

Tapping into talents of older persons can boost Global Goals, says UN on International Day

1 October 2017 – On the International Day of Older Persons, the United Nations is urging the world to tap into the often overlooked contributions of older persons, and calling for integrated care to improve well being and ensure they have the opportunity to contribute to development.

By the year 2050, [one in five people](#) in the world will be aged 60 and older. It's our goal to ensure that all older people can obtain the health services they need, wherever they are, wherever they live," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) in a news release.

Older adults are more likely to experience chronic conditions and often multiple conditions at the same time. Yet today's health systems generally focus on the detection and treatment of individual acute diseases.

WHO's new [Guidelines on Integrated Care for Older People](#) require health and social care providers to coordinate their services around the needs of older people through approaches such as comprehensive assessment and care plans.

Yet, even in the rich world, people may not be getting the integrated services they need. In a survey of 11 high-income countries, up to 41 per cent of adults aged 65 or older reported care coordination problems in the past two years.

"The world's health systems aren't ready for older populations," said John Beard, Director of the Department of Ageing and Life course at WHO, adding that WHO's new guidelines provide the evidence for primary care workers to put the comprehensive needs of older people, not just the diseases they come in to discuss, at the centre of the way they provide care.

The International Day of Older Persons is annually observed on 1 October to encourage efforts to counter negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older persons and ageing.

Younger generations must act now to stamp out human rights denials in old age [UN expert](#)

Also marking the Day, the UN Independent Expert on older people's rights, Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, urged those in power today to provide decent futures for older people noting that they themselves will be affected by the issue in years to come.

Unlike action on climate change, which will be our legacy for future generations, [young people in positions of power today will themselves not escape ageism](#), discrimination and the denial of human rights in older age

unless we recognize now that there is a need for concrete action,” she explained.

With this in mind, she called on States to step up their efforts to determine the best way to strengthen the protection of the human rights of older people and to consider the various proposals that have been made, including the elaboration of a dedicated instrument on the rights of older people.

This year's [theme](#), 'Stepping into the Future: Tapping the Talents, Contributions and Participation of Older Persons in Society,' is about enabling and expanding the contributions of older people in their families, communities and societies at large.

The theme underscores the link between tapping the talents and contributions of older persons and achieving the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development and the [Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing](#), which is currently undergoing its third review and appraisal process.

In less than two weeks, 72 States sign UN voluntary compact on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse

29 September 2017 – More than 90 United Nations Member States have signed or intend to sign the voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, answering the call of [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres to address the scourge.

"This represents [an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity](#) and a firm commitment to addressing the issue comprehensively and effectively, ensuring full implementation of the Secretary-General's zero tolerance policy," said UN Spokesman Stéphane Dujarric at the daily press briefing in New York.

The Secretary-General introduced the compact at a meeting on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse held last week in the margins of the UN General Assembly's annual high-level period. The meeting charted an ambitious strategy aimed at comprehensively addressing sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel.

At the meeting, the Secretary-General reaffirmed to Member States that the UN would "not tolerate anyone committing or condoning sexual exploitation and abuse" and would "not let anyone cover up these crimes with the UN flag."

To date, 72 Member States have signed the compact, with 19 more having formally indicated that they will do so soon.

Through the compact, the Secretary-General and Member States reaffirm their mutual belief that sexual exploitation and abuse runs counter to their shared values and erodes the trust of those the UN serves.

The compact also sets out specific commitments for the Secretary-General and Member States to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, to hold individuals accountable and to respect the dignity of those who have been victimized by providing them with meaningful support.

The document remains open for signature and the Secretariat encourages all Member States that have not signed to add their voice to this important initiative.

[UN Human Rights Council wraps current session, adopts texts on Myanmar, Yemen, Burundi](#)

29 September 2017 – The United Nations Human Rights Council concluded its 36th session in Geneva today, having adopted 33 resolutions, 20 by consensus, addressing multiple themes as well as human rights situations in Yemen, Burundi, Myanmar, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Somalia and Cambodia.

Among the highlights of the final day the [Council](#)'s work for the session, the 47-member body adopted a resolution in which it extended the mandate of the independent international fact-finding mission on Myanmar. It also adopted a text on cooperation with the UN, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights.

The Council also decided to extend for a year the mandate of the [Commission of Inquiry on Burundi](#) and recommended that the UN Recommends that the General Assembly submit the Commission's most recent report on the human rights situation in Burundi "to all relevant UN bodies for its consideration and appropriate action."

The Council requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to urgently dispatch a team of three experts to engage with the Burundian authorities and all other stakeholders in order to collect information, establish the truth, and ensure that the perpetrators of deplorable crimes are all accountable to the judicial authorities of Burundi.

Also today, the Council took several actions regarding Yemen, adopting a resolution condemning ongoing violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law in the country, including those involving the widespread recruitment and use of children by parties to the

conflict.

It also requested the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to establish, no later by the end of 2017, a group of eminent international and regional experts for a period of at least one year to monitor and report on the situation on human rights in Yemen and to carry out a comprehensive examination of all alleged violations and abuses of human rights.

[Full coverage of the closing of the Council's 36th session here](#)

[UN agency provides 'badly battered' Dominica with critical food supplies, telecom support](#)

29 September 2017 – Emergency supplies from the United Nations food relief agency are being delivered to Dominica as people face “huge challenges in their lives” in the wake of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Maria, which ripped through the small Caribbean island last week.

“Dominica has been [badly battered and needs to be rebuilt](#),” said World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, Miguel Barreto.

The mountainous island has suffered nearly 30 deaths, about 80 per cent of its buildings damaged and many roads blocked or impaired.

“We’re working with the Government to support the people who are facing huge challenges in their lives” added Mr. Barreto, who has visited in recent days.

Some 10 metric tons of WFP high-energy biscuits were transported by ship to the eastern Caribbean island this week and then delivered to communities in the remote interior by helicopter and to coastal communities by boat.

Overall, WFP plans to provide a range of food assistance to some 25,000 people for three months as it discusses with the Government a system to supply hurricane-affected people with food vouchers to be used in local markets once they reopen.

WFP is also providing critical logistics, air service and telecommunications support to Dominica and the humanitarian relief response. Its Emergency Telecommunications Team – with expert support from the Ericsson Response Team and the Government of Luxembourg – has set up connectivity in Dominica to some 400 registered users including the Government Emergency Operations Centre, the island’s airports and hospitals, and the Dominican, Venezuelan and French fire brigades.

Mr. Barreto and the UN Resident Coordinator for Barbados, Stephen O'Malley, visited some of the worst-hit areas and have held discussions with Dominica's Prime Minister, Roosevelt Skerrit.

"We've been talking to the Government about how to help them get their systems up and running again," said Mr. O'Malley. "People want to go back to their normal lives and we can help them do that."

The UN food agency's emergency efforts are part of a larger UN operation to provide a range of assistance including disaster relief, humanitarian coordination, shelter and water.

On the logistics side, the UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Panama and the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) – both managed by WFP – are providing support to humanitarian partners in Dominica and the region.

UNHRD has been airlifting critical emergency supplies, including mobile storage units and pallets, tarpaulins, boats, and electric generators while UNHAS has been providing regular flight services to humanitarian workers, government officials and partners.

In the wake of a series of hurricanes that have ravaged the Caribbean, WFP – from its operational hubs in Barbados and Antigua – has been working closely with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, island governments and international partners.

[Half a million Rohingya arrive in Bangladesh; UN agencies rush to provide shelter, clean water](#)

29 September 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency announced today that it has started distributing plastic sheeting and essential relief items to Rohingyas arriving in from Myanmar into neighbouring Bangladesh, as part of a massive effort to cut the time refugees spend in the open.

"The latest estimate of the number of Rohingya who have arrived in Bangladesh since violence erupted in Myanmar has [crossed the half million mark](#), at 501,000 as of Thursday," Andrej Mahecic, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters at today's regular press briefing in Geneva.

"Giving the newly arrived refugees the ability to construct their own shelter, begin cooking for themselves and taking care of their families is an important first step on the road to healing," he added.

The 2,000-acre (809 hectare) extension site on the outskirts of Kutupalong Camp in southeast Bangladesh is becoming more organized, turning into a series of communities as UNHCR and its partners supporting the Bangladesh Government deliver more emergency relief items.

From its \$4.2 million budget, UNHCR is contributing \$2 million to support Bangladesh in constructing a road for easier aid delivery into Kutupalong extension site and shipping in 23 vehicles to assist aid efforts.

UNHCR nutrition experts estimate that approximately 18 per cent of new arrivals suffer from acute malnutrition.

“This is due to more than lack of food,” said Mr. Mahecic. “We witness dire need for psycho-social support and counselling among refugees,” he said adding that many breastfeeding mothers are “severely traumatised, sick and malnourished.”

UNHCR is working with its partner Action Against Hunger to provide warm meals as private donors conduct ad hoc food distributions, which is also becoming more structured.

“As Bangladesh shoulders the full extent of this refugee crisis, UNHCR calls on all countries in the region to show solidarity and do their part in keeping their borders open and protecting refugees who are fleeing discrimination, persecution and violence in Myanmar,” concluded Mr. Mahecic.

UN Migration agency reports at least 23 dead in Bay of Bengal boat tragedy

More tragic details have emerged about [yesterdays' reports](#) that Rohingya refugees died when the boat they were using to reach safety in Bangladesh capsized in the Bay of Bengal's rough seas. An International Organization for Migration (IOM) [local field team](#) travelled to the scene to assist survivors and assess any further response needed. Today, they report that, having checked with police and the owner of a grocery shop located close to where the incident occurred, the total confirmed dead is now 23.

Clean water and sanitation needed

Meanwhile, IOM is partnering with UNHCR and other aid agencies to [provide clean water and sanitation](#) for an estimated half a million people who have fled to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

As tens of thousands of new arrivals live with little or no shelter, food or access to healthcare, daily rain flooding campsites has left pools of water – numerous contaminated with faecal matter – as the only accessible water source, posing a lethal threat of waterborne diseases like cholera.

The Inter Sector Coordination Group, which, hosted by IOM, is managing the response, says that approximately 59 million litres of safe water are now needed every day to meet the basic needs of the new arrivals.

Since the influx began on 25 August, IOM has installed 1,532 emergency latrines in three sites to serve some 19,350 people and 17 mobile toilets to

serve an estimated 850 people.

The IOM Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) team has also bored six deep tube wells, with installation completion due in two weeks to provide 3,000 people in the Kutupalong expansion site with clean water.

While agencies have been able to reach only 141,070 people in Cox's Bazar with WASH assistance, its engineers say some 18,000 emergency latrines are needed as basic emergency sanitation for all the new arrivals.