

Malala Yousafzai designated youngest-ever UN Messenger of Peace

10 April 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres today designated children’s rights activist and Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai as a UN Messenger of Peace with a special focus on girls’ education.

“You have been to the most difficult places [...] visited several refugee camps. Your foundation has schools in Lebanon, in the Beka’a Valley,” said Mr. Guterres at a ceremony in the Trusteeship Council chamber at UN Headquarters, in New York.

“[You are a] symbol of perhaps the most important thing in the world, education for all,” he highlighted.

Ms. Yousafzai, who was shot in 2012 by the Taliban for attending classes, is the youngest-ever UN Messenger of Peace and the first one to be designated by Secretary-General Guterres since he assumed office in January this year.

Accepting the accolade, Ms. Yousafzai underscored the importance of education, especially education of girls, for advancing communities and societies.

“[Bringing change] starts with us and it should start now,” she said, adding: “If you want to see your future bright, you have to start working now [and] not wait for anyone else.”

[UN Messengers of Peace](#) are distinguished individuals, carefully selected from the fields of art, literature, science, entertainment, sports or other fields of public life, who have agreed to help focus worldwide attention on the work of the global Organization.

Backed by the highest honour bestowed by the Secretary-General on a global citizen, these prominent personalities volunteer their time, talent and passion to raise awareness of UN’s efforts to improve the lives of billions of people everywhere.



Malala Yousafzai, global advocate for girls’ education and the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was designated as a United Nations Messenger of Peace with a special focus on girls’ education, at a special ceremony at UN headquarters. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas



Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed pictured together with children’s rights activist and Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai on the day Malala was designated as UN Messenger of Peace with a special focus on girls’ education. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

If you speak out, you can help people – UN Messenger of Peace Malala

Following the official presentation, Secretary-General Guterres and Ms. Yousafzai conversed with youth representatives from around the world on the theme of girls' education.

Taking a question from a young speaker in the audience, Ms. Yousafzai said the most difficult time she faced had been from 2007 to 2009 in the Swat Valley, "because we were at a point of making a decision about whether to speak out or remain silent. And I realized that if you remain silent, you are still going to be terrorized. So speaking out, you can help people."

While recovering from the Taliban attack, she realized that "extremists tried everything to stop me [and the fact that they didn't] is clear evidence that no one can stop me. I have second life for the purpose of education and I'll continue working on [this issue].

Ms. Yousafzai went on to say that brothers and fathers must also support women and girls in the global effort to ensure education for all and, more importantly, "be who they want to be." Indeed, she has that her father always told people not to ask him what he did for Malala, 'but as what I didn't do – I didn't clip her wings.'

Summing up the conversation, Mr. Guterres called Ms. Yousafzai's life "a remarkable example of solidarity." Yet, he said, Pakistan was also such an example. "We live in a world where so many borders closed; so many doors are closed, but Pakistan has received seven million refugees with open borders, open doors and hearts – open a symbol of generosity." He hoped this spirit could serve as an example that "it is not by closing doors that we will all be able to move forward."

National policies can offset impact of joblessness caused by market competition – UN partner report

10 April 2017 – Trade and trade-related policies have a role to play not just in promoting growth and prosperity, but helping share that prosperity more widely, United Nations global finance partners said today, launching a report that calls on national governments to pursue policies that help those who might lose their jobs, one of the unintended consequences of trade integration.

Trade leads to productivity gains and significant benefits for consumers, especially the poor, but can also be responsible for job displacement that must be addressed through sound domestic policies that can help the unemployed get back on their feet, say economists from the World Trade Organization ([WTO](#)), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

“I recognize that there are very real concerns, but the answer is not to turn against trade, which would harm us all,” says the WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo.

Economists from the three global organizations reflect in the report on the latter part of the 20th century, arguing that trade integration helped drive economic growth in advanced and developing economies through greater productivity, increased competition resulting in higher living standards and more choices and better prices for consumers.

Looking back, “trade has had a very positive impact on the lives and livelihoods of many millions of people in recent decades,” says Mr. Azevêdo.

The report notes that job losses in certain sectors or regions in advanced economies have resulted to a large extent from technological changes rather than from trade.

According to Mr Azevêdo the “challenge before us is to support the workers of today and train the workers of tomorrow.”

The organizations call on national governments to pursue both “active” and “passive” labour market policies such as training programmes, job search assistance and wage insurance (a private insurance providing compensation if one is forced to move to a job with a lower salary) to facilitate reintegration of the unemployed back into the job market.

The organizations also call on governments to stabilize unemployed working families with short term passive labour market programmes, such as unemployment benefits and income support until those who have lost their jobs can get back to work.

Effective education and skills policies will be essential in preparing workers for the changing demands of the modern economy, they add.

RELATED: [World’s jobless numbers to rise amid economic uncertainty, growing inequality – UN labour report](#)

The report also calls for further trade integration to strengthen global growth and advance an inclusive trading environment.

It stresses that traditional areas such as agriculture need further attention, while sectors such as services, as well as digital trade, represent areas where further trade reform can make a particularly strong contribution to growth.

[Iraq: UN agency ramps up emergency medical care to women and girls affected by conflict](#)

10 April 2017 – The United Nations population agency, with financial support from the European Union (EU), has increased its humanitarian response in Iraq to meet the urgent needs of women and girls as fighting peaks in the war-torn country.

Thanks to an additional five million euros contribution by the European Commission Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the UN Population Fund ([UNFPA](#)) is able to up-scale its urgent frontline assistance.

“Through this EU partnership, UNFPA will provide much needed reproductive health services to more than 700,000 conflict-affected women and girls in Iraq. Furthermore, over 120,000 newly displaced women and girls from Mosul will receive first line relief items, as part of the Rapid Response Mechanism Consortium, which also includes UNICEF [UN Children’s Fund] and the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)),” said the UNFPA representative in Iraq, Ramanathan Balakrishnam, in a [press statement](#).

The provisions include lifesaving reproductive health services in the recently re-taken areas of East and West Mosul as well as the delivery of first assistance kits to displaced women and girls from Mosul and other active conflict areas in Iraq.

According to UNFPA, the EU’s generous support will contribute to establishing and running of three field maternity hospitals that will offer safe delivery options and lifesaving obstetric emergency services to conflict-affected women from West Mosul.

“Bringing back essential health services in conflict-affected areas in Mosul is a priority for the EU,” said Javier Rio-Navarro, ECHO head of office in Iraq.

The EU contribution also supports the procurement and running of two mobile delivery units and two mobile reproductive health clinics in retaken districts and neighbourhoods in East and West Mosul, as well as similar services in Anbar, Kirkuk and Salah al-Din governorates.

“Pregnant women and displaced women and girls who have survived the hardship of conflict will receive much needed emergency medical services,” he added.

UNFPA delivers a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every child birth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.

[Urgent action needed to stave 'hunger crisis' in Iraq – UN food relief agency](#)

10 April 2017 – Warning that deepening food insecurity in Iraq could leave more than half the population facing “unprecedented levels” of vulnerability, the United Nations emergency food relief agency today called for improving nutrition awareness and strengthening social safety nets and livelihoods in rural areas, to avoid a hunger crisis in the country.

In its [Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis](#), prepared jointly with the Iraqi Government, the UN World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) also underlined the need to improve access to education, especially for girls, as an important component in the fight against hunger.

“[The Analysis] should guide the work of the Government, policy makers, and humanitarians across the country to improve the food security and nutrition status of every Iraqi so that [no one is left behind](#),” the WFP Representative and Country Director in Iraq, Sally Haydock, said in a news release.

The study – one of the most robust technical food security studies ever conducted in Iraq – was conducted prior to the recent offensive in Mosul and does not capture the food security situation among people fleeing these conflict areas. Data collection was concluded in 2016 and included first hand surveys with more than 20,000 families in urban and rural areas as well as with those who are internally displaced.

Findings revealed that 2.5 per cent of the country’s population is already food insecure – a level of need that requires support. On top of this, rather than going to school, nearly 75 per cent of children under the age of 15 work to help their families put food on the table.

Analysis also showed that 53 per cent of residents and 66 per cent of internally displaced people are vulnerable to food insecurity.

“The prevalence of food insecurity was twice as high among internally displaced families compared to those remaining in their homes,” noted WFP in the news release

The highest concentration of food insecure families was found in the southern portion of the country, particularly in northern Muthanna and portions of Salah al-Deen, it added.

The recommendations of the study will also be used by the UN agency and the Government of Iraq to work towards the implementation of the food-security related Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)), in particular [Goal 2](#) on ending

hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition.

It will also provide the basis for five to 10 years of strategic development planning.

WFP assistance in country

The UN agency has been operating in Iraq since 1968, providing emergency food assistance during crises as well as investing in development initiatives such as school meals, nutrition support for babies, pregnant and nursing mothers, tree planting, and assisting the Government with technical capacity building and reform of its food delivery systems.

It has also been providing nationwide support to families displaced by the conflict through cash assistance programmes and monthly family rations. However, lack of funding continues to pose a serious threat to such operations.

In Iraq, WFP urgently requires \$113 million to continue to provide full monthly rations and cash-based assistance to cover the needs of 1.5 million vulnerable Iraqis until the end of September 2017.

[UN refugee agency urges EU States to suspend transfers of asylum-seekers to Hungary](#)

10 April 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency today called on European Union (EU) members to temporarily suspend returns of asylum-seekers to Hungary, concerned about the country's new policy of detaining migrants at the border or expelling those not holding the proper papers.

"The situation for asylum-seekers in Hungary, which was already of deep concern, has [only gotten worse](#) since the new law introducing mandatory detention for asylum-seekers came into effect," said Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The EU's Dublin Regulation, named after the Irish capital in which it was agreed more than 25 years ago, is an EU instrument that determines which European State is responsible for examining an asylum seeker's application.

"Given the worsening situation of asylum-seekers in Hungary, I urge States to suspend any Dublin transfer of asylum-seekers to this country until the Hungarian authorities bring their practices and policies in line with European and international law," he added.

While Mr. Grandi said he was “encouraged” by the decision taken by the European Commission to work with the Hungarian authorities with a view to bringing the new legislation and Hungary’s practice in line with EU law, he noted that “urgent measures are needed to improve access to asylum in Hungary.”

The High Commissioner’s Office ([UNHCR](#)) has repeatedly raised its concerns over the situation of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving to Hungary with the authorities and the EU, stressing that physical barriers and restrictive policies have resulted in effectively denying access to territory and asylum.

Hungary’s “emergency measures” under the amended law on asylum expand mandatory detention of asylum seekers and lead to the expulsion from the country of anyone who enters the country irregularly, in violation of the country’s obligations under international law.

UNHCR reported that since it came into force on 28 March, new asylum-seekers, including children, are detained in shipping containers surrounded by high razor fences at the border for the entire length of their asylum procedures. As of 7 April, there were 110 people, including four unaccompanied children and children with their families, held there.

“While acknowledging the authorities’ recent efforts to address police violence, we remain very concerned about highly disturbing reports of serious incidents of ill-treatment and violence against people crossing the border into Hungary, including by State agents,” said Mr. Grandi.

“These unacceptable practices must be brought to an end and I urge the Hungarian authorities to further investigate any allegation of abuse and violence,” he added.

RELATED: [UN agency urges EU to adopt stronger approach on refugees, asylum seekers](#)

Back in December, UNHCR presented a series of proposals to the EU and Member States to improve the distribution of asylum claims among Member States. The High Commissioner also called for the EU to adopt a simplified asylum system that would identify, register and process arrivals swiftly and efficiently.

“This is key to ensure access to protection for those who need it and to restore public trust,” he said.