

## Easing of blockade enables UN aid to enter Yemen, but agencies say imports must also be allowed

28 November 2017 – The United Nations food relief agency said Tuesday that humanitarian air service into Yemen has resumed, and a ship waiting in international waters for three weeks has now docked in Saleef, stressing that unhindered access to all airports and ports is vital to end the dire situation in the conflict-ravaged southern Arabian country.

“The situation in Yemen is currently the biggest humanitarian crisis in the world and aid is urgently required in order to avoid famine,” said Bettina Luescher, spokesperson for the World Food Programme ([WFP](#)), at a press briefing in Geneva.

She said two daily flights to the Yemeni capital, Sana’a, from Jordan’s Amman and one from Djibouti will continue until the end of this month, and a WFP-chartered vessel carrying 25,000 metric tons of wheat grains, now docked at Saleef port, will be unloaded over the coming days.

Ms. Luescher stressed that it is essential that commercial imports, which accounts for 90 per cent of the country’s food requirements, also be allowed in to Yemen, as the UN can not feed the entire population, and that continued access to Hudaydah and Saleef is especially vital as those ports are equipped with unloading, storage and milling facilities.

WFP has more than doubled the number of people it reaches every month from 3.5 million people in January to a current average of seven million people. Due to the funding shortfall of \$362 million, however, some people are only receiving half-rations.

Alessandra Vellucci, spokesperson for the UN Information Service in Geneva, said fuel is urgently needed to operate generators for hospitals, water well pumps and sanitation units and to facilitate the trucking of drinking water and food to vulnerable people.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) is largely focusing its efforts on the diphtheria outbreak. There have been 194 clinically suspected cases of diphtheria and 20 deaths in 13 governorates, said spokesperson Christian Lindmeier.

He said that the outbreak is spreading faster than WHO anticipated. It can only be tackled if medicines, supplies and vaccinations are allowed to enter and move around the country.

Mr. Lindmeier noted that a WHO team left Sana’a on Sunday and travelled to al-Sadah and Yarim districts in Ibb Governorate, where more than 80 per cent of the diphtheria cases have been reported, to collect samples and analyse

them on the spot.

Between Tuesday and Friday, the team will provide training for the rapid response team on the case management of diphtheria at local health centres in Ibb city.

A diphtheria vaccination campaign targeting 300,000 children aged under 12 months began in remote areas on Saturday. Further vaccination rounds for priority districts for 940,000 children under 5 years of age and 2.3 million children and young adults are scheduled for December, he said.

The lifting of the blockade on the movement of humanitarian goods will enable the shipping of 361 tons of medicines and medical supplies that have been blocked in Djibouti. The supplies to be shipped over the coming days include enough antitoxin to treat 1,000 cases of diphtheria.

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## **South Sudan: Senior UN official urges Security Council to support peace process revitalization**

28 November 2017 – The arrival of the dry season in South Sudan could lead to more fighting that would undermine the political process and cause additional civilian casualties and displacement, a senior United Nations official cautioned the Security Council on Tuesday.

Briefing the Council on the security situation in the world's newest country, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Bintou Keita also raised concerns about the growing number of incidents targeting humanitarian actors and restrictions on movement of UN Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)) personnel.

"The humanitarian situation in South Sudan continues to be dire, compounded by widespread armed conflict, inter-communal violence, large displacements of the civilian population and access restrictions which prevents the delivery of humanitarian assistance," Ms. Keita said.

Some four million South Sudanese have been forced to flee their homes in the conflict that erupted nearly four years ago following a political dispute between President Salva Kiir and his Vice-President, Riek Machar. Despite an August 2015 peace agreement, violence has continued.

According to UN figures, nearly half of the country's 12 million people are hungry, including about 1.7 million on the brink of famine.

The situation is likely to get worse with onset of the dry season, Ms. Keita

said, and “the Government’s push to assert military dominance across the country, notably when faced with continued resistance by armed opposition groups.”

She stressed that the conflict in South Sudan can only have a political solution and urged the international community to provide “unified and unconditional” support for the peace process.

Ms. Keita encouraged the 15-member council to “unanimously express its support to the urgent revitalization of the peace process so that the suffering of all South Sudanese civilians can come to an end.”

Those efforts are being led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), with support from neighbouring countries, such as Uganda, to revitalize the implementation of the peace agreement and to bring stakeholders together.

An IGAD task force is now meeting informally in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire – where the fifth African Union and European Union summit will begin tomorrow – and will formally discuss the situation in South Sudan in mid-December.

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## **UN working to address slavery, abuses against African migrants and refugees, Security Council told**

28 November 2017 – The United Nations is stepping up its work to stop the grave abuses perpetrated against [refugees and migrants](#) along the Central Mediterranean routes, including alleged slave trade in Libya, two UN agency chiefs told the Security Council Tuesday.

The [meeting](#) was held at UN Headquarters in New York in response to growing international concerns about risks facing migrants and refugees, which were illustrated by recent news reports and videos showing African migrants in Libya allegedly being sold as slaves.

“This is an enormous human tragedy and we can stop it,” said William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), via video link from Geneva, underscoring the need to break the smugglers’ business model.

In such efforts, IOM has helped 13,000 people get out of detention centres in Libya and 8,000 in Niger, he said, noting that there are about 15,000 still in such facilities.

IOM is working with partners, including the Government of Libya, the Office

of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), the African Union, the European Union, and countries of origin, to forge an agreement to implement a programme to empty those detention centres, Mr. Swing said.

Also briefing was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, who told the Council: “The grave abuses perpetrated against migrants and refugees along the Central Mediterranean routes can [no longer be ignored](#).”

“Compelled to flee, but without legal pathways to safety, refugees are exposed to appalling harm, together with migrants, including torture, rape, sexual exploitation, slavery and other forms of forced labour,” Mr. Grandi said, also via video link from Geneva, adding that these abuses proliferate where governance is weak and transnational criminal networks take root.

“This requires a comprehensive approach encompassing countries of origin, transit, and destination,” he stressed, highlighting the need to strengthen refugee protection and offer solutions along the routes.

UNHCR is stepping up its work – but faces “dramatic” funding gaps, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, he added.

UNHCR is helping the authorities address the needs of displaced Libyans and others affected by conflict. Reception and protection mechanisms are being incrementally strengthened. Plans for a transit centre in Tripoli are progressing positively.

“Too often, measures pursued in relation to the Mediterranean routes have centred on how to control, deter and exclude. This can have a dehumanizing effect – and more importantly, alone, it does not help refugees and migrants avoid exploitative, deeply harmful situations,” Mr. Grandi said, calling for a comprehensive set of political, security, humanitarian, human rights and development investments.

“Your attention is welcome, because your leadership is critical to ensuring that this happens,” he told the Council members.

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## [Family members linked to nearly half of child trafficking cases, new UN-backed data reveals](#)

28 November 2017 – Almost half of identified child trafficking cases has begun with a family member’s involvement, new data from the United Nations migration agency has revealed.

Statistics on human trafficking prevention efforts and identifying and

protecting survivors –based on data released by The Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC), the world’s first human trafficking data portal to include such data contributed by multiple agencies – revealed that family involvement is up to four times higher than in cases of adult trafficking.

“Our Organization is taking a leading role in increasing the access to this critical information in order to [strengthen counter-trafficking interventions](#),” said William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)).

According to the new data, children are most commonly trafficked into forced sexual exploitation, begging and domestic work. It also revealed that children are most likely to be coerced into trafficking through physical, sexual and psychological abuse, suggesting the need for more prevention efforts specifically targeting children and their families.

Additionally, boys are more likely to be recruited by a family member than girls.

Meanwhile, adults are more likely to be controlled by having their documents confiscated or their irregular status in a foreign country exploited.

Initiated by IOM, in partnership with non-governmental organization (NGO) Polaris, the new CTDC data portal combats and prevents modern-day slavery by hosting the world’s largest open-access, multi-stakeholder repository of human trafficking data.

The CTDC continues to build partnerships with other counter-trafficking actors and currently hosts nearly 80,000 human trafficking victim cases consisting of 180 nationalities exploited in 117 countries. Forthcoming data, which will be contributed by counter-trafficking partner organizations around the world is expected to have a large counter-trafficking impact.

The statistics related to child trafficking cases with family involvement are based on nearly 12,000 trafficking survivors for which the recruitment process information is known.

In response to these statistics, IOM is calling for governments and other development and humanitarian partners to step-up counter-trafficking interventions aimed at children by helping household heads to make long-term plans for themselves and their family; helping children identify potentially dangerous or exploitative situations and know how to get support; and ensuring that protection and systems are accessible to all children, regardless of their migration status.

Child protection systems should act in the best interests of the child in all circumstances, including by providing solutions to bring sustainable resolutions.

IOM has underscored that more research is needed to better understand the specific risk and protective factors that make children vulnerable to human trafficking, saying that children’s voices should be heard in the design, implementation and evaluation of services, policies and interventions, that

the legitimacy of their aspirations should be recognized.

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## **Antalya: South-South cooperation offers major opportunities to support vulnerable countries – UN official**

28 November 2017 – As the most vulnerable countries continue to face serious development challenges, South-South cooperation offers enormous opportunities and potential to effectively support them in accelerating progress on implementing globally agreed goals, a senior United Nations official has said.

This vital message was delivered to delegations gathered yesterday in Antalya, Turkey, for the opening of the [Global South-South Development Expo 2017](#) by Fekitamoeloa Katoa Utoikamanu, the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-[OHRLLS](#)).

“These are all countries faced with complex and unique development challenges which lend themselves to exploring how and where we can maximize South-South cooperation and leverage global partnerships to support countries’ efforts toward sustainable and inclusive futures,” said Ms. Utoikamanu, who advocates on behalf of 10 billion people in the world’s most vulnerable countries.

She is participating in the 2017 Global Expo along with other senior UN officials, government ministers, national development agency directors, and civil society representatives, who have gathered to share innovative local solutions and push for scaling up concrete initiatives from the global South to achieve the [2030 Agenda](#) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

“The central promise of the 2030 Agenda is to ‘leave no-one behind,’ and thus is about addressing poverty, reducing inequality and building a sustainable future of shared prosperity,” explained Ms. Utoikamanu. “But it is already clear that these noble Goals will be elusive if the 91 countries my Office is a voice for remain at the bottom of the development ladder.”

As such, she said, South-South collaboration has led to increasing trade between and with emerging economies, investors, providers of development cooperation and sources of technological innovations and know-how. “This trend is confirmed by trade preferences for [least developed country products], enhanced trade finance opportunities, but also innovative infrastructure finance emerging,” noted Ms. Utoikamanu.

“The complex and pressing challenges the vulnerable countries experience demand that we further strengthen and leverage South-South cooperation,”

added Ms. Utoikamanu. “South-South cooperation is not an ‘either-or’; it is a strategic and complementary means of action for the transfer and dissemination of technologies and innovations. It complements North-South cooperation,” she emphasized.

This week’s gathering will focus on a number of issues, including how to transfer science, technology and innovation among developing countries.

With that in mind, Ms. Utoikamanu said that to a large extent, the future will be determined by the abilities to leverage science, technology and innovation for sustainable growth, structural transformation and inclusive human and social development.

“It is proven that innovative technologies developed in the South often respond in more sustainable ways to the contextual needs of developing countries. Last, but not least, this is a question of cost,” she said.

In all this, the [Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries](#) has a major role to play in boosting science, technology and innovation capacity. “It must facilitate technology transfer and promote the integration of [least developed countries] into the global knowledge-based economy.”

While countries in the South continue to deepen cooperation to achieve the [SDGs](#), the trend of declining official development assistance (ODA) is cause for great concern. ODA remains a crucial source of external financing for the vulnerable groups of countries UN-OHRLLS represents,” she said.

“OHRLLS is committed to working with countries both of the North and the South to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and above all its pledge of leaving no one behind,” concluded Ms. Utoikamanu.