

FROM THE FIELD: Comoros farmers battle climate change

Farmers in the Comoros islands are learning, with the support of the UN, to adapt to dramatic shifts in the climate which have contributed to the deterioration of agriculture across the Indian Ocean archipelago.

Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns including a severe decrease in rainfall have led to soil erosion and widespread deforestation as well as decreased crop yields.



UN Environment/Hannah McNeish

A UN climate change expert panel determined in a [special report](#) on Monday that the world needs to move much faster and more dramatically, if global warming is to be contained to anything like the levels demanded by the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The Comoros sits some 300 kilometres off the coast of East Africa and is amongst the most underdeveloped countries in the world.

But now, a project backed by UN Environment has been launched to plant 350,000 trees per year across the three islands of the archipelago, in the hope that reforestation will protect the environment and boost development there.

Read more about the challenges that Comorian farmers face [here](#).

'Stronger' effort must be made to

cement peace deal for South Sudanese women and girls: UN Women chief

Putting the latest peace deal into real effect across South Sudan, must include addressing “in a stronger manner, the challenges facing women and girls”, said the UN’s leading voice for gender-equality, who is part of a joint United Nations-African Union delegation to the country this week.

The delegation’s there to express solidarity with the people and leadership of the country, in support of the peace agreement signed early last month in Addis Ababa by President Salva Kiir and his former deputy and political rival, Riek Machar.

Speaking after arriving in the capital, Juba, both [UN Peacekeeping](#) chief, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and the head of the UN’s gender equality agency, [UN Women](#), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, said there was a need to focus on those most affected by conflict – vulnerable women and children.

South Sudan’s development has been stunted by ongoing conflict over the past five years, but there is hope that the new deal will stem the tide of violence across the country, which has resulted in the displacement of more than four million people.

We want to be sure that all negotiations going forward must include women in a substantive way. Women need to be supported and protected – *Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Women*

“We are currently at a time where the emphasis has to be put on the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement,” said Jean-Pierre Lacroix. “We are ready to help, we are ready to support and at the same time ready to say that it is very important to take time...for the implementation to be inclusive.”

Championing the rights of women who are victims of the conflict, Mr. Lacroix said that women being heard “represents the process of bringing peace to South Sudan.”

“There is a glimmer of hope now with the peace agreement, but we know much more needs to be done, and we are here to see how we can help that,” he said. “The only way to bring durable peace is to build an inclusive peace.”

While there has been some skepticism about whether the political will exists to implement the peace agreement, the international community hopes that the government and opposition parties will compromise to enable peace to prosper.

“The purpose of our visit is to focus on women, peace and security because of the impact of the conflict on women,” said Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka.

“It is to be in solidarity with women and to look at how we can address, in a stronger manner, the challenges that are facing women and girls, especially violence against women.”

“We want to be sure that all negotiations going forward must include women in a substantive way. Women need to be supported and protected...but women are also decision makers in their own rights, so it is important to hear their voices,” she said.

September’s peace deal has a 35 percent quota of executive appointments set aside for women, “It’s a good step and we would like them to do more,” said the UN Women chief.

The Africa Union’s Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe, who is also the chairperson of the African Women’s Network on Mediation – FemWise, said she wanted to encourage the women of South Sudan and tell them to join men in the struggle to develop the country.

Referring to the peace agreement, she said: “What is happening in South Sudan gives us a lot of hope, and with hope, there is innovation, with hope there is rebirth.”

She challenged South Sudan’s leaders to end the conflict and work together for peace. “The dream of silencing the guns in Africa is here, and it is up to us to take it – take the bull by the horns now, in South Sudan, to make sure that this region which has been dubbed the Great Lakes Region of conflict, becomes the Great Lakes Region of peace and prosperity,” she said.

Female UN police and military personnel held discussions with the joint-delegation which stressed the need for increased numbers of women serving in peacekeeping missions.

“We are convinced that peacekeeping with more women is more effective peacekeeping,” said Jean-Pierre Lacroix. “We heard from their experiences. We heard about the challenges they are facing.

He said that with more women in the [UN Mission in South Sudan, UNMISS](#), and with more women in peacekeeping operations in general, “we are better at engaging with the population, we are better at creating trust [and] confidence, and therefore we are better at building peace.”

[UN climate panel climate panel says ‘unprecedented changes’ needed to](#)

Limit global warming to 1.5°C

Limiting global warming to 1.5°C will require “far-reaching and unprecedented changes,” such as ditching coal for electricity to slash carbon emissions, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ([IPCC](#)) has said, launching a special report that finds some of the actions needed are already under way, but the world must move faster.

The IPCC, the United Nations top climate panel, issued the report from Incheon, Republic of Korea, where for the past week, hundreds of scientists and government representatives have been pouring over thousands of inputs to paint a picture of what could happen to the planet and its inhabitants with global warming of 1.5°C (or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).

“One of the key messages that comes out very strongly from this report is that we are already seeing the consequences of 1°C of global warming through more extreme weather, rising sea levels and diminishing Arctic sea ice, among other changes,” [said](#) Panmao Zhai, Co-Chair of one of the IPCC Working Groups.

More to follow...

In Chad, top UN officials say humanitarian response must go ‘hand in hand’ with longer-term recovery

Senior United Nations officials on Sunday called for stronger joint humanitarian and development interventions in [Chad](#) as the crisis-riven central African country as it tackles poverty, displacement, malnutrition, and lack of access to basic social services.

Wrapping up their [first joint visit](#) in Chad, UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) Administrator Achim Steiner and UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock visited a nutrition centre in the capital’s Chad-China Friendship Hospital, where more than 16,000 children suffering from malnutrition are admitted annually.

“I was profoundly touched by the plight of the women and children I met in the nutrition centre in N’Djamena today,” said Mr. Lowcock, who heads up the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)).

While he commended the efforts and actions undertaken to deal with one of the

biggest nutrition crises the people of Chad have faced, he stressed that the bigger challenge is to prevent children being in this position to start with.

“Humanitarian assistance can save lives, but the solution is development, economic progress and better livelihoods. The United Nations stands ready to support the Government, who must lead in this process,” he said.

In N’Djamena, the two UN officials also met with senior Government representatives and parliamentarians, and discussed plans for national development, poverty reduction, the regional situation, and the recent Lake Chad Basin Region [conference](#) in Berlin.



OCHA/Eve Sabbagh

UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Mark Lowcock (near left), and UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner (far right), with ALIMA nutrition specialists working at the Chad-China Friendship Hospital, in the capital, N’Djamena.

“The challenges the country faces have roots in development deficits and climatic realities that have made living conditions for communities caught up in the crisis, even worse,” said Mr. Steiner, adding that there was urgent need for a scale up in the response.

Around 4.9 million people are in need of urgent support, with the majority of them [food insecure](#). Over half a million are in need of shelter: “We call upon our partners to engage in multiyear financing to facilitate mid and longer-term planning. Stepping up now will help us address the crisis today, tackle the underlying causes and help people build resilience to better cope with and be able to stand on their own after the crisis,” Mr. Steiner added.

The humanitarian response plan 2018 in Chad requires \$544 million to respond to the needs of the 2.1 million people who are the most vulnerable in the country. To date, [only 35.6 per cent](#) of the funding has been received.

This visit concludes a three-day trip to Nigeria and Chad, during which the

two UN officials looked at ways both humanitarian and development actors can better support national support efforts, including in the Lake Chad Basin crisis. While in Nigeria, Mr. Steiner and Mr. Lowcock called for more support to ease the humanitarian crisis and rebuild lives in conflict-ravaged north-eastern part of the country.

Afghanistan: Civilian casualties caused by IEDs has reached 'extreme levels', UN warns

The United Nations on Sunday called on anti-Government elements in Afghanistan to immediately stop using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in civilian areas, after the UN mission in the country recorded a sharp rise in civilian casualties caused by the explosives this year.

A [special report](#) by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) revealed that between 1 January and 30 September 2018, IEDs have caused almost half of the civilian casualties from conflict-related violence.

“Deliberately targeting civilians is a war crime and cannot be tolerated,” said UNAMA chief Tadamichi Yamamoto in a [press release](#) on the report, which noted the killing and maiming of Afghan civilians by improvised explosive devices, particularly suicide devices, has reached “extreme levels” in Afghanistan.

The special report outlines serious concern over the increased number of deliberate and indiscriminate attacks by anti-Government elements against the civilian population.

These attacks primarily involved the use of suicide and non-suicide IEDs: bombs designed, planned and placed to detonate among crowds of civilians to kill and maim Afghan men, women and children; destroy livelihoods; disrupt lives; and create terror among survivors.

The report identifies the victims of these deliberate attacks as including midwifery students and students preparing for university entrance exams; players and spectators at cricket and wrestling matches; worshippers at mosques; humanitarian aid workers; education officials; civilian government staff providing essential services to Afghans, as well as civilians seeking to access those government services; and election workers, and men and women attempting to participate in the electoral process.

“Beyond the immediate and direct harm caused to victims and their families, the long-lasting effects of suicide and other IED attacks on the wider

civilian population cannot be ignored,” said Mr. Yamamoto, the top UN official in the country.

He also stressed that the unpredictable nature of these types of attacks has caused Afghans “unbearable suffering” and forced them to live in fear of the next explosion, severely curtailing their ability to carry out normal lives.

UNAMA maintains that all parties must immediately cease the deliberate targeting of civilians and civilian objects, and provides recommendations in the report for immediate measures to be taken to prevent further civilian deaths and injuries from these attacks.

[Find the full report here.](#)