

# Yemen: Tackling the world's largest humanitarian crisis

With three-quarters of the population requiring some form of basic assistance to survive, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, now in its fourth year, has reached unprecedented levels of need.

On Monday, ahead of the United Nation's 73rd General Assembly high-level debate, a [special event](#) will focus on the humanitarian response across the country, its major achievements and its daily challenges, in an attempt to galvanize more international support.

The figures of the crisis are staggering and near-impossible to grasp: 22.2 million in need of assistance, 8.4 million people severely food insecure, and a further 10 million that could fall under the same category by the end of the year, if action is not urgently taken. "It is bleak", UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock [told](#) the Security Council on Friday. "We are losing the fight against famine".

In addition, more than 1.1 million cases of acute watery diarrhoea or cholera have been reported since April 2017.

Conflict in Yemen – already one of the poorest countries in the world before the crisis – escalated in March 2015, when an international coalition led by Saudi Arabia intervened militarily at the request of the Yemeni President. Airstrikes have become a daily occurrence for millions of civilians.

Since 1 June alone, according to the UN [Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\)](#), half a million people have been forced to flee their homes in Hudaydah, an opposition-held governorate in western Yemen, bringing the total of internally displaced persons in the country to 2 million.

Hundreds of thousands of families no longer have a regular source of income – including teachers, health workers, water and sanitation workers and other public servants. They have not been paid a regular salary in two years.

Currently, over 150 relief organisations, including eight UN agencies, are working around the clock to provide food, shelter, nutritional assistance, protection services and much more to millions of Yemenis whose lives have been uprooted by the conflict.

Of the nearly US\$ 3 billion required for this year's response plan, \$2 billion (65 per cent) have been mobilized, making it the world's best funded humanitarian appeal. The humanitarian response reaches more than 7 million people every month across Yemen and the number of people reached has increased consistently across sectors during the year.

However, the needs continue to outpace the response capacity and humanitarian

workers face critical challenges every day. According to OCHA, the organizer of the General Assembly high level event, these include impediments to humanitarian action such as movement restrictions, attempted interference and harassment, as well as fluctuating commercial import levels and collapsing basic health, education, water and sanitation services.

The event will take place from 1:15 pm to 2:30 pm at UN Headquarters and will be broadcast live on [webtv.un.org](http://webtv.un.org). It will include opening remarks by the UN head of humanitarian affairs, Mr. Lowcock, and a briefing by Yemen's Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the UN, Lise Grande.

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## [UN News Daily #UNGA Guide: Peace Summit, Global Goals, Youth and Yemen](#)

Every year, in September, global leaders and change-makers gather at United Nations Headquarters in New York for two weeks, to discuss the burning issues of our time and set the global agenda for the year ahead. The 73rd session of the [UN General Assembly](#) opened this week and the body's annual high-level segment – formally known as the 'general debate' – begins on Tuesday, 25 September, where every country's leader gets to address the world.

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## [Financing the 2030 Agenda: What is it and why is it important?](#)

How high on the [Secretary-General's](#) to-do list is the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)?

Well, the timing of the [meeting](#) to discuss financing the Agenda might be a clue: it takes place on Tuesday afternoon, just before the General Debate of the General Assembly on Wednesday morning, when the eyes of the world turn to the UN Headquarters in New York.

### **A plan to transform the world**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, commonly referred to as the 2030 Agenda, can be boiled down to a plan to "Transform Our World."

In 2015, UN Member States adopted the Agenda and its 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#), or SDGs, which break down into three broad areas: people, planet and prosperity.

The adoption of the Agenda was significant, as it was the first time that world leaders pledged common action against such a universal and ambitious policy agenda. As the name suggests, the organizing principle of the Agenda and the SDGs is sustainable development, which is also the key message to the world community.

The UN defines sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This means taking into account, for example, the effects that unbalanced economic growth can have on the environment and people’s wellbeing.

The SDGs provide a framework for sustainable development that improves the lives of everyone, everywhere. For example, ensuring that economies grow and provide decent work; that everyone has access to nutritious food, no matter where they live; and access to quality education for all.



Source:UN SDGs

UN in collaboration with Project Everyone

From 2015 until 2030, Member States, civil society and other partners are mobilizing efforts to change the way the world does business: ending all forms of poverty, fighting inequalities and tackling climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Since 2015, the UN has been hosting several meetings every year, designed to monitor the progress of Member States and partners, including the private sector, in changing business practices to ensure that the SDGs can be met.

The foundations for the financing of the SDGs were laid in July of that year, at the [Third International Conference on Financing for Development](#), which

took place in the Ethiopian Capital Addis Ababa, in a document called the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It provided a new global framework for financing sustainable development by aligning finance with economic, social and environmental priorities; and set out a list of over 100 concrete measures, touching on finance, technology, innovation, trade, debt and data, in order to support the achievement of the SDGs.

## **Progress and setbacks**

Since then, there have been positive signs. Just a week ago, at the Global Climate Action Summit, it was estimated that new [UN-backed commitments](#) to take action against the damaging effects of climate change could result in \$26 trillion in economic benefits worldwide, and help create 65 million new “low-carbon jobs” by 2030.

Many welcome initiatives by governments and companies were noted. For examples, the Investors Agenda, one of the focus areas of the Global Climate Action Summit, brought together nearly 400 investors, managing \$32 trillion of assets, who pledged to scale up the flow of capital into climate action, and a more sustainable, low-carbon economy.

However, whilst this new way of running the world presents a huge investment opportunity, public or private resources, and investments remain stubbornly far below what is needed to meet the 2030 Agenda targets.

Too much investment remains short-term and volatile, and the systemic change needed to transform economies and societies is not yet happening.

Governments need to make it easier for business to finance and invest in sustainable development projects, the private sector needs to mobilize for long-term investment, and new solutions for financing the SDGs must be created.

## **The High-Level Meeting on Financing the 2030 Agenda**

Which brings us back to Monday’s meeting. It can be expected that the timing, and the senior political levels of the participants, will ensure that considerable attention will be directed to the proceedings, and the outcome.

The Secretary-General will open the meeting, followed by [Christine Lagarde](#), the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Heads of State and Government will also participate, as well as senior representatives of leading private sector investors, financial technology innovators, and foundations.

Mr. Guterres has indicated that this meeting will be used to build momentum and political support at all levels; step up engagement with the private sector; and make the most of innovative solutions to finance the SDGs.

It will also be the forum for the launch of his Strategy for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has three objectives:

1. Aligning global financial and economic policies with the 2030 Agenda
2. Enhancing sustainable financial strategies at the regional and country levels
3. Exploiting the potential of financial innovations, new technologies and digitalization to provide equitable access to finance.

After the meeting, the process continues, with several follow-ups scheduled for this year, and into 2019. The road is long, complicated and filled with potholes, but the commitment from the UN is clear: transform the world for the better by 2030.

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## [UN chief condemns attack in south-west Iran which killed dozens](#)

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres [condemned](#) the terrorist attack on Saturday in Iran's southwestern city of Ahvaz which reportedly left dozens dead and injured, including children.

According to media reports, the attack targeted a military parade, with terrorists shooting from a long distance at the armed forces parading as well as the civilians watching the event.

Mr. Guterres expressed his condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Iran. He wished those injured a speedy recovery.

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## [Deaf advocate voices importance of sign languages as UN marks first commemoration](#)

Nyle DiMarco is just a foreigner speaking a different language. That's how the actor, model and advocate introduces himself to people who have not met a deaf person before.

Mr. DiMarco, who reached fame after winning America's Next Top Model in the United States, advocates for children learning sign language at an early

age. The 29-year old grew up in an all-deaf family and has more than 25 relatives who are deaf.

“I advocate for early education because growing up, my life was really privileged. My deaf parents knew exactly how to raise a deaf child,” Mr. DiMarco told UN News during a visit to the United Nations Headquarters for an event linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On Sunday, the UN is marking the first [International Day of Sign Languages](#), at the start of the official International Week of the Deaf. The UN General Assembly selected 23 September to coincide with the date the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) was founded, in 1951. WFD consists of 135 national associations of deaf people and strives to defend their human rights.

Mr. DiMarco studied in a deaf school and attended a private university for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Growing up with an education, Mr. DiMarco says he was able “to define who [he] was.” He played sports, was involved in different organisations and skateboarded.

The advocate is among 72 million deaf people worldwide, of whom only 2 per cent have access to a formal education.

“How can they be expected to succeed and have the same successes in their lives as someone with the same privileges that I had,” Mr. DiMarco said of other deaf people who grew up without setting foot in a classroom.

He noted that in some countries sign language is considered “a mere gesture” which results in deaf children being deprived of a language, and also unable to define their own lives.