

[UN General Assembly again calls for lifting US embargo against Cuba](#)

1 November 2017 – The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday adopted a resolution underlining the need to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

In the resolution, the Assembly reiterated its call to all UN Member States to refrain from promulgating and applying laws and measures not conforming with their obligations under the UN Charter and international law, which reaffirm freedom of trade and navigation. The Assembly “once again urges States that have and continue to apply such laws and measures to take the necessary steps to repeal or invalidate them as soon as possible,” the resolution added.

The resolution enjoyed favorable votes from 191 of the 193 UN Member States. The United States and Israel opposed the text.

Last year, these two countries, for the first time in the 25-year history of the annual review of the issue, abstained in the vote rather than rejecting the text.

[UN chief contacts New York City Mayor, US Ambassador to extend condolences in wake of deadly attack](#)

1 November 2017 – A day after the deadly attack in New York City, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres spoke to Mayor Bill di Blasio and reaffirmed his solidarity with the people of New York.

According to his spokesperson, the Secretary-General has also contacted the Permanent Representative of the United States to the UN, Nikki Haley, to express his condolences.

In a [Tweet](#) yesterday, Mr. Guterres said that “our hearts go out to the people of our great host city; today all of us at UNHQ are New Yorkers.”

A [statement](#) from his spokesperson says Mr. Guterres was “shocked and deeply saddened” to learn of the attack.

Violence against children pervasive in homes, schools and communities – UNICEF

1 November 2017 – About 300 million, or three-quarters, of the world's two- to four-year-old children experience either psychological aggression or physical punishment, or both, by their caregivers at home, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said in a report published Tuesday.

"The harm inflicted on children around the world does [tremendous damage](#)," said UNICEF Chief of Child Protection Cornelius Williams in a press release on the report, titled [A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents](#).

"Babies slapped in the face; girls and boys forced into sexual acts; adolescents murdered in their communities – violence against children knows no boundaries," he added.

The report uses the latest data to show that children experience violence across all stages of childhood and in all settings.

About 60 per cent of one-year-olds in 30 countries with available data are regularly subjected to violent discipline. Nearly a quarter of one-year-olds are physically shaken as punishment and nearly one in 10 are hit or slapped on the face, head or ears.

Worldwide, 176 million, or one in four, children under age five are living with a mother who is a victim of intimate partner violence.

The report also finds that around 15 million adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 worldwide have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forced sexual acts in their lifetime. Only one per cent of adolescent girls who had experienced sexual violence said they reached out for professional help.

VIDEO: Recognize it. Report it. UNICEF calls for everyone to stand up and speak out to end violence against children. Credit: UNICEF

In the 28 countries with data, 90 per cent of adolescent girls who had experienced forced sex, on average, said the perpetrator of the first incident was known to them.

Data from six countries reveals friends, classmates and partners were among the most frequently cited perpetrators of sexual violence against adolescent boys.

Globally, every seven minutes, an adolescent is killed by an act of violence. In the United States, adolescent boys from African American or black non-Hispanic populations are almost 19 times more likely to be murdered than non-Hispanic white adolescent boys.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region where adolescent homicide rates have increased; nearly half of all homicides among adolescents globally occurred in this region in 2015.

The report also says that half the population of school-age children – 732 million – live in countries where corporal punishment at school is not fully prohibited. Three-quarters of documented school shootings that have taken place over the past 25 years in non-conflict countries occurred in the United States.

To end violence against children, UNICEF is calling for governments to take urgent action and support such measures as adopting well-coordinated national action plans; changing adult behaviours; limiting access to firearms and other weapons; educating children, parents, teachers, and community members to recognize violence in all its many forms and report it safely; and collecting better disaggregated data to track progress through robust monitoring and evaluation.

[UN envoy welcomes full return of Gaza border crossings to Palestinian Authority](#)

1 November 2017 – The United Nations envoy for the Middle East peace process on Wednesday welcomed the full return of the Gaza crossings to the control of the Palestinian Authority.

“This is a [landmark development](#) in the implementation of the intra-Palestinian agreement, signed in Cairo on 12 October,” said UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, in a statement.

“The positive momentum should be maintained and the Palestinian government must be fully empowered to function in Gaza,” he added.

According to media reports, the 12 October agreement between the Fatah and Hamas factions allows the Palestinian government to resume its responsibilities in Gaza. Under the agreement, the Palestinian Authority should take control of the crossings of the Gaza Strip by 1 November.

A statement released by Egypt, which facilitated the accord, said he

Palestinian government should assume its full responsibilities to manage the enclave by 1 December.

The July 2016 report of the Middle East Quartet – comprising the UN, Russia, the United States and the European Union – identified the lack of Palestinian unity as one of the main obstacles to achieving a two-state solution, which is to establish a viable, sovereign Palestinian state that lives in peace and security with Israel.

“The return of the crossings should facilitate the lifting of the closures, while addressing Israel’s legitimate security concerns, and unlock increased international support for Gaza’s reconstruction, growth, stability and prosperity,” Mr. Mladenov said.

He reminded all factions in Gaza of the importance of maintaining security and ending militant activities that undermine peace and security for both Palestinians and Israelis alike. Mr. Mladenov said the UN will continue to work with the Palestinian leadership, Egypt and the region to support this process, which is critical for reaching a negotiated two-state solution and sustainable peace in the Middle East.

[Women are not helpless, they will work hard and achieve their goals, UN forum told](#)

1 November 2017 – Despite overwhelming challenges women face at the workplace, “they are not helpless,” they will follow their dreams, work to the hardest and achieve their business goals, was a core message on day two of a United Nations forum on sustainable development.

“This is a chance for everyone around the world – policy makers, investors, those in technology – to realize that women are not waiting for handouts, they are looking for opportunities. An opportunity is not a handout,” Adot Killmeyer-Oleche, the Chief of UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Institute for Capacity Development, told *UN News*.

“This is an important message for all of us – the UN, development activists and practitioners, and change agents,” she added.

At a plenary panel discussion on the theme of [Women in industry](#) policy makers, business persons, officials from financial institutions and UN agencies, and women and young entrepreneurs came together to discuss the challenges confronting women entrepreneurs and how to overcome them.

Women entrepreneurs often find themselves at the end of the value chain, not

just in terms of employment, but also when it comes to access to knowledge, technology and the basic resources – particularly finance – to do business.

Adding to these barriers, women face very high level of stigma – a universal problem – with their projects and ideas not given the same level of attention or simply ignored because of the fact it came from a woman.

“Women have challenges at all levels – traditionally they have had challenges getting education and training [...] or made to enter trades ‘more associated’ with their gender,” explained Killmeyer-Oleche, also a panellist at the session.

This discrimination is also evident in the lack of equal pay for equal work in many sectors around the globe.

One of the key ways to address these challenges, the panel discussed, is reforming laws and policies, integrating the gender dimensions. Another area of focus is training and education to ensure that young women and men, are imparted with the necessary skills to become entrepreneurs and are able to carefully analyse risks.

Using technology and innovative solutions, such as crowd-sourcing or community financing can help overcome some challenges, in particular those relating to accessing finance, said many participants.

But, above all, mind-sets across the world have to be changed, they stressed, noting that changed mind-sets will automatically improve the situation in other sectors.

“Attitudes change, but not overnight [...] it is simply not acceptable to discriminate against women,” said Ina Cronje, Chairperson of the Board of Trade and Investment, KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), a panel participant.

The session also saw the designation of Azza Fahmy, a prominent business woman and the Chairwoman and Creative Director of Jewellery of Egypt, as the UNIDO International Creative Woman Entrepreneur.

The panel discussion on women in industry was a key event held on the second day of the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum, organized by UNIDO in partnership with the Government of Bahrain.

Other key events today include a plenary session on global impact investing; a side-event on the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development implementation in Bahrain, jointly organized by UNDP, [UNIDO ITPO-Bahrain](#) and UN Global Compact; and partnership events for entrepreneurs.

UN News is in Manama, Bahrain, covering the Forum and its associated events. Follow [@UN_News_Centre](#) and [@UNNewsArabic](#) for up to date news and highlights from WEIF 2017.