

UN chief urges Security Council to 'be ambitious' in supporting Sahel anti-terror force

30 October 2017 – Stressing the urgent need to help Mali and other countries the Sahel address cross-border terrorism and organized crime, [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Monday invited the United Nations Security Council to 'be ambitious' in deciding how the UN supports the region's newly-established joint force.

'The situation in Sahel challenges us all,' Mr. Guterres told the 15-member body, describing the difficult operational circumstances facing the joint force created by the Group of Five Sahel countries (G5) – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – to combat terrorism and organized criminal activity, and to promote stability and development in the region.

'Time is against us,' he said, stressing the need to unite efforts to address the root causes of instability in the region. He warned that not acting could have severe consequences for the region and beyond.

At the outset, Mr. Guterres paid tribute to the three Chadian peacekeepers of the UN Mission in Mali, known by its French acronym MINUSMA, who were killed in an attack on Thursday, as well as to their wounded colleagues.

'Their sense of sacrifice compels us to urgently find solutions to counter terrorism in Mali, while ensuring the security and safety of MINUSMA contingents,' he said.

In his [16 October report](#) on the activities of the African-led joint force, the UN chief outlined four possible options to support the force, ranging from using the existing mandate of MINUSMA, to an expanded MINUSMA mandate, to the establishment of a dedicated United Nations support office.

Under the most ambitious plan, the office would provide full-fledged support, similar to that provided to the non-UN missions, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). A less ambitious option would limit the scope of the office's services to logistical and 'soft' support.

The Secretary-General says in the report that he firmly believes that 'only predictable and sustainable funding and support will enable the Joint Force to contribute to the lasting stabilization of the Sahel.'

'We must think of innovative actions in support of the G5 Sahel' – UN chief

At today's meeting, Mr. Guterres described how poverty, underdevelopment and climate change have contributed to humanitarian and security crises in the Sahel, and how the weak institutions, exclusion and marginalization of some

groups are exploited by extremists and terrorists.

He also said that porous borders facilitate the trafficking of human beings, drug and arms trafficking, and other criminal activities and that the humanitarian crisis is getting worse, with nearly five million people displaced, and 24 million people need humanitarian aid.

“Given the urgency of the situation, we must think of innovative actions in support of the G5 Sahel efforts in the security field, but also in the areas of development and governance,” Mr. Guterres said.

“I therefore invite this Council to be ambitious in the choice it has to make. Strong political support for the G5 Sahel and material and operational support commensurate with the challenges are essential,” he added.

“Since taking office, prevention is my top priority,” he emphasized, explaining that in the Sahel, this means preventing the region from sinking into chaos, which could have dangerous consequences for the continent and the entire world.

Earlier this month, Security Council members visited Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso to assess the level and the nature of the threat posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahel, as well as the status of the operationalization of the joint force. The visiting mission also delivered a message to the parties in Mali regarding the need to accelerate the implementation of the 2015 Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.

[Carbon dioxide levels surge to new high in 2016, UN weather agency reports](#)

30 October 2017 – Levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) surged at record-breaking speed to new highs in 2016, the United Nations weather agency announced on Monday.

Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), issued the warning in Geneva, at the launch of the organization’s [Greenhouse Gas Bulletin](#).

The report indicates that carbon dioxide concentrations reached 403.3 parts per million in 2016, up from 400 ppm in 2015.

“We have never seen so big growth in one year as we have been seeing last year in carbon dioxide concentration,” said Mr. Taalas, telling journalists that it is time for governments to fulfil the pledges they made

in Paris in 2015 to take steps to reduce global warming.

Emphasizing that the new figures reveal [we are not moving in the right direction at all](#), he added that [in fact we are actually moving in the wrong direction when we think about the implementation of the \[Paris Agreement\]\(#\)](#) and this all demonstrates that there is some urgent need to raise the ambition level of climate mitigation, if we are serious with this 1.5 to 2C target of Paris Agreement.

The report's findings are based on observations taken around the globe by the WMO Global Atmosphere Watch Programme. It found that rapidly increasing atmospheric levels of CO2 and other greenhouse gases have the potential to initiate unprecedented changes in climate systems, leading to [severe ecological and economic disruptions](#).

Population growth, intensified agricultural practices, increases in land use and deforestation, industrialization and associated energy use from fossil fuel sources have all contributed to [increases in concentrations of greenhouse gases](#) in the atmosphere since the industrial era, beginning in 1750.

Oksana Tarasova Chief of Atmospheric Environment Research Division at WMO, explained that last year's elevated CO2 levels happened because of a combination of human activities and a strong El Niño event.

The climatic phenomenon is associated with warmer-than-average sea temperatures that is believed to be responsible for triggering droughts in tropical regions, as well as unprecedented hurricanes and wildfires elsewhere around the globe.

Atmospheric change occurring 10 to 20 times faster than ever observed in the planet's history

However, at 3.3 parts per million, the 2016 increase in carbon dioxide levels was significantly higher than an El Niño-influenced spike in 1998, which was measured at 2.7 ppm.

To put that into perspective, WMO says that before the industrial era, a CO2 change of 10 parts per million took between 100 and 200 years to happen.

[What we are doing now with the atmosphere is 10 to 20 times faster than ever been observed in the history of the planet](#), Ms. Tarasova said.

According to the WMO report, which covers all atmospheric emissions, CO2 concentrations are now 145 per cent of pre-industrial levels.

After carbon dioxide, the second most important greenhouse gas is methane; its levels rose last year but slightly less than in 2014.

Nitrous oxide is the third most warming gas; it increased slightly less last year than over the last decade.

The release of the WMO report coincides with Tuesday's *Emissions Gap Report*

by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), which tracks how governments are taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Together, both publications will serve as a scientific base for policy decisions at the UN climate change negotiations in Bonn, Germany, beginning Monday 7 November.

[UNICEF warns 1,800 unaccompanied refugee children in Greece need proper shelter, care](#)

30 October 2017 – Two-thirds of the nearly 3,000 unaccompanied refugee and migrant children currently in Greece are not receiving proper shelter and care, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) has warned.

[Children stranded without families](#) should have proper shelter, care and protection, and there are solutions that could make this a reality for them, said Laurent Chapuis, Country Coordinator for UNICEF's refugee and migrant response in Greece in a press release issued over the weekend.

The solutions include transfer these children to shelters on the mainland without delays, devote available funding to existing shelters with the right standards, and put more foster care or supervised living schemes in place, he added.

Although the Greek authorities and their partners have made tremendous efforts in responding to the needs of children and families, the recent surge in the refugee and migrant arrivals has led to further overcrowding and deteriorating living conditions in island camps, with some reception facilities hosting twice as many as they were designed for.

In September, there were more than 5,700 arrivals in Greece compared to an estimated 3,080 arrivals a year earlier.

There are now some 1,800 unaccompanied children waiting for a place in shelter, living in open sites, reception centres, or who are otherwise stranded on the islands or in de facto detention centres. Some of these children are even living on the streets, and the approaching winter is adding to the risk.

Children are particularly vulnerable at night without proper safeguards in place. Delays of up to five months in transferring children from the islands to the mainland are compounding their emotional and mental strain.

UNICEF is also calling for urgent policy and legal reforms to strengthen

community-based care after years of economic hardship in Greece. For those children who have family elsewhere in Europe, UNICEF is urging other European countries to step up family reunification.

[UN forum to bring together governments and entrepreneurs for sustainable development](#)

30 October 2017 – More than one thousand business leaders, government officials and academics will converge at a United Nations forum Tuesday in Bahrain to strengthen global partnerships, entrepreneurship and investment for the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

“As our world gets more interconnected, no one country or region can meet development challenges on its own,” the President of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák who will be attending the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum told *UN News*.

The Forum offers a unique opportunity to promote entrepreneurship and innovation both of which can help us build momentum to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he added.

Being organized from 31 October to 2 November by the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in partnership with the Government of Bahrain, the World Entrepreneurs Investment Forum has the overarching theme of *achieving the SDGs through promoting entrepreneurship and innovation*.

At this time of global economic uncertainty, enhanced international development cooperation is more important than ever [...] world leaders need to deliver on their promise to lift people from poverty, ensure sustainability and make sure that no one is left behind
President of the General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák

The three day Forum also includes a number of key events on the Maritime-Continental Silk Road; investing for global impact; women in industry; private sector engagement for implementing SDGs; promoting inclusive investment in Africa; and forging partnerships between entrepreneurs.

Highlighting, in particular, the focus on the role of female entrepreneurs and the challenges they face in industry, Hashim Hussein, the Head of UNIDO Investment, Technology and Promotion Office in Bahrain ([ITPO-Bahrain](#)) said that the percentage of women holding senior positions below 10 per cent worldwide and challenges relating to issues such as maternity leave and

working hours are indicative of the challenges they face at work.

The Forum will, therefore, discuss addressing these challenges and explore opportunities for women to be more active in the industrial arena and promote women entrepreneurship, including through access to finance and new technologies, building support networks, and managerial skills.

It will focus on the role of female entrepreneurs, partnerships for development, and the implications for achieving the 2030 Agenda, in particular [SDG 9](#) on industry, innovation and infrastructure.

It will also recognize the contributions made by prominent women entrepreneurs from different parts of the world.

Linked to the World Forum, UNIDO organized a training on understanding links between gender equality and industrial development, and designing programmes and policies that promote women's economic empowerment.

Concluding later today, key issues and challenges identified at the training will feed into one of the Forum's plenary sessions, informed Mr. Hussein.

Also on the agenda for the Forum is the inauguration of the Bahrain Entrepreneurs Exhibition, launch of the Maritime-Continental Silk Road Entrepreneurs Alliance and Action Plan, and the unveiling of the Coding for Girls joint initiative between the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), UNIDO ITPO-Bahrain, Microsoft and the Bahrain Supreme Council for Women.

UN News is on location in Manama, Bahrain, covering the Forum and its associated events. Follow @UN_News_Centre and @UNNewsArabic to stay updated on news and highlights from WEIF 2017.

[In Tehran, UN atomic chief says Iran implementing nuclear-related commitments](#)

29 October 2017 – Visiting Iran, the head of the United Nations atomic energy agency on Sunday reiterated that the commitments undertaken by the country under the nuclear accord of 2015 are being implemented.

According to the press release issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency ([IAEA](#)), its Director General Yukiya Amano [met with](#) Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Vice-President and President of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran Ali Akbar Salehi, and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, during a visit to the capital, Tehran.

Since January 2016, the IAEA has been verifying and monitoring Iran's implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which was endorsed unanimously by the UN Security Council in 2015.

The accord between its five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), plus Germany, the European Union (EU) and Iran, set out rigorous mechanisms for monitoring limits on Iran's nuclear programme, while paving the way for lifting UN sanctions against the country.

The release said that the IAEA's verification and monitoring activities are conducted in an impartial and objective manner and in accordance with the modalities defined by the JCPOA and standard safeguards practice.

Mr. Amano reiterated that the JCPOA represents a clear gain from a verification point of view, and stressed the importance of full implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments in order to make the JCPOA sustainable.