

Amid funding crunch, UN agency seeks \$800 million in lifesaving aid for Palestine refugees

30 January 2018 – Facing an acute funding shortage, the United Nations agency for Palestine refugees is seeking more than \$800 million for its emergency programmes for Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The appeal would enable the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East ([UNRWA](#)) to “continue delivering [desperately needed relief](#) to those affected by deepening emergency situations,” UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl said at a launch event in Geneva.

“However, the Agency’s critical financial crisis following the reduction in US funds threatens our ability to deliver these vital services,” he added.

Programmes for Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which consists of Gaza and the West Bank, require \$400 million each. The appeal covers some 50,000 Palestine refugees from Syria who have fled to Lebanon and Jordan.

Mr. Krähenbühl explained that the majority of Palestine refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory and from Syria “rely on UNRWA to provide aid which is literally life-saving, including food, water, shelter and medical assistance.”

Inside Syria, UNRWA is reaching over 400,000 Palestine refugees with cash assistance, one of the largest such programmes in an active conflict setting anywhere in the world.

Despite the immense security challenges, UNRWA is providing education to over 47,000 Palestine refugees, supplementing regular classes with psychosocial support and safety-awareness training. For those unable to reach our classrooms, UNRWA has developed distance-learning materials.

In Gaza, with employment opportunities stifled by the decade-old blockade – the unemployment rate remains among the highest worldwide – almost one million Palestine refugees are dependent on UNRWA for emergency food assistance, a tenfold increase on the 100,000 that required such support in 2000.

Three and a half years on from the 2014 hostilities, which caused unprecedented destruction and loss of life in Gaza, thousands of Palestine refugee families remain displaced and repairs to over fifty thousand homes have yet to be completed.

The situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remains fragile. Palestine refugees continue to experience difficult socioeconomic conditions rooted in occupation-related policies and practices imposed by the Israeli

authorities. In addition to continued movement and access restrictions and shelter demolitions, Palestine refugees in the West Bank experience high levels of food insecurity.

[UN agency launches appeal to fund aid efforts in crisis-struck South Sudan](#)

30 January 2018 – Amid worsening humanitarian situation in South Sudan and the number of persons in need of assistance continues to grow, the United Nations migration agency today launched a \$103.7 million appeal to sustain critical and life-saving aid programmes.

“As civilians continue to bear the brunt of the crisis, experiencing violence and displacement, [timely and effective humanitarian assistance is critical](#),” said William Barriga, the head of the UN International Organization for Migration (IOM) operations in the country, in a news release announcing the launch.

“[We] remain committed to responding to these needs and reaching the most vulnerable, wherever they are,” he stressed.

According to estimates, some 7 million people across the African nation are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 1.9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs).

With full funding, the appeal aims to reach about one million displaced persons, their host communities as well as communities of potential returnees and migrants with assistance in 2018. Specific IOM programmes focus on providing aid and assistance as well as supporting transition, recovery and migration management initiatives.

IOM remains committed to respond to [the] needs and reach the most vulnerable, wherever they are William Barriga, head of IOM in South Sudan

Additionally, in line with the broader 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan for South Sudan, the UN migration agency will also continue its multi-sector humanitarian responses in camp coordination and camp management, displacement tracking and monitoring, health, shelter and non-food items, mental and psychosocial support and water, sanitation and hygiene.

Given the diverse nature of displacement and the dynamics of the crisis, IOM has adopted an integrated approach, where in migration management, recovery and stabilization efforts complement humanitarian interventions to build community resilience and reduce dependency on humanitarian aid.

Millions of children in crisis zones face 'bleak future,' UNICEF warns, launching emergency appeal

30 January 2018 – Children are the most vulnerable when conflict or disaster causes the collapse of essential services such as healthcare and unless the international community takes urgent action to protect and provide life-saving assistance to them, they face an increasingly bleak future, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) warned Tuesday, launching a \$3.6 billion [emergency appeal](#).

According to UNICEF, approximately 48 million children across 51 countries are caught up in war zones, natural disasters and other dire emergencies that continue to deepen in complexity, bringing new waves of violence, displacement and disruption into their lives.

"Children cannot wait for wars to be brought to an end, with crises threatening the immediate survival and long term future of children and young people on a catastrophic scale," said UNICEF's Director of Emergency Programmes, Manuel Fontaine, citing the devastating impact on children living amid years-long or cyclical violence in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen, among others

UNICEF said that almost one in four children live in a country affected by conflict or disaster and has therefore set aside about 84 per cent of its appeal (over \$3 billion) these zones.

Destruction of schools, hospitals and health and sanitation systems due to violence has meant that the spread of water-borne diseases is now one of the greatest threats to children's lives in crises.

Girls and women face additional threats, as they often fulfil the role of collecting water for their families in dangerous situations.

"[Some] 117 million people living through emergencies lack access to safe water and in many countries affected by conflict, more children die from diseases caused by unclean water and poor sanitation than from direct violence," said Mr. Fontaine.

Without access to safe water and sanitation, children fall ill, and are often unable to be treated as hospitals and health centres either do not function or are overcrowded UNICEF official Manuel Fontaine

Without access to safe water and sanitation, children fall ill, and are

often unable to be treated as hospitals and health centres either do not function or are overcrowded. The threat is even greater as millions of children face life-threatening levels of malnutrition, making them more susceptible to water-borne diseases like cholera, creating a vicious cycle of undernutrition and disease,” he added

The largest chunk of UNICEF's [2018 appeal](#), amounting to \$1.3 billion is earmarked for supporting nearly seven million Syrian children both inside the war-torn country – where the conflict will soon enter its eight year – as well as those forced to become refugees outside its borders.

Globally, the UN agency aims to reach 35.7 million people with access to safe water, 8.9 million children with formal or non-formal basic education, 10 million children with immunization against measles, 3.9 million children with psychosocial support, and 4.2 million children with treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

As the leading humanitarian agency on water, sanitation and hygiene in emergencies, UNICEF provided over half of the emergency water, sanitation and hygiene services in humanitarian crises around the world. It also helped hospitals and medical centres treat deadly diseases and repaired water and sanitation systems.

In the first 10 months of 2017, UNICEF provided almost 30 million people with access to safe water, 13.6 million children with vaccination against measles, 5.5 million children with some form of education, 2.5 million children with treatment for severe acute malnutrition and 2.8 million children with psycho-social support.

Poverty eradication, inclusive growth focus of UN Social Development Commission's 2018 session

29 January 2018 – Countries must accelerate inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development that will not leave behind vulnerable populations, such as women and youth, the United Nations deputy chief told the Commission for Social Development, which opened its annual session on Monday.

“We have achieved impressive reductions in extreme poverty, and major improvements in providing access to schooling and healthcare, and promoting the empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons and indigenous populations,” said Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed in her remarks to the 56th session of the intergovernmental body under the UN Economic and Social Council.

“However, [the drop in extreme poverty remains uneven](#) across regions, within countries and between various social groups,” she added, stressing a key role the Commission can play in addressing such challenges.

The Commission has been the key UN body in charge of the follow up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the world summit for social development, held in the Danish capital in March 1995.

The theme of this year’s gathering is ‘Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all.’

Ms. Mohammed noted that while more than one billion people have risen above the \$1.90-a-day poverty line since 1990, millions slide back into the threshold annually because of economic, environmental, health or other shocks.

“Of particular concern are the persistently high levels of poverty and deprivation among women and children, indigenous groups, older persons and persons with disabilities,” she said.

Among other things, she stressed the need to address unemployment and underemployment among the world’s young people and inequality between and within countries.

She also said that it is imperative to promote social policies and protection that ensure the benefits of globalization and economic growth are shared by all, noting that globally, 45 per cent of the people who need social protection have access to just one social benefit, while the rest – some four billion people – go without.

“This is unacceptable – and underscores the challenge we face in upholding our promise to leave no one behind,” she said, referring to the pledge made in the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by UN Member States in 2015.

“To fulfil that vision, I encourage the Commission to emphasize the imperative of accelerating inclusive and equitable economic growth and sustainable development, including full, productive employment and decent work for all,” she added.

She also noted that the Commission can support the Secretary-General’s efforts to reposition the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, and continue to serve as a space for policy debate and the sharing of experiences.

The upcoming adoption by the Commission of a resolution on its methods of work is an important step that will establish the Commission’s identity for the period ahead, she said.

Youth leaders ready to 'roll up their sleeves' and get to work at annual UN forum

29 January 2018 – Not content to follow old-school rules to tackle problems like climate change, poverty and inequality, today's youth – media savvy 'Millennials' and the 'Born in the 90s' cohort that can't remember life without the Internet – are using disruptive, new-school innovations to drive change; and they're heading to the United Nations to talk about building a better world for all.

At UN Headquarters in New York on 30 and 31 January, youth leaders from every corner of the world will lead discussions with government officials, civil society and other stakeholders on policy frameworks and innovative initiatives to advance the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) – a 15-year plan to create a prosperous world for everyone on a clean planet.

Marie Chatardová, the President of the UN Economic and Social Council, the UN body that convenes the annual [Youth Forum](#), has said that it is vital to empower young people to break cycles of poverty allow them to fulfil their potential to the fullest.

"If young people have the right support, education, and means, they can go on to build better societies. They have energy, creativity, and innovation to power entrepreneurship and create jobs for themselves and others," she wrote in an opinion piece, published in the *Miami Herald* on Friday.

Citing examples of the youth taking action on pressing global concerns, such as on impacts of climate change or growing pollution, Mr. Chatardová said that young people do not wait idly for others to transform their ideas into reality.

"They are leaders who roll up their sleeves and work hard to transform their societies," she added.



Marie Chatardová, President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
UN Photo/Manuel Elias

Around the world, the population of young people is now almost [1.8 billion](#) – the largest ever. And it offers both immense potential as well as considerable challenges ranging from 71 million unemployed youth and an additional 161 million in situations of moderate or extreme poverty despite having a job.

In this situation, building on the work of young people to address the problems of the young people is critical, highlighted Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth.

“We will be discussing the issues [the youth] care about like sustainable energy for all, safe and inclusive cities, access to clean water and sanitation, protecting bio-diversity and forests and partnerships to achieve the [SDGs],” said Ms. Wickramanayake.

As a subset of the partnerships agenda, she explained, is the involvement of the youth in the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [SDGs](#).

[Started in 2012](#), the Youth Forum is the only gathering of its kind to bring together young people and senior Government officials in-charge of youth matters in their countries, such as youth ministries. This year’s overarching theme is *the role of youth in building sustainable and resilient urban and rural communities*.

In addition to discussing youth action for specific SDGs, the agenda also includes regional perspectives and a roundtable on means of implementation, including finance, technology, capacity building and trade.

The outcomes from the Youth Forum will flow into this year High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the global UN forum to which discusses and reviews the status of implementation of sustainable development.