

Industry leaders agree to implement UN agency's standards on clinical trial reporting

18 May 2017 – With about half of all clinical trial results unreported, some of the world's largest funders of medical research and international non-governmental organizations today agreed to adopt standards based on United Nations health agency's recommendations to register and publicly disclose results of all clinical trials they fund or support.

Research funders are making a strong statement that [there will be no more excuses](#) on why some clinical trials remain unreported long after they have completed, said Marie-Paule Kieny, Assistant Director-General for Health Systems and Innovation at the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

The concern is that unreported trials result in an incomplete and potentially misleading understanding of the risks and benefits of vaccines, drugs and medical devices, and could lead to the release of harmful products.

The standards are based on a 2015 WHO published position on public disclosure, which defines timeframes within which the results should be reported.

Today's joint statement that future standards will be in line with that 2015 position, was signed by the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Norwegian Research Council, the UK Medical Research Council, Médecins Sans Frontières and Epicentre (its research arm), PATH, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Institut Pasteur, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Wellcome Trust.

According to a press release, the entities agreed to develop and implement policies within the next 12 months that require all trials they fund, co-fund, sponsor or support to be registered in a publicly-available registry.

Number of unaccompanied refugee and migrant children hits 'record high' – UNICEF

18 May 2017 – The number of children traveling alone has increased fivefold since 2010, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said today, warning

that many young [refugees and migrants](#) are taking highly dangerous routes, often at the mercy of traffickers, to reach their destinations.

At least 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children were recorded in some 80 countries in the combined years of 2015 and 2016, up from 66,000 in 2010 and 2011, according to the new UNICEF report [A Child is a Child: Protecting children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation](#), which presents a global snapshot of refugee and migrant children, the motivations behind their journeys and the risks they face along the way.

“One child moving alone is one too many, and yet today, there are a staggering number of children doing just that – [we as adults are failing to protect them](#),” said UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Justin Forsyth yesterday in a news release.

Among a raft of alarming statistics, the report finds that children account for approximately 28 per cent of trafficking victims globally. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Central America and the Caribbean have the highest share of children among detected trafficking victims at 64 and 62 per cent, respectively. Further, as much as 20 per cent of smugglers have links to human trafficking networks.

“Ruthless smugglers and traffickers are exploiting their vulnerability for personal gain, helping children to cross borders, only to sell them into slavery and forced prostitution. It is unconscionable that we are not adequately defending children from these predators,” stated Mr. Forsyth.



A boy carrying his belongings in a large cloth bag over his shoulder is among people walking on railway tracks to cross from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia into Serbia. Photo: UNICEF/NYHQ2015-2203/Georgiev

Frist and foremost, the agency says, children need protection, highlighting the importance of the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), through which State Parties commit to respect and ensure the rights of “each child within their jurisdiction, without discrimination of any kind.”

Six-point agenda for action

The information is coming to light just ahead of next week’s G7 Summit in Italy and UNICEF is calling on governments to adopt its six-point agenda for action, which includes:

1. Protect child refugees and migrants, particularly unaccompanied children, from exploitation and violence;
2. End the detention of children seeking refugee status or migrating, by introducing a range of practical alternatives;
3. Keep families together as the best way to protect children and give children legal status;
4. Keep all refugee and migrant children learning and give them access to health and other quality services;

5. Press for action on the underlying causes of large scale movements of refugees and migrants; and
6. Promote measures to combat xenophobia, discrimination and marginalization in countries of transit and destination.

“These children need a real commitment from governments around the world to ensure their safety throughout their journeys,” said Mr. Forsyth. “Leaders gathering next week at the G7 should lead this effort by being the first to commit to our six-point agenda for action.”

[UN expert urges Dominican Republic to place child protection at core of tourism strategy](#)

18 May 2017 – Those who come to the Dominican Republic to sexually exploit children must know that they will be punished, a United Nations independent expert said, urging the Government to put child protection at the centre of its tourism strategy.

At the end of her first official visit to the Dominican Republic, the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, urged the Government to [send a strong signal](#) that the target of 10 millions of tourists by 2022 is not reached at the expense of exposing further children to the scourge of sexual exploitation.

During her eight-day mission, the Special Rapporteur visited child care institutions, and met with children in vulnerable situations to fall victims of sexual exploitation such as girl vendors on beach locations.

She noted that blame for rape and other sexual exploitation is often put on the families and the exploited children while perpetrators often foreign male from Western countries whose crimes are facilitated by all sorts of intermediaries walk around with a complete sense of impunity.

The Special Rapporteur called on the Ministry of Tourism to incorporate prevention of this scourge in its plans, and to lead efforts already deployed by the private travel and tourism sector, together with local actors of affected communities, to implement the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism.

The expert commended measures adopted by the specialised units of the Attorney General’s Office to combat trafficking and high technology crimes, which have led to a series of convictions, including of foreign nationals.

She also called for better coordination between the police and the body in

charge of tourist security (CESTUR) to improve detection and referral of cases for criminal investigation.

International police and judicial cooperation are also crucial to combat impunity," she added.

Ms. de Boer-Buquicchio also called for a strengthened cooperation between the Dominican and Haitian authorities to address the situation of unaccompanied children living and working around the Haitian border, and reminded that "while these children remain in the country, they must receive the Dominican authorities' assistance and protection."

Among other statements made during her visit, the expert called for absolute prohibition of child marriage.

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.

Mosul: 200,000 more people could be displaced as battle nears Old City – UN

18 May 2017 – As military operations against terrorists intensify and move closer to Mosul's Old City area, up to 200,000 more people could be displaced, a senior United Nations humanitarian official in Iraq warned today.

"The numbers of people fleeing their homes in western Mosul are overwhelming," said Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq Lise Grande in a press release from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Since military operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) began in Mosul seven months ago, nearly 700,000 people have been displaced, including 500,000 people from the city's western neighbourhoods.

Iraqi Security Forces have made rapid gains in north-west Mosul and ISIL terrorists are reportedly surrounded in the west of the city.

"The military battle in Mosul isn't over yet and even when it is, the emergency will continue for months... Hundreds of thousands of lives are at stake," said Ms. Grande, stressing the need to re-double efforts to

mobilize more resources to assist the people in need.

She said many are lacking food and haven't had access to safe drinking water and medicines for weeks or months.

Acknowledging the generosity of people in other parts of Mosul who are opening their homes for displaced families, she said: "Without this support, the camps would have been overwhelmed long ago."

To date, the \$985 million appeal for Iraq is less than 30 per cent funded. About \$331 million is being sought for the Mosul assistance.

Innovators, UN discuss using tech to tackle world's development challenges

17 May 2017 – From drones dropping food and medicines, to handheld devices that can diagnose Ebola with a drop of blood, the latest technological advances are converging to make the "unthinkable happen," said global innovators and heads of tech companies invited to the United Nations today to discuss how to emerging technologies can boost achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

Living up to his promise to be "disruptive," a famous Silicon Valley catchphrase, Peter Thomson, the President of the UN General Assembly told those gathered for the High-level [SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity](#) that he had refrained from wearing a tie, while Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed kicked off her shoes before addressing the room.

"Today, in this world, everyone is closing their border," she said, but partnerships are necessary for the [SDGs](#) to reach every corner of the globe. Indeed, many innovators know no borders, "like we do in these halls when we negotiate and we talk about red lines, blue lines and green lines."

Ms. Mohammed underscored: "There are no red, blue or green lines as you walk through the Internet, social media, communicating across those borders. That is what is exciting. Because with that you can share knowledge, with that you can go to scale, with that you can partner to de-risk environments where ordinarily you would not go."

The Action Event, which sought to get leading innovators from major global corporations to interact with UN Member States, [featured](#) two keynote speakers, with Dr. Peter Diamandis, Chairman of XPrize Foundation and Singularity University, telling the gathering that he believed that in seven years, the entire planet will be connected.

This is what he called the "dematerialization" of things that people used to own, and that are now free on our cell phones.

VIDEO: Speaking at the General Assembly's High-level SDG Action Event, leading innovators from major corporations interacted with UN Member States on how emerging technologies can transform efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

"The son or daughter of a billionaire here in Manhattan, or the son or daughter of the poorest person in Kenya, has access to the same free applications, the same knowledge and information. It's an incredible world. What we are seeing here is a dematerialization as all of these things become cheaper and cheaper and ultimately, a democratization where we have a billion handsets in Africa."

Mr. Diamandis then asked participants to imagine the power of five billion new minds that had never been connected before.

"Change the world," was his response.

The second keynote speaker, Astro Teller, Chief Executive Officer of Google X, said partnerships between inventors, technologists, governments and local communities are what matter the most.

The majority of 7.5 billion people living on the planet do not have access to the internet, he remarked.



General Assembly President Peter Thomson speaks at the High-level SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity. UN Photo/Evan Schneider



Astro Teller, CEO of Google X, speaks at the High-level SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity. UN Photo/Evan Schneider



Peter Diamandis, Chairman of the XPrize Foundation and Singularity University, speaks at the High-level SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

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"This is a picture in Brazil. There are so many people who climb up the trees in order to get cell phone signal that they call them fireflies because at night, all you can see in the darkness is all of the flashing lights of the cell phones high up in the trees as they are hoping to get a signal. In Peru, they climb to the top of water towers or walk for many kilometres for

the hope of getting a signal,” he said.

In order to get more people online, Google Ex launched a balloon-powered Internet project, Loon, in Latin America with the help of the UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Partnering, Mr. Teller stressed, is important for everyone, from the innovator to Governments. “No one can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals alone.”