

# UN report outlines path towards closing gender gap, realizing reproductive health rights

17 October 2017 – Vast inequalities threaten economies, communities and nations, trapping people in a cycle of poverty and marginalization, the United Nations said on Tuesday in a new report that outlines 10 actions countries can take on the path towards equality.

[The State of World Population 2017](#), a flagship report of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), notes that these inequalities are not simply a matter of wealth, but social, racial and political, and are all mutually reinforcing. The report says that around the world, gender amplifies these inequalities. Too many women and girls do not have access to sexual and reproductive health care, which means they are unable to receive family planning services or antenatal care, and may be forced to give birth in unsafe conditions.

Pressed into motherhood early, or repeatedly, these girls and women are more prone to maternal injuries, disabilities or even death. They are less able to finish their educations or enter the paid workforce, leaving their families poorer and their children with bleaker futures.

The report also warns that these inequalities could undermine the global goals on ending poverty, eliminating preventable deaths and achieving sustainability.

The report outlines 10 actions that countries can take to create a more equal world:

1. Meet all commitments and obligations to human rights agreed in international treaties and conventions;
2. Tear down barriers that prevent young women from accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services;
3. Reach the poorest women with essential, life-saving antenatal and maternal health care;
4. Meet all unmet need for family planning, prioritizing women in the poorest 40 per cent of households;
5. Provide a universal social protection floor, offering basic income security and covering essential services, including maternity-related benefits and support;
6. Bolster services, such as childcare, to enable women to enter or remain in the paid labour force;
7. Adopt progressive policies aimed at accelerated income growth among the poorest 40 per cent, including through stepped-up human capital investments in girls and women;
8. Eliminate obstacles to girls' access to secondary and higher education, and to their enrolment in courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;

9. Accelerate the transition from informal jobs to formal, decent work – focusing first on sectors with large concentrations of poor, female workers – and unblock women’s access to credit and property ownership; and
  10. Work towards measuring all dimensions of inequality and how they influence each other, and strengthen links between data and public policy.
- 

## [Thousands of Rohingya refugees stranded near Bangladesh-Myanmar border – UN](#)

17 October 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency is concerned about the humanitarian condition of up to 15,000 Rohingya refugees who are stranded in paddy fields near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

“Since Sunday night, an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 Rohingya refugees have entered Bangladesh through the Anjuman Para border crossing point in Ukhia district in the country’s south-east,” Andrej Mahecic, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters Tuesday in Geneva.

“Many say they had initially chosen to remain in their homes in Myanmar’s northern Rakhine state despite repeated threats to leave or be killed. They finally fled when their villages were set on fire,” he added.

Tensions have escalated into violence in Myanmar’s northern Rakhine state. Since 25 August, an estimated 582,000 Rohingya Muslims have arrived in Bangladesh.

As of Tuesday morning, the new arrivals were still squatting in the paddy fields of Anjuman Para village, where the sound of gunfire continues to be heard every night from the Myanmar side.

UNHCR is advocating with the Bangladesh authorities to urgently admit these refugees fleeing violence and increasingly-difficult conditions back home.

UNHCR and our partners are delivering food and water to the stranded refugees, among them children, women and the elderly who are dehydrated and hungry from the long journey.

“Every minute counts given the fragile condition they’re arriving in,” said Mr. Mahecic.

The UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said Tuesday that without immediate

additional funding, the agency will not be able to continue providing lifesaving aid and protection to Rohingya children who have fled horrific violence in Myanmar.

UNICEF spokesperson Marixie Mercado told reporters in Geneva that almost 60 per cent of the refugees who have fled Myanmar since August 25 are children.

“The growing needs are far outpacing resources,” she said, noting that as of Tuesday, UNICEF has received just 7 per cent of the \$76 million required to provide emergency support to children over the next six months.

Without more funding, UNICEF would soon have to stop lifesaving services. “Rohingya children have already endured atrocities. All of them need the lifesaving basics – shelter, food, water, vaccinations, protection – not tomorrow or next week or next month, but right now,” she said.

---

## [On International Day, UN chief urges action to address root causes of poverty](#)

17 October 2017 – Highlighting the importance of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development to ensure a life of dignity for all, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres called for redoubling of efforts to eradicate poverty in its entirety.

“This globally agreed agenda, pledges to secure a healthy planet and build peaceful and inclusive societies to ensure lives of dignity for all,” said the Secretary-General in a [video message](#) marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

“Its pledge to leave no one behind will require innovative approaches, partnerships and solutions.”

In particular, he called for addressing the root causes of poverty to eradicate it in its entirety, and in doing so to listen to the views and guidance of people living in poverty and acting together with them.

Despite progress to eliminate poverty, more than 800 million people around the world continue live in extreme poverty and many more are threatened by alarming rates of unemployment, insecurity, inequality, conflict as well as the effect of climate change.

Eliminating poverty, and alleviating the suffering and building resilience of those living in poverty is the target for Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)) to end poverty in all its forms everywhere.

The Goal also aims to ensure social protection for the poor and vulnerable, increase access to basic services and support people harmed by climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the [decision](#) by the General Assembly, designating 17 October as the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#).

The theme for this year's commemoration is [Answering the Call of October 17 to end poverty: A path toward peaceful and inclusive societies](#).

It recognizes the knowledge and courage of families living in poverty throughout the world, as well as the importance of reaching out to the poorest and building an alliance with citizens from all backgrounds to end poverty.

---

## [Secretary-General welcomes launch of new UN mission in Haiti](#)

16 October 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres welcomed the establishment Monday of the UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti ([MINUJUSTH](#)), following the closure of its predecessor peacekeeping mission.

“MINUJUSTH reflects the commitment of the United Nations to continue supporting the consolidation of peace and promotion of stability in Haiti,” said a [statement](#) issued by Mr. Guterres’ Spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric.

The closure of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti ([MINUSTAH](#)) is “a testament to Haiti’s progress over the past 13 years,” the statement said.

In the statement, the Secretary-General extended his gratitude to all civilian and uniformed personnel who served with MINUSTAH, as well as to troop and police contributing countries.

MINUJUSTH will assist the Haitian Government to strengthen rule of law institutions, further develop the capacities of the national police and advance human rights.

“The Secretary-General is confident that the Haitian people and Government will work in close partnership with MINUJUSTH and the United Nations country team, to implement together joint priorities based on [UN Security Council] [resolution 2350](#) (2017) and reflected in the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development,” the statement said.

---

## UN General Assembly elects new members to the Human Rights Council

16 October 2017 – The General Assembly today elected, by secret ballot, 15 States to serve on the Human Rights Council, the highest intergovernmental body in the United Nations system for matters relating to protection and promotion of human rights worldwide.

Newly elected to the Geneva-based Human Rights Council are Afghanistan, Angola, Australia, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Qatar, Senegal, Slovakia, Spain and Ukraine.

All would serve three-year terms beginning on 1 January 2018.

The 15 new members were [elected](#) according to the following pattern: four seats for African States; four seats for Asia-Pacific States; three seats for Latin American and Caribbean States; two seats for Eastern European States; and two seats for Western European and other States.

On the basis of [equitable geographical distribution](#), Council seats are allocated to the five regional groups as follows: African States, 13 seats; Asia-Pacific States, 13 seats; Eastern European States, six seats; Latin American and Caribbean States, eight seats; and Western European and other States, seven seats.

Created by the General Assembly in 2006, the 47-member Council is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and making recommendations on them.

Its meetings are held at the UN Office at Geneva, located at Palais des Nations, which used to house the League of Nations, until its dissolution in 1946.