

# Promote affordable, equitable access to diabetes medicines information for women, UN health agency urges

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“Approximately 205 million women around the world (about 8 per cent globally) are living with diabetes, with more than half of them in the Western Pacific and south-east Asia,” said Christian Lindmeier, a spokesperson for the UN World Health Organization ([WHO](#)).

Globally, [diabetes](#) is a major cause of blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke and lower limb amputation. In 2015, diabetes had been the direct cause of 1.6 million deaths, and two million people die each year from high blood glucose.

Furthermore, with blood glucose-levels rising substantially during pregnancy, there is heightened risk the health of both mother and child as well as the threat of diabetes for the child in the future.

However, early diagnosis through relatively inexpensive testing of blood sugar and simple lifestyle measures can be effective in preventing or delaying the condition and treating its consequences.

This year, World Diabetes Day calls for promoting affordable and equitable access for all women with diabetes or at risk of diabetes to the essential medicines and technologies, self-management education and information they require to achieve optimal diabetes outcomes and strengthen their capacity to prevent Type-2 diabetes.

[Type-2 diabetes](#) results from the body’s ineffective use of insulin, and comprising majority of people with diabetes around the world, and largely the result of excess body weight and physical inactivity, can be prevented with a healthy diet, avoiding sugar and saturated fats intake, not smoking and using tobacco, as well as a more physically active lifestyle with at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity activity on most days.

Until recently, this Type-2 diabetes was seen only in adults but it is now also occurring increasingly frequently in children.

Other types of diabetes are Type 1 diabetes (previously known as insulin-

dependent, juvenile or childhood-onset), gestational diabetes (hyperglycaemia with blood glucose values above normal but below those diagnostic of diabetes, occurring during pregnancy), as well as impaired glucose tolerance (IGT) and impaired fasting glycaemia (IFG) (intermediate conditions in the transition between normality and diabetes.

People with IGT or IFG are at high risk of progressing to type 2 diabetes, although this is not inevitable, [according](#) to WHO.

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## **Libya's detention of migrants 'is an outrage to humanity,' says UN human rights chief Zeid**

14 November 2017 – The European Union's (EU) support for Libya's Coast Guard which has resulted in thousands of migrants being detained in "horrific" conditions inside Libya is "inhuman," the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said on Tuesday.

Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein sounded the alarm after a [probe by UN monitors](#) who visited migrants held in State detention centres in Libya at the start of the month.

From 1 to 6 November, UN human rights monitors visited four Department of Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM) facilities in Tripoli, where they interviewed detainees who have fled conflict, persecution and extreme poverty from States across Africa and Asia, according to the High Commissioner's Office ([OHCHR](#)).

"Monitors were shocked by what they witnessed: thousands of emaciated and traumatized men, women and children piled on top of one another, locked up in hangars with no access to the most basic necessities, and stripped of their human dignity," OHCHR spokesperson told reporters today in Geneva.

Detainees at the centres said they are often beaten or prodded with electric sticks if they ask for food and medicine. There are no functioning toilets in the hangar-like facilities and the detainees find it 'difficult to survive the smell of urine and feces.' Rape and other sexual violence appear commonplace.

The European Union is providing assistance to the Libyan Coast Guard to intercept migrant boats in the Mediterranean. This includes in international waters, despite concerns raised by rights groups that this would condemn more migrants to arbitrary and indefinite detention and expose them to forced labour or extortion. According to OHCHR, those detained have no possibility to challenge the legality of their detention, and no access to legal aid.

Nearly 20,000 people are in custody now, up from about 7,000 in mid-September.

The spike in numbers came after authorities detained thousands of migrants following clashes in Sabratha, a smuggling and trafficking hub, about 80 kilometres west of Tripoli.

“We cannot be a silent witness to modern day slavery, rape and other sexual violence, and unlawful killings in the name of managing migration and preventing desperate and traumatized people from reaching Europe’s shores,” said High Commissioner Zeid.

His Office has urged the Libyan authorities to stamp out human rights violations in centres under their control, while also calling on the international community not to turn a blind eye to the “unimaginable horrors” endured by migrants in Libya.

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## **Bonn: Initiative to increase insurance coverage for climate-related disasters launched at UN conference**

14 November 2017 – On the heels of one of the worst – and most costly – Atlantic hurricane seasons on record, a global initiative was launched Wednesday at the United Nations Climate Change Conference ([COP23](#)), in Bonn, Germany, with the aim of providing insurance to hundreds of millions of vulnerable people by 2020 and to increase the resilience of developing countries against the impacts of climate change.

In 2017, extreme weather events are estimated to have caused more than \$200 billion worth of damage worldwide, as hurricanes, droughts and rising sea levels devastated vulnerable communities with increased frequency and intensity. In the face of skyrocketing costs, new forms of financial protection have become an increasingly urgent part of the climate change discussion.

The [InsuResilience](#) Global Partnership is a major scaling-up of an initiative started by the G7 in 2015 under the German Presidency. It aims at meeting the pledge of providing cover and support to an extra 400 million vulnerable people by 2020.

The Global Partnership now brings together G20 countries in partnership with the so called ‘V20’ nations, a group of 49 of the most vulnerable countries including small islands like Fiji, which holds the Presidency of COP23.

“The Global Partnership is a practical response to the needs of those who

suffer loss because of climate change,” said the COP23 President and Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama.

This announcement on climate risk insurance was made a day before the high-level segment of COP23, which Heads of State and Government, Ministers, and UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, are expected to attend.

Thomas Silberhorn, Parliamentary State Secretary to the German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, announced support of 125 million dollar for the new Global Partnership as part of the launch. This follows the £30 million commitment to the initiative made by the British Government in July 2017.

“Climate risk insurance is a response to the simple fact that extreme weather events are constantly increasing in number and intensity, and also a response to our experience that the international community and the countries affected by extreme weather events tend to really act after those incidents occurred and they tend to come too late and to intervene not significantly enough,” Mr. Silberhorn told a press conference.

“So our intention is to act more preemptively, to act in time, and to act decisively in order to reduce the impact of extreme weather events. Insurance is one tool to address this challenge,” he added.

#### ***A partnership for climate and disaster risk finance and insurance solutions***

The Global Partnership supports data and risk analysis, technical assistance and capacity building according to countries needs and priorities, solutions design of concrete risk finance and insurance solutions, smart support for the implementation for such schemes and monitoring and evaluation efforts.

“This new and higher ambition initiative represents one [shining example of what can be delivered](#) when progressive governments, civil society and the private sector join hands with creativity and determination to provide solutions,” said Patricia Espinosa, Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change secretariat ([UNFCCC](#)).

The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF), for example, is being supported with the help of ‘InsuResilience.’ The most recent example of support was in September 2017, when more than \$55 million was paid out to 10 Caribbean countries within 14 days of hurricanes Irma and Maria, which left an arc of destruction across the region.

The money was used in various ways, for example, to quickly buy urgently needed medicines and to build emergency shelters for the people affected by the storms.

In Zambia, InsuResilience supports the NWK Agri-Services cotton company, which offers direct weather and life insurance to small contract farmers. In 2015, some 52,000 farmers decided to buy insurance. Following a major drought in 2016, more than 23,000 farmers received payments.

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# UN warns of trafficking of Rohingya refugees in shadow of humanitarian crisis

14 November 2017 – Human trafficking and exploitation are rife among Rohingya refugees who have fled Myanmar to seek safety in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, the United Nations migration agency has found.

Understanding the scope of [human trafficking](#) is difficult in most settings due to the hidden nature of the crime,&#8221 said Kateryna Ardanyan, a counter-trafficking expert of the International Organization for Migration ([IOM](#)), in a press release issued Tuesday.

In the chaos of a crisis like this, trafficking is usually invisible at first, as there are so many other urgent needs like food and shelter. But agencies responding to this crisis should not wait until the number of identified victims increases,&#8221 she added.

According to interviews and community focus groups conducted in the district’s makeshift settlements by IOM, desperate men, women and children are being recruited with false offers of paid work in various industries including fishing, small commerce, begging and, in the case of girls, domestic work.

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With almost no alternative source of income, the refugees are willing to take whatever opportunities they are presented with, even ones that are risky, dangerous and that involve their children.

Once they start the job, they usually find that they are not paid what was promised. They are often deprived of sleep, made to work more hours than was agreed, not allowed to leave their work premises and not allowed to contact their family. Women and girls are often physically or sexually abused.

Some report being forced into jobs which they never agreed to do. In one case, a number of adolescent girls, who were promised work as domestic helpers in Cox’s Bazar and Chittagong, were forced into prostitution. Others reported being brought to locations different from the agreed destination.

In one case, a woman reportedly went to work for a family and was brought back to the settlements dead. The family of the victim received a settlement

from the employers.

Many of the recruiters are Bangladeshi, while some are Rohingya, and many were established in the area prior to the most recent influx. The number of criminals and trafficking rings operating in the district has expanded with the population.

The abuse mainly occurs in neighbourhoods surrounding the settlements, but recruiters are also taking people to places as far away as Cox's Bazar city, Chittagong and Dhaka.

IOM is also aware of cases where Rohingya have been trafficked to outside Bangladesh, and is assisting the victims. Most of the trafficking is taking place inside the country, which follows the pattern of trafficking globally.

Forced and early marriages are also taking place among the Rohingya population. For many families, it is a coping mechanism that offers protection and economic advancement for young Rohingya women and girls.

Rohingya refugees need preventative and proactive action now to mitigate risks of human trafficking, and the survivors need help, before this spirals out of control, Ms. Ardanyan said.

Over 617,000 Rohingya refugees have settled in Cox's Bazar since 25 August, but exploitation of the Rohingya population in the district has been occurring since well before this most recent influx of people.

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## [Largest gathering of defence ministers dedicated to UN peacekeeping to kick off in Vancouver](#)

13 November 2017 – It is extremely critical that “major gaps” in equipment and staff needed to maintain United Nations peacekeeping operations are filled “in the shortest possible time possible” Atul Khare, the Under-Secretary-General for Field Support, said ahead of a major gathering of global defence ministers in Canada.

On the eve of the second [UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference](#), taking place on Tuesday and Wednesday in Vancouver, British Columbia, Mr. Khare said: “We are trying to make do. We are trying to do the best that we can; we are trying many innovations.”

The Conference, hosted by Canada, is the largest gathering of defence ministers dedicated to [UN peacekeeping](#). It aims to:

- measure the progress made since the 2016 UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial Conference;
- encourage new pledges from Member States, particularly in areas where the UN faces gaps, such as rapid deployment, helicopters and francophone units;
- advance peacekeeping reform through the efforts of Member States and the UN to improve the UN's capacity to better plan and perform peacekeeping operations; and
- foster pragmatic and innovative solutions to make peacekeeping operations more effective, by building on the '3Ps' — pledges, planning, performance — with a new focus on partnerships.

"This meeting is critical to our work. We have now indications that about 80 countries — which is quite a large number — are likely to attend at ministerial level [...] This is a very good indication of the importance which countries attach to this meeting," said Mr. Khare.

In an exclusive interview with *UN News*, the senior official talks more about the importance of the meeting to UN peacekeeping, and what his expectations are for the outcome.

**VIDEO:** Under-Secretary-General Atul Khare calls for international support as ways to improve and make peacekeeping operations more effective.

**AUDIO:** Under-Secretary-General Atul Khare says that it is extremely critical to fill major gaps in UN peacekeeping.

*UN News will be in Vancouver, British Columbia, covering the Conference and its associated events. Follow [@UN\\_News\\_Centre](#) to stay up to date on news and highlights.*