

‘Surge of solidarity’ can halt spread of poverty, Cameroon’s President tells UN Assembly

22 September 2017 – The first speaker to take the podium on the fourth day of the United Nations General Assembly annual high-level debate, President Paul Biya of Cameroon, underscored that peace, essential for the survival of humanity and sustainable development, “is dangerously under threat,” notably from terrorism, conflicts, poverty and climate disruptions.

“Today, I would say, we are all ‘beggars for peace.” And such persistent threats are of utmost concern to us all,” he said, pointing to terrorist attacks around the globe.

Mr. Biya condemned ongoing conflicts in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East that are wreaking hardships, deaths, refugees and displaced persons. Noting that his country – hosting thousands of refugees from the Central African Republic and Nigeria – understands their struggles, he urged policies, behaviours and actions to re-focus attention on people.

Turning to climate change, he cited the two main challenges for Africa: the ongoing forest degradation in Central Africa, calling it “the earth’s second lung;” and the desertification affecting Lake Chad, “which is essential for the survival of communities and biodiversity.”

Despite the numerous UN declarations and resolutions, as well as ‘development decades,’ plans of action and other agendas, the result, noted Mr. Biya has been that poverty persists and the gap between rich and poor countries continues to widen. “Let us all mobilize in a powerful surge of solidarity to roll back poverty. Let us match our actions with our words,” he pressed. To provide conditions for a decent life, “let us thus focus on People!” urged President Biya.

[*Full statement available here*](#)

Darfur: AU-UN mission urges restraint after clashes at camp for displaced persons



A section of the Kalma camp for internally displaced people (IDP), near

Nyala, in South Darfur. Photo: UNAMID/Albert González Farran

22 September 2017 – The joint African Union-United Nations peacekeeping mission in Darfur today urged “the utmost restraint” by all parties after clashes between government forces and internally displaced persons at the Kalma camp led to the death of at least three IDPs and injuries to some 26 others.

“I call upon everyone involved in this situation to restore calm as soon as possible. A peaceful resolution of differences is the only way forward for the Darfuri people,” [said](#) Jeremiah Mamabolo, the Joint Special Representative and head of the AU-UN mission ([UNAMID](#)).

A medical team from UNAMID is currently at Kalma camp, located in South Darfur, to assist local authorities in treating the injured. The mission is also engaging with the state government and IDP leaders to peacefully resolve the issue.

The incident reportedly occurred after Sudanese Government forces dispersed a group of IDPs protesting against President Omar Al-Bashir’s visit to South Darfur.

Hurricane Irma erased ‘footprints of an entire civilization’ on Barbuda, Prime Minister tells UN

21 September 2017 – The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Alphonso Browne, told the United Nations General Assembly today that after the largest storm ever in the Atlantic Ocean, “the island of Barbuda is decimated; its entire population left homeless; and its buildings reduced to empty shells.”

As all its inhabitants were evacuated to Antigua in the wake of Hurricane Irma, in addition to providing shelter and basic necessities to the residents, the social services on Antigua are under great strain – providing places for 600 additional children; medical services for the elderly; and a means of income for the able-bodied.

“For the first time in over 300 years, there is now no permanent resident on Barbuda. The footprints of an entire civilization have been emasculated by the brutality and magnitude of Irma,” he said.

Mr. Browne stressed that Barbuda is not only a natural disaster, it is a humanitarian crisis that now consumes Antigua. “Whatever position on climate

change any nation takes, the evidence of global warming is now irrefutably stronger,” he underscored. “We are the least of the polluters, but the largest of the casualties. The unfairness, injustice and inequality are painfully obvious,” he added.

He pointed out that according to preliminary estimates, rebuilding would cost Barbuda about \$250 million – representing 15 per cent or more of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately \$1.5 billion.

“Antigua and Barbuda urgently requires the assistance of the international community, including the international development and finance institutions, to accomplish this vital task of rebuilding Barbuda,” he said.

Caribbean islands need to construct more resilient buildings and infrastructure, requiring international developmental and financial institutions to provide financing at concessionary rates without artificial impediments – or cost in lives and property would be “too frightening to contemplate.”

[*Full statement available here*](#)

European ministers tell Assembly UN is proper place to tackle phenomenon of mass migrations

21 September 2017 – From the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today, European foreign ministers called for humane treatment of the hundreds of thousands of refugees flooding into the continent and the orderly management of migrant flows that benefit the countries of origin, transit and destination.

“Large displacements of people have reached unprecedented levels in recent years,” Spanish Foreign Minister Alfonso María Dastis Quecedo told the Assembly’s 72nd general debate.

“The two Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants that we have undertaken to adopt in 2018 should confirm the concerted, equitable and humane response to the phenomenon of refugees,” he added.

In a wide-ranging speech that touched on all major world crises, as well as development and climate change, Mr. Dastis expressed “the sincere gratitude of the people of Spain for the multitude of heartfelt displays of support and affection we have received from around the world” following last month’s terrorist attack in Barcelona.

“Terrorism will be vanquished through unity, perseverance and the full weight

of the law,” he said.

[Full statement available here](#)



Minister for Foreign and European Affairs Jean Asselborn of Luxembourg addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Luxembourg’s Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn, said the UN was the appropriate place to tackle the phenomenon of mass migration.

“The causes are manifold: demographic pressures, climate change, conflict, humanitarian catastrophes. Perfectly respectable economic motivation, both in the country of origin and that of destination are also often the cause of such movement,” he added.

He also called on the five permanent Members of the UN Security Council to forgo the use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities, such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

[Full statement available here](#)



Minister for Development Cooperation Ulla Tørnæs of Denmark addresses the general debate of the General Assembly’s seventy-second session. UN Photo/Cia Pak

Also addressing the UN General Assembly today was Ulla Tørnæs, Minister for Development Cooperation from Denmark, who highlighted the “ever more interconnected” threats and challenges facing the international community, including displacement and irregular migration, as well as violations of human rights and armed conflict.

Given the evolving global landscape, there is a need for leadership and common purpose to steer the UN in a new direction by breaking the status quo and reforming the UN development system, bridging immediate relief and long-term development objectives.

“Staying on the current path is not an option if we want to maintain the legitimacy of the United Nations. Fundamental and ambitious reform is the only way forward,” Ms. Tørnæs said.

[Full statement available here](#)

At UN assembly, Croatia calls for treating migrants humanely while also tackling 'root causes'

21 September 2017 – Croatia, a major way-station on the path of tens of thousands of refugees from the Middle East and Asia in 2015, called from the podium of the United Nations General Assembly today for a holistic approach that respects migrants' rights while tackling the root causes of their flight.

"Croatia in the past has been faced with acute refugee and migrant crises," Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic told the Assembly's 72nd general debate. "The approach we took has always been – and will always be – one that puts people first.

"In the context of the upcoming negotiations on the Global Compact on Migration, we would advocate an approach to human mobility that prioritizes safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, no matter where they come from and where they are headed.

"As with all global challenges, here too a holistic approach is required. We therefore need to work together to fight the root causes of mass migrations – be it poverty, failing States and wars or climate change and natural disasters – while standing against exploitation and abuse in the context of human trafficking and people smuggling."

On conflicts, Mr. Plenkovic said that while a consistent approach by UN, and in particular the Security Council, is essential for its credibility, copy-pasted "one-size-fits-all" approaches are not the most effective way to proceed.