Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions and Kelvin Ong, Chief of the Security Council Subsidiary Organs Branch.