

The world swings from Saint Petersburg on International Jazz Day

Jazz speaks to people from all linguistic, political and economic backgrounds, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said Monday, praising the art form for its ability to promote peace, diversity, and respect for human dignity.

Observed [annually on 30 April](#), the International Day honours the enduring legacy of this musical genre and its power to bring people together.

UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay said the message for freedom “is [rooted at the very core](#)” of jazz music, which is defined by improvisation.

“The ability for musicians to come together and listen, play and exchange artistry through this free-flowing expression reflects the spirit of freedom movements across the world,” she added.

International Jazz Day 2018 kicked off over the weekend in New Orleans, Louisiana, the birthplace of jazz, with a concert in famed Congo Square – site of the first-ever International Jazz Day event.

UNESCO, in partnership with the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, presented a special *International Jazz Day Salute to New Orleans* concert that recognized the city’s 300th anniversary.

Affirming the unifying power of jazz, Mr. Hancock and world-renowned New Orleans trumpeter Terence Blanchard led the free event, which featured vocalists Patti Austin, Ledisi and the renowned Preservation All-Stars.

Beginning 18 April, students in New Orleans were also treated to in-school education programmes that explored the origins, development and significance of jazz – with master classes by Mr. Hancock and Mr. Blanchard.

A global celebration

Russia’s first Concert Jazz Band was founded in 1927... and Saint Petersburg, the global host city of the 2018 International Day, has been bee-bopping ever since.

An all-star global performance from the [Mariinsky](#) Theatre will be streamed live as some three dozen jazz heavyweights, representing [14 countries](#), flex their musical muscles.

With Mr. Hancock and Russian jazz saxophonist Igor Butman serving as co-artistic directors, American jazz pianist John Beasley will direct a stellar lineup that includes The Manhattan Transfer (US), Till Brönner (Germany), Fatoumata Diawara (Côte d’Ivoire), Antonio Faraò (Italy), Gilad Hekselman (Israel), Horacio Hernandez (Cuba), Branford Marsalis (US), Moscow

Jazz Orchestra (Russia) and Danilo Pérez (Panama).

Myanmar: Security Council delegation meets top politicians, civil society leaders

The United Nations Security Council is continuing its mission to Bangladesh and Myanmar, taking a first-hand look at the plight of hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who have fled across the border to escape violence.

On Monday, the delegation of diplomats from the Council's 15 member countries arrived in Myanmar's capital, Naypyidaw, holding meetings with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi as well as General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric told reporters in New York.

Ambassadors also met with civil society, parliamentarians and Government representatives.

On Tuesday, the Council members will fly to Rakhine State – the epicenter of the mass displacement crisis, which has been caused by a recurring cycle of clashes between mainly Buddhist residents in the State, and Rohingya Muslims who've also lived there for decades.



Caroline Gluck/UNHCR

United Nations Security Council members visit Kutupalong Rohingya refugee

settlement in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

According to the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR), about 671,000 Rohingya refugees have fled targeted violence and serious human rights violations in Myanmar since last August.

In Rakhine, the delegation is expected to meet local government representatives and civil society.

Last week, UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) announced the appointment of Christine Schraner Burgener of Switzerland as his new Special Envoy on Myanmar, to strengthen the world body's efforts to assist Myanmar's peace and reconciliation process.



Caroline Gluck/UNHCR

United Nations Security Council members visit Kutupalong Rohingya refugee settlement in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

The UN Spokesperson added that over the weekend, the Council delegation visited Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar, where they listened to testimony from refugees at the Kutupalong Camp.

Before departing for Myanmar early on Monday, the delegation met with Bangladesh's Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, in Dhaka.



Caroline Gluck/UNHCR

United Nations Security Council members visit Kutupalong Rohingya refugee settlement in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh and meet with a group of women and girls.

[Nations begin drafting climate action 'operating manual' at UN conference in Bonn](#)

The latest round of United Nations climate change negotiations began on Monday in Bonn, Germany to further develop the "operating manual" for implementing the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement, which aims to keep temperature rises this century, well below 2 degrees Celsius.

"We are witnessing the severe impacts of climate change throughout the world", said the Executive Secretary of UN Climate Change, Patricia Espinosa, at a press conference.

"Every credible scientific source is telling us that these impacts will only get worse if we do not address climate change and it also tells us that our window of time for addressing it is closing very soon," she added.

"We need to dramatically increase our ambitions," stressed the UNFCCC chief, outlining three priorities.

First, all stakeholders – including governments, non-governmental

organizations, businesses, investors and citizens – must accelerate climate action by 2020.

Second, she said, the international community must complete the Paris Agreement guidelines, or operating manual, to unleash the potential of the accord.

Third, conditions must be improved to enable countries to be more ambitious in determining their own national policies to slow down global warming.

At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) held last November under the leadership of Fiji, nations agreed to accelerate and complete their work to put in place the guidelines – officially known as the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP) – at COP24 in Katowice, Poland next December.

At this Bonn meeting, which will run through 10 May, Governments will start drafting texts to be finalized at COP24.

Finishing off the operating manual is also necessary to assess whether the world is on track to achieve the goals of the historic Paris Agreement limiting greenhouse gas emissions, while pursuing efforts to keep the temperature rise to less than 1.5°C.

Throughout this year, countries will also focus on how they can scale up their climate ambition and implementation in the pre-2020 period. All countries share the view that climate action prior to 2020 is essential.

[Nearly two-thirds of global workforce in the 'informal' economy – UN study](#)

More than 61 per cent of the world's employed population – two billion people – earn their livelihoods in the informal sector, the United Nations labour agency said on Monday, stressing that a transition to the formal economy is critical to ensure rights' protection and decent working conditions.

[“The high incidence of informality in all its forms has multiple adverse consequences for workers](#), enterprises and societies and is a major challenge for the realization of decent work for all,” said Rafael Diez de Medina, the Director of Department of Statistics at the UN International Labour Organization (ILO).

The findings are revealed in ILO's latest report, [Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture](#). The study also provides comparable estimates on the size of the informal economy and a statistical profile of

the sector, using criteria from more than 100 countries.

“Having managed to measure this important dimension, now included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators framework, this can be seen as an excellent step towards acting on it, particularly thanks to more available comparable data from countries,” added Mr. Diez de Medina.

The geographic distribution of employment in the informal sector presents a striking picture.

For hundreds of millions of workers, informality means a lack of social protection, rights at work and decent working conditions –
report author Florence Bonnet

In Africa, 85.8 per cent of employment is informal. The proportion is 68.2 per cent in Asia and the Pacific, 68.6 per cent in the Arab States, 40 per cent in the Americas, and just over 25 per cent in Europe and Central Asia.

In all, 93 per cent of the world’s informal employment is in emerging and developing countries.

The report also found that informal employment is a greater source of employment for men (63 per cent) than for women (58.1 per cent).

“Out of the two billion workers in informal employment worldwide, just over 740 million are women,” said ILO, noting that they are mostly in informal employment in most low- and lower-middle income countries and are more often found to be the most vulnerable.

Factors affecting level of informality

Education is a major factor affecting the level of informality, the study has shown, noting that as the level of education increases, the level of informality decreases.

“People who have completed secondary and tertiary education are less likely to be in informal employment compared to workers who have either no education or completed primary education,” said ILO.

In addition, people living in rural areas are almost twice as likely to be in informal employment as those in urban areas, it added.

According to Florence Bonnet, one of the authors of the report, data on these issues are crucial to design effective policies.

“For hundreds of millions of workers, informality means a lack of social protection, rights at work and decent working conditions, and for enterprises it means low productivity and lack of access to finance,” she said.

UN mission strongly condemns twin suicide attacks in Kabul

Strongly condemning two terrorist attacks in the Afghan capital, Kabul, the United Nations mission in the country has underscored the need bring those behind the attacks to justice.

According to reports, at least 14 civilians were killed and over 30 injured in the two attacks that took place this morning (local time) in a heavily populated neighbourhood in central Kabul. The second attack was timed 30 minutes later to target journalists arriving on the scene and emergency services personnel seeking to provide aid to victims of the first attack.

There is no justification whatsoever for such attacks [...] those who have organized and enabled these attacks must be brought to justice
– UNAMA head Tadamichi Yamamoto

[“I am outraged by the attack](#) which appears to have deliberately targeted journalists; this attack, coming just ahead of World Press Freedom Day, is a direct assault on freedom of expression,” Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and the head of the [UN Assistance Mission in the country](#) (UNAMA), said in a news release.

“There is no justification whatsoever for such attacks [...] those who have organized and enabled these attacks must be brought to justice and held to account.”

In the release, Mr. Yamamoto also reiterated the protections accorded to civilians under international humanitarian law and called on all parties to uphold their obligations, at all times.

“These attacks caused untold human suffering to Afghan families,” he said, extending condolences to the families of the victims and a speedy recovery to the injured.