

UN forum closes in Bahrain with the spotlight on entrepreneurs for sustainable development

2 November 2017 – A United Nations forum on sustainable development concluded today in Bahrain with a strong call for the integration of entrepreneurship and innovation in all economic and social dimensions as key strategies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

In particular, the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum (WEIF) 2017 – having over 60 per cent of participants women – underscored the importance of the role of female entrepreneurs.

We recommend for the active involvement of women in all sectors related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through entrepreneurship and innovation, read the World Forum’s outcome declaration / communique.

The World Forum also called upon governments, the private sector, academia, civil society, media and international organizations to facilitate the work of entrepreneurs and innovators to ensure sustainable development.

Speaking at a press conference where the outcome – Manama Declaration – was unveiled, Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, also highlighted the importance of entrepreneurship and innovation for the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

We must offer better incentives to induce entrepreneurs and innovators to invest in [SDGs](#) [to] unleash and foster a dynamic private sector and ensure competitiveness, he said, noting, in particular, the role of small and medium sized-enterprises, which often account for the majority of business activities at the national level.

Helping businesses get off the ground and sustaining them through their initial phases helps generate employment, income and economic growth
President of General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák

Supporting [these enterprises] is a proven strategy to build a robust economy from the ground up [and] helping businesses get off the ground and sustaining them through their initial phases helps generate employment, income and economic growth, added Mr. Lajčák.

Further in his remarks, the President of the General Assembly highlighted the importance of the means of implementation for sustainable development, and called innovative partnerships between all sectors.

In that context, Mr. Lajčák noted that, in mid-2018, he will be convening a high-level event on sustainable development financing to foster discussions

among UN Member States and other stakeholders on the important subject.

Organized under the overarching theme of [achieving the SDGs through promoting entrepreneurship and innovation](#), the World Forum saw participation of more than 1,000 government officials, entrepreneurs, representatives of international organizations, civil society and the academia from over 90 countries.



Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, speaks at the Press Conference. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



Hashim Hussein, the head of the UNIDO ITPO-Bahrain, briefs on the outcomes of WEIF 2017. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly, receives a commemorative plaque from the organizers of WEIF. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



A participant at the press conference broadcasts the event live on Facebook. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra



Participants at the Press Conference, held at UN House, Manama, Bahrain. Photo: UNIC-Manama

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Briefing on the World Forum's discussions and outcomes, Hashim Hussein, the Executive Secretary of WEIF 2017 and the head of the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Investment and Technology Promotion Office (ITPO) in Bahrain, noted that participants stressed the need to build and strengthen partnerships between entrepreneurs – both women and men alike.

“[The World Forum] urged stakeholders to foster the private sector as the main engine behind economic growth, structural change and innovation [and] identified the pressing need to promote competitive micro, small and medium-sized enterprises as the main driving force for empowerment of women and youth,” said Mr. Hussein.

In his remarks, the head of UNIDO ITPO-Bahrain also underscored the importance of sound economic policies, legislation and programmes – as key elements of sustainable development – to ensure the empowerment of women at the national, regional and global levels.

Also at the press conference, Samir Aldarabi, the Director of the [UN Information Centre in Manama](#), [recalled](#) the message of UN [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres to the Forum, in which the Secretary-General said that inclusive and sustainable industrial development will continue to be a key driver of progress as [the United Nations] supports Member States in this essential work.

Looking ahead, Mr. Aldarabi informed that the World Forum will be held every two years in Manama, the capital of Bahrain, and that in 2020 [it will be organized](#) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Also speaking at the occasion were the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Bahrain, Amin El Sharkawi; and the Under Secretary for International Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, Shaikh Abdulla bin Ahmed bin Abdulla Al Khalifa.

Organized by UNIDO in partnership with the Government of Bahrain, the World Entrepreneurs and Investment Forum 2017, held from 31 October to 2 November, saw key events on the [Maritime-Continental Silk Road](#); [addressing challenges faced by women in industry](#); global impact investing; [recognition](#) of men and women business leaders for their contributions to sustainable development; the [Bahrain Entrepreneurs Exhibition](#); and a side event on implementation of SDGs in Bahrain.

UN News was in Manama, Bahrain, covering the Forum and its associated events. Follow [@UN_News_Centre](#) and [@UNNewsArabic](#) for up to date news and highlights from the UN.

['Injustice against journalists costly for society,' says UNESCO chief on International Day](#)

2 November 2017 – Justice must be done for the murder of journalists, who perform important functions in taking forward fundamental freedoms and bolstering the strength of societies, a senior United Nations official said Thursday, marking the International Day to end impunity for crimes against them.

Justice is a [cornerstone](#) of a free society. It dissuades those who threaten freedom of expression and emboldens those who stand to defend it," said Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), in her message for the [International Day](#), observed annually on 2 November.

The date was chosen in commemoration of the assassination of two French

journalists in Mali on 2 November 2013.

“This is why injustice against journalists is so costly for all societies,” she added.

From 2006 to 2016, at least 930 journalists were killed. In 2016 alone, some 102 journalists were killed in the line of duty. Worryingly, more than nine out of 10 cases, the perpetrators are never brought to justice.

“We must ensure justice is done for every journalist killed,” she declared.

Journalists must be defended through concerted action by Governments, supported by the UN, working with all relevant actors, from international regional organizations, judiciaries and media to private companies, academia and civil society.

This partnership for action was embodied UNESCO’s recent Multi-Stakeholder Consultation, held in Geneva to strengthen implementation of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity.

On Wednesday in Geneva, two UN experts warned that the world is witnessing a “downward spiral of attacks” on journalists, spurred on by hate speech even from senior politicians.

Speaking on the eve of International Day, the Special Rapporteurs on arbitrary, summary and extrajudicial executions, Agnes Callamard, and on freedom of expression, David Kaye, said that when authorities [fail to follow up such attacks](#) with independent and impartial investigations, the killers and their allies achieve their objectives.

The attacks need to stop, so too does the public demonization of reporting and specific media outlets and reporters by political leaders at the highest levels, they added.

[Global shift to clean, affordable energy critical to attaining Global Goals – UN officials](#)

1 November 2017 – To tackle the double challenge of energy poverty and climate change – producing clean, affordable energy at a pace that will meet rising demand without environmental detriment – all stakeholders must step up efforts to transform the world’s energy systems for everyone’s benefit, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres said Wednesday.

“Energy is the [golden thread](#) that connects all the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)),” the Secretary-General told a [High-Level Symposium](#) on Global Energy Interconnection, at UN Headquarters today, where participants gathered to discuss ways to advance the 17 globally-agreed Goals.

Modern energy services are integral to poverty reduction, food security, public health and quality education for all. Moreover, they are the key to sustainable industrialization, healthier more efficient cities and successful climate action.

Despite this understanding, Mr. Guterres said the world is still far from achieving the vision of [SDG7](#) on affordable and clean energy for all. Indeed, some one billion people still live without any access to any electricity at all – 500 million in Africa and more than 400 million in the Asia-Pacific region. And three billion still cook and heat their homes without the benefit of clean fuels and more efficient technologies.



Secretary-General speaking at Energy Interconnection: Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals”, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in collaboration with the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

“So, the world needs more energy, and – in particular – more clean energy,” Mr. Guterres continued, but stressed that as this need rises, the world is experiencing rising temperatures and in 2016, atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide [surged to a new high](#). Recalling the [sobering report](#) issued just yesterday by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) which found that pledges made under the [Paris Agreement](#) are only a third of what is required by 2030 to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, the Secretary-General said falling short of the agreed 2 degrees Celsius temperature rise would be “catastrophic.” Against this background, and in light of the devastating hurricane season that had just battered the Caribbean and similar extreme weather events elsewhere, urgent climate action is needed. “That means transforming the world’s energy systems. It means promoting modern technologies that can fulfil energy needs without polluting the environment and pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere,” Mr. Guterres explained. He said today’s Symposium could help point the way, as it would feature both policy- and technical-level presentations on how to strengthen global energy interconnection through the deployment of smart grids.

“With smart grids it is now feasible to generate, transmit and distribute power efficiently, cutting transmission losses and providing clean, affordable, economically viable and environmentally sound energy services,” he stated.

Echoing the Secretary-General’s sense of urgency, Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, with its 17 [SDGs](#) and 169 targets, puts a strong

emphasis on inter-linkages. As such, progress in implementing SDG7 on energy is bound to impact delivery on other Goals.



Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Liu Zhenmin speaks at Energy Interconnection: Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals”, organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), in collaboration with the Global Energy Interconnection Development and Cooperation Organization. UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

“Likewise, without [increased access to modern energy](#), energy efficiency and renewable energy, there will be no progress on climate action,” he said, emphasizing: “So, we need to move from silo to synergy.” And in that regard, the UN is reforming its development system in response to the 2030 Agenda to provide more coherent support to Member States.

Turning to the role of SDG7 in the broader context of the 2030 Agenda, Mr. Liu highlighted three key points:

- Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is fundamental to a peaceful, inclusive and sustainable work, and a necessary investment in our collective future;
- Energy is inextricably linked to most of the global challenges now and in the future, including poverty, food security, clean water, infrastructure, public health, education, economic growth, youth’s and women’s empowerment, and climate change; and
- Access to modern energy must go beyond residential power access. It must aim to unlock new entrepreneurial opportunities for the growing workforce, so that they can become the next global engine for the new economies of the future.

“New technologies, new business models, and new approaches to capacity building are all needed to transform the world and achieve global sustainable development. The global energy interconnection, through smart grids, offers one such avenue,” he said.

But such global energy interconnection, or GEI, can only work in partnership. “The technology for worldwide energy connectivity is there. The barriers are institutional, not technological,” stated Mr. Liu, calling for a change in mindset, and stressing that decisive progress can only be made through partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources are indispensable to succ

[South Sudan: UN Mission weighs re-establishing presence in north-eastern town](#)

1 November 2017 – The United Nations peacekeeping mission is expected to reach vulnerable people in remote parts of South Sudan, as it takes a more “nimble and proactive” approach, the head of the operation said Wednesday during a visit to a hard-to-reach area in the country’s north-east.

“It’s clear that the needs of people in this location are immense,” said David Shearer, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative and head of the UN Mission in South Sudan ([UNMISS](#)), adding that UNMISS is looking at ways of extending a presence in Akobo, a town near the border with Ethiopia.

The mission had operated a base in the town but it was closed following an attack in December 2013 in which two Indian peacekeepers and thirty civilians were killed.

Some 71,000 displaced people are currently living in Akobo and the surrounding area after fleeing fighting between the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) and opposition forces in the north-east.

About 10 to 15 humanitarian agencies are working in Akobo, which lies in an opposition-held part of South Sudan. “As UNMISS, we need to reach communities in need in all parts of the country, regardless of their ethnic or political background,” Mr. Shearer said.

The UNMISS mandate is to protect civilians and help create an environment conducive to the delivery of humanitarian aid, he added, “so it was important to hear from the humanitarians working here how the presence of peacekeepers and other mission personnel can help.”

[UN agency and EXPO Dubai 2020 agree on strengthening cooperation for Global Goals](#)

1 November 2017 – The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and EXPO Dubai 2020 signed Wednesday a Memorandum of Understanding on strengthening joint cooperation, including hosting the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum (WEIF) 2020 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

“This partnership proves that the private sector can make significant contributions toward inclusive and sustainable development,” said Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the UN General Assembly, welcoming the signing in Bahrain.

“I also welcome the parties’ intention to share knowledge around investment and entrepreneurship for development to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)),” he added.

Mr. Lajčák arrived in the capital, Manama, Wednesday to attend the ongoing WEIF 2017, organized by UNIDO in partnership with the Government of Bahrain.

In his remarks at the signing ceremony, Mr. Lajčák noted that the hosting of the 2020 edition of WEIF in Dubai is further proof of the region’s interest and commitment to encourage all stakeholders to work together with UNIDO to strengthen the implementation of the [SDGs](#) through promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation.



Miroslav Lajčák, the President of the General Assembly (left), congratulates Manal AlBayat, Senior Vice President at EXPO Dubai 2020 (right) and Hiroshi Kuniyoshi, Deputy Director General of UNIDO (centre) after the signing of the memorandum of understanding. Photo: UN News/Vibhu Mishra

This year’s WEIF, as well as the one in 2015, have been held in Manama.

Prior to his arrival in Bahrain, the President of the General Assembly was in Paris, France, where, among other engagements, he addressed the Leaders’ Forum of the 39th UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) General Conference, held under the theme of *SDGs and the role of UNESCO in the multilateral system*, Tuesday.

“We need multilateralism – more than ever before [...] If we want the next generation to be born into a better world, we only have one option. And that is strong multilateralism, with the UN System at its core,” Mr. Lajčák said in his remarks at the occasion.

While in Paris, Mr. Lajčák also held meetings with senior officials from the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina and France, and discussed issues including his priorities for the 72nd session of the General Assembly, climate change, sustainable development, biodiversity and regional matters, according to a news release from his Office.

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